



THE PR♥PHET

UNION CATHOLIC REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 13,
2004

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Sister Percylee Explains Snow Day Policy

David Ault

RECENTLY, UNION CATHOLIC STUDENTS have experienced the kinder side of an unusually cold and snowy winter in central New Jersey when two snow days were declared by the administration. Principal Sister Percylee Hart, RSM, explained the school's snow day policy and its implications for the beginning of summer vacation.

According to Sister Percylee, the decision to call a snow day is made

by Mr. Venezia, Miss Piasecki and herself. Mr. Venezia, the school's transportation manager, assesses the extent of transportation difficulties the snow will cause. Miss Piasecki, as Assistant Principal, offers her opinion to Sister Percylee as well. Sister Percylee then listens to weather reports and reports of school closings before she makes her final decision. Out of bed by

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Seniors Take Advantage Of Early Admission

Katelyn Primich

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS IS the most nerve-wracking experience for many high school students. However, several students relieve senior year college admission stress through the early application procedure.

Early admissions requires students to apply by November 1 to their top choice school. Students may apply early to only one school and must agree to attend if accepted. "It's a good approach because if you get in, it relieves a lot of stress your senior year," said Joe Torella '04. "Even if you don't get in, you still have another

chance later in the year, so it's really a win-win situation."

Torella received early admission to Harvard University. He applied to fourteen schools, but some students only apply to their top school. Chris Boyar '04 used the early admissions process to get into Virginia Tech, the only school he applied to. "After I got into the college I wanted, I no longer had to deal with the aggravation of the whole college application process that most of my friends are still dealing with," Boyar noted. "I think the early application process

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Senior Prom: Is the Bid Too High?

Kristine Mintel

THE SENIOR PROM, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE CRYSTAL PLAZA IN LIVINGSTON ON THURSDAY, MAY 27, WILL COST \$220 per couple and \$110 per individual.

Several seniors complained when they learned the bid increased \$5 per person from last year's cost. It was also a surprise that prom wasn't being held at The Manor in West Orange this year. "I am really mad that we didn't get a choice [where prom will be held]," said Kim Scutieri '04. "I'd rather that we vote." The place and price didn't appear to add up. "It's definitely way too expensive," said Fernando Gallego '04.

Unlike some high schools, UC doesn't make any profit from prom, according to Sister Irma Gazzillo, senior class advisor. All of the money from the bid goes towards the reception hall, DJ, favors and programs. The Crystal Plaza is more expensive than The Manor because it has its own security. The senior prom was held at the Crystal Plaza in 2002 and Mr. Marotti wanted it there again.

Sister Irma noted that the Crystal Plaza has a larger dance floor than The Manor, and they both are equally classy. There is no competition at the Crystal Plaza, as Union Catholic will be the only group there. "These people welcome us, as if into their home," said Sister Irma. "They treat the seniors like young adults."

Sister Irma recalled that last year's seniors did get to vote between The Manor and the Crystal Plaza. Yet the problem was that most seniors, when asked to vote on something, didn't. Another issue was why the seniors didn't get to choose between having prom on a boat or at a reception hall. Sister Irma explained that there are too many people in this year's graduating class to even consider having prom on a boat, since accommodations couldn't be made for such a large group. And most of the time, seniors question prom arrangements only after they are in their senior year, when the place has already been chosen and booked.

The seniors are still a bit hesitant about the price, yet most of them are genuinely looking forward to their long-awaited senior prom. "With all the expenses we have to pay, I really hope everything is worth the money," said Emily Moharter '04, "because we could be putting the money towards college instead." "It's too much money, but I think it will be a fun event where I can talk to the kids I've spent the last four years with," said Chris Boyar '04. "[Prom] is a nice way to say good-bye to the people who have meant something to you in high school."

***The Prophet* is a publication of Union Catholic Regional High School, Scotch Plains, New Jersey.**

Letters to the Editor

Want to share your opinions in *The Prophet*? *The Prophet* accepts letters from all members of the Union Catholic community. Letters to *The Prophet* must be signed. However, we will withhold your name upon request. *The Prophet* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length. Letters may be placed in *The Prophet* mailbox in the main office or given to any editor-in-chief.

Contributions (articles, photographs, cartoons, etc.) are also accepted. Please see Mr. Leib in Room 206 or an editor for details.

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Overcrowded Electives Make Learning Harder

Nicole Desiato

SOME ELECTIVES HAVE PROVEN SO POPULAR THAT THE classes suffer from serious overcrowding. Intro to Art is one of the most popular electives at UC, with 30 students in one section and 29 in another. Creative Writing and Speech are other popular electives, with 33 students in each class.

Acting has also become a popular class; the two sections (Acting I and Acting II) total 23 students. However, Mrs. Addison teaches both Acting I and Acting II in the same period and in the same class. With so many students in one class, learning has become harder. "It's difficult because I need to teach the basics to Acting I," Mrs. Addison said, "while Acting II has already learned all of it." Another complication of having two different classes together is one-on-one participation. "The class is performance-based; therefore we should be up on our feet working every day," according to Mrs. Addison. "But because of the large class size this is impossible." Students usually have to wait at least two or three periods before getting the opportunity to perform in front of the class again.

Mrs. Ferraro teaches Speech and Creative Writing. Each class has 33 students. "In a speech class it's hard to have the class stay interested when they have to listen to 32 other people give their presentations," according to Mrs. Ferraro.

In Creative Writing, giving comments to each individual is important so the students can grow and learn when they made a mistake. "There are many times I can't give the kind of constructive feedback I could have given students one-on-one," Mrs. Ferraro said. Learning becomes more difficult with a large class size because keeping students motivated becomes a more difficult task.

Art I and Advanced Art also meet at the same time. "It's hard to get to everyone because there's not enough time in class," said Mr. Merola. In recent years, more students have signed up for art, mainly because it is open to all

four classes, unlike many electives which are only open to upperclassmen. With a crowded class it's difficult to sit with the students and give them the kind of analysis that would make them better in art, according to Mr. Merola. "Sometimes having a larger class makes it harder to be productive," said art student Stefanie Messercola '05. "Sometimes having a larger class is more fun because there's more going on," countered Christina Hinkle '05. "However, it sometimes makes learning more difficult."

Early Admissions

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is a good approach only if you're 100% sure that you want to attend the school and you're positive you'll be happy there for the next four years of your life."

Heather Hanley '04 will be attending the College of St. Elizabeth's in the fall. "I can relax a lot more knowing that I can enjoy the rest of my senior year since I'm already over the hurdle of applying."

Applying early isn't just a growing trend in the UC community, but on a national level as well. Ms. Modlin, director of guidance, is a firm believer in the process. "It relieves a lot of stress for seniors and offers them the opportunity to enjoy their senior year. Students look forward to getting the college process over with and having more time for themselves." Ms. Modlin also recommended that underclassmen who want to apply early should visit the school and check out the courses they would be interested in taking during the summer prior to their senior year. Then they will be ready to hand in applications by November.

There are some disadvantages to making the college decision early that some students may not be aware of. "Many students don't believe that colleges really do revoke early admissions based on a drop in second semester grades," said Ms. Modlin. "Two unfortunate students found that out the hard way last year." Applying for early decision is not for those students who are uncertain of their plans after graduation, since they must attend the school that accepts them.

Freshmen Take First Midterms

Amanda Ballate

MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 2007 HAVE COMPLETED THEIR first midterm exams as students at Union Catholic. Midterms count for one-tenth of a student's final grade for the school year.

Freshmen's reactions to the exams varied. Some freshmen had to adjust to the different structure of the exams. "I think [the exams] were good overall," said Heather Heaney. "The English exam was the hardest of my exams because of the essay-writing section." "Although I have taken midterm exams before," noted Joanna Jones, "the World Studies test was ex-



Freshmen studying for midterms

extremely long because I was not used to the Scantron format, and there were four required essays."

Some students believed the midterm exams were quite simple while others

questioned the necessity of taking midterms in the first place. Mark Hamill and Rob Gutierrez agreed that the tests were easy. "We didn't even have to study for them. The teachers reviewed for them well." On the other hand, Robert Hardaker said, "Midterms are a waste of time. They shouldn't count for a grade." Kacie Hanley agreed. "Midterms should be used as a preparation for finals in June but should not count as a grade."

Most freshmen teachers were optimistic about the freshmen's performances on their midterms. "We spent two full day of class to review," said biology teacher Mr. Gresco. "Although many freshmen were nervous at first, they did well because the lowest grade was a C+." Mrs. Dellanno, who teaches freshman study skills, noted, "After the exams, many students were relieved because it was not as bad as they thought. They became less stressed out."

The second semester began on January 26. All the materials from this point on will be covered during finals.

Respect For Life March

Katie Czado

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, SIX MEMBERS OF THE PEER Ministry Club took part in the "March For Life" held in Washington, D.C. Stacey Hagenbush '04, Kim Chervenyak '04, Ricky Cabrera '04, Ashley Rosa '04, Jen Hillyer '04, and Elyssa DiGiovanni '05 rallied with over 100,000 people protesting abortion. Accompanying the peer ministers was Peer Ministry leader Mr. Donahue.

The participants started the march at the Washington Monument, walked along Constitution Avenue and finally reached the Supreme Court, where *Roe v. Wade*, the case that legalized abortion, was decided. This was the first year that Union Catholic participated. All the peer ministers and Mr. Tanyag's Respect For Life Club were asked to attend but the change in exam scheduling due to the weather affected attendance. "This was a memorable experience," said Mr. Donahue, "even though not many people went. I think that in the years to come more people will go and march for this cause."

The UC bus left the school at 4:30 A.M. and reached its destination about 9 A.M. Before the march began, a youth mass with about 20,000 attendants was held at the MCI Center. "The youth mass was cool. I definitely want to go again," said DiGiovanni. "The mass and the march reaffirmed my beliefs that abortion is wrong."

Numerous speeches and conferences were held in the Washington, D.C., area addressing the evils of abortion. Peer Ministry originally got the idea of marching after Archbishop Myers encouraged all Catholic schools in the area to take part.



Snow Days

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4:00 A.M. on such days, Sister makes the school or no-school decision by 5:30 A.M. so that students know before they leave home for school.

Sister Percylee plans the annual school schedule to be long enough to allow three snow days and still meet the diocesan requirement of a 180-day school year. If more than three snow days occur, one day must be added to the school calendar for each additional snow day over the three-day limit. In 1994, a series of severe storms led to six snow days and make-up days had to be added to the spring term.

If days are added to the spring semester, seniors may be asked to lengthen their school day rather than come to school on additional days around the time of graduation.

Library Database Unveiled

Brian DeOliveira

THE NEW LIBRARY DATABASE CONSISTS OF AN ONLINE card catalogue of more than 6,000 books. The database searches credible information online.

"The online card catalogue is an easy way to find out if the library has the book you are looking for," said Mr. Johnston, network administrator. "You can just use your laptop instead of actually going to the library."

In February, teachers will be trained in using the service database and will show students how to use the program on their laptops. "The information from the service database is more reliable than a website because you are quoting facts from real books," said Mr. Johnston. "This type of program is also used in college."

Preparations for the database began in June and were finished prior to Christmas vacation. Seniors Chris Boyar, Bryan Smith, and Kim Johnston typed the title, author, and call number of each book into the database over the summer. "It was a long process," said Smith.

"The new database will be more convenient to everyone in the school," said Mr. Reagan, Sr., the school's librarian. "It will have better information that will be available to the students."

Senioritis Sets In

Carlos Homs

SENIORITIS, ACCORDING TO URBAN DICTIONARY.COM, IS "a deadly, vicious disease that strikes seniors (twelfth graders) when they get sick of high school and cause them to get more lazy, down, and tired." While the credibility of this online dictionary may be questionable, senioritis is really a vicious disease. It allegedly has infected more than 94% of high school seniors in America, and in some areas rates are as high as 99%.

The difference between senioritis and juniors, sophomores, or freshmen being lazy in school is that twelfth graders claim to have a semi-acceptable reason for their slacking-off attitude. "I've already been accepted into college," said Nicole Tami '04. "It doesn't really matter what happens from here on. I am just going to get plenty of rest for the summer."

Not everyone agrees with this argument, however, especially teachers and guidance counselors. "Now that the pressure is off, grades will tend to diminish," said Ms. Modlin, director of guidance at UC. "If there is a considerable change in grades, the colleges may rescind the student's admission."

Many seniors see this as something that the college says to please teachers and parents. While underclassmen have to watch every grade for the sake of future college admission, seniors spend most of their time planning for prom and the upcoming summer. Jobs also become a huge factor in the lack of focus in school.

Underclassmen may say, "Senioritis will never hit me." But senioritis is highly contagious. It is hard to stay focused when your classmates



have placed school last on their priority list.

Valentine Memories

Nicole Desiato

FLOWERS, CANDY, LOVE, RATS—JUST A FEW OF THE things faculty members associate with St. Valentine's Day. Here are some of their memories.

Mr. Butchko: Valentine's Day has always been special to me. In 1984 I realized that the woman who would be my wife loved me and within a month we were engaged.

Mrs. Lubin: One year, my husband surprised me with a new wedding band.

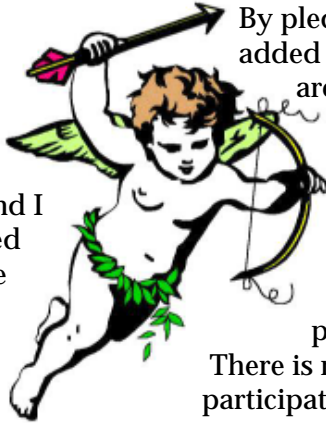
Mrs. Addison: I will never forget the apartment I had at the time because there was a dead rat in the wall. On Valentine's Day, my future husband and I exchanged cards. He then gave me a red napkin. I opened the napkin and inside it was a candy heart that said "Marry Me." I looked down and saw Mr.

Addison on one knee.

Mr. Tanyag: There was one Valentine's Day when we agreed to exchange the cheesiest or tackiest gifts we could find.

Mr. Cerimele: When I was eleven, I found in a local store a box with a picture of a heart on it. When you opened the box a little heart inside it started to tremble like it was beating. I bought it for my mother.

Mr. Leib: I remember being in grammar school and not getting any valentines. I cried. No, wait a minute, that was in high school...or was it college? Oh, yeah...all three.



The Health Club under the direction of Nurse Ball sponsors this event. "Save-a-Sweetheart Week" was formerly sponsored by the American Heart Association but has been run by the school for the past seven years. This program is one of few in existence that encourages people not to start smoking while informing them of the dangers associated with this habit.

February is National Heart Month. People who smoke, or live with someone who smokes, increase their risk of a heart attack or stroke. By pledging to stop smoking years can be added to one's own life as well as those around them. Even if someone doesn't smoke, chances are he or she knows someone who does. According to Nurse Ball, "Since everyone has a heart worth saving, this is a program all students can relate to."

UC students can sign up to participate from February 5 to February 12. There is no cost involved and everyone who participates will receive a Valentine's Day treat.

Mr. Reagan Adapts to New Role

Nikol Jean

MR. REAGAN, JR., THE NEWLY APPOINTED ASSISTANT principal, feels that he is adjusting well to his new role. "There are always different challenges that occur that make it fun to come to work," said Mr. Reagan. "I don't even consider it work." He likes to deal with teenagers and his position allows him to do that everyday. He believes he has been given the opportunity to make a difference in students' lives.

"Mr. Reagan is a nice teacher and he's doing a great job as assistant principal," said Karilyn Serina '07. Mr. Reagan's constant presence in the halls of Union Catholic creates a positive influence on the student body as a whole. As UC steadily changes, Mr. Reagan feels that he is well prepared to face those changes. "We're constantly looking to improve as a school everyday," he said. "We're looking to become a better community, a better society."

Save-a-Sweetheart Week

Megan Stahlberg

FROM FEBRUARY 9 TO FEBRUARY 13, UNION CATHOLIC celebrates "Save-a-Sweetheart Week." The program encourages people, and students in particular, not to smoke. Its primary goal is to have non-smoking students pledge to be smoke free this year. Students who do smoke pledge to refrain from tobacco products on February 13, Save-a-Sweetheart Day.

Bowling Strikes It Big

Liz Colombo

BOWLING HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL sports teams at Union Catholic. With a record of 7-1-2, the keglers are second in the Mountain Valley Conference and are ranked tenth in Union County. Team coach Mr. Butchko is "very pleased. We've done excellently this year."



The team has overcome several obstacles. It lost six of its starters from last year, while five members of the team had never bowled in high school before. This year's team includes only one senior, which means that the team should have a bright future.

The team members are very happy about their performance. "We've done really great this year," said Judy

Adan '05. "I'm really proud of everyone on the team." Mr. Butchko "couldn't be happier" with the team. "They're a great group," he said.

Linkin Park at Nassau

Laura Mortkowitz

LINKIN PARK PLAYED THE STAGE AT NASSAU COLISEUM on Sunday, January 18, like concert veterans. They managed to run side to side without colliding and re-created the exact sounds heard on their records. The band even brought out a breakdancer for their song "Nobody's Listening."

The set started out with lead singer Chester Bennington singing a version of "Something I Can Never Have" by Nine Inch Nails and quickly charged into "With You," along with favorites "Somewhere I Belong" and "Run-away." Rapper Mike Shinoda played his guitar for several songs and the piano for "Breaking the Habit," "Numb," and "Place for My Head." He

even sang during the version of "Pushing Me Away" off the band's *Reanimation* album.

Bennington pulled out his own guitar for "It's Goin' Down," a track recorded for one of the X-ecutioners' albums.

Proving that they are about their fans, Shinoda recognized a fan in the front asking, "What's this, like your fifteenth or seventeenth show?" During the song "Faint," he invited an audience member up on stage to play the guitar.

Expressions Wins Another Award

Liz Colombo

UNION CATHOLIC'S LITERARY MAGAZINE, *EXPRESSIONS*, recently was honored again in a national competition. It received first place in the annual magazine competition sponsored by the American Scholastic Press Association. According to the judges, *Expressions* reflected "a tremendous amount of time, energy and talent" by everyone affiliated with the magazine.

The magazine was judged in many areas, including content coverage, organization, design, presentation, and creativity, scoring a 910 out of a possible 1000 points. *Expressions* also received a "first place with special merit" due to its high score.

This year, there are four student editors in addition to Mr. Leib, who is the moderator. Lauren Moore '04, Cheryl Ritter '05, and Ewa Hausbrandt '05 are the editors-in-chief. Elyssa DiGiovanni '05 is the art editor. Their goal for this year, according to Ritter, is to "keep improving *Expressions* to make it even better. We want to print the best pieces in the school."

However hard the editors work, the only way that *Expressions* can be successful is if students submit. "People really should give us submissions," said Hausbrandt. "Right now, we don't have very many at all." *Expressions* accepts student-produced writing as well as artwork of any sort, including painting, photography, drawings, and sculpture. Those interested in submitting writing or artwork should see Mr. Leib in room 206.

 THE ARTS 

Performing Arts Company to Present Pippin

Pamela Seiple

THE UNION CATHOLIC PERFORMING ARTS COMPANY will present *Pippin*, this year's annual spring musical, on March 26 and 27, and April 2 and 3 at 8:00 P.M. as well as a matinee performance March 29 at 3:00 P.M. Tickets for the show go on sale in early March and cost \$10 for standard



admission and \$8 for students and senior citizens.

Pippin was first presented on October 23, 1972, by Stuart Ostrow at the Imperial Theatre in New York City. In the play, Pippin (Andrew Timmes

'05), the son of King Charlemagne (Joe Torella '04), feels as if he doesn't quite fit in. He sets out on a quest to find a place in life where he will feel complete. Throughout his journey, he turns to such things as religion, power, sex, and ordinariness in hopes that he will find the answer to his question, "Where do I belong?" Meanwhile, Leading Player (Eddie Hernandez '04), who narrates the story, and the other players have their own ideas of what Pippin has to do. When Pippin feels that he has failed at practically everything, he is driven to a shocking finale.

Other leading roles include Catherine

(Nathalie Cortés '04), Lewis (Brian DeOliveira '05), and Berthe (Lauren Maseda '05). "The audience will really enjoy *Pippin* because it's different," noted Cortés. "It's not the same as the classic musicals Union Catholic tends to do. It has a more rock, jazzy feel, and it's a great dance show. It's all about entertainment, and for the most part it caters to the audience, so everyone feels as if he or she is a part of the show."

The cast has been rehearsing about four times a week since December, sometimes putting in as many as five hours on weekend rehearsals. "*Pippin* is a much more challenging show to put together than last year's musical, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*," said Timmes, "but we have a very talented cast and a great ensemble, so none of us has any doubt that we can pull it off successfully."



English teacher Mrs. Carolan, who has been directing UC's musicals since 1988, said, "Because *Pippin* is a challenging show to direct, it's necessary to have an incredible staff to help form a vision and make it a reality. It's also been great to have a cast of actors who are trusting and willing to try almost anything in the name of art." Assisting Mrs. Carolan with this year's production are math teacher Mrs. Doherty (assistant director), religion teacher Miss Eger (choreographer), English teacher Mr. Addison (assistant technical director), Leonard Tate '04 (stage manager), and Kim Scutieri '04 (head of costume crew).

