



THE PROPHET

UNION CATHOLIC REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

OCTOBER 29,
2004

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Calendar

- November 2**
School closed
- November 3**
Open House
- November 5**
School closed
Fools, 8 PM,
Auditorium
- November 6**
Fools, 8 PM,
Auditorium
- November 11**
Sophomore
Olympics
Early dismissal
- November 12**
Club period

Ch-ch-changes Come to UC

Liz Colombo, Nicole Desiato, Jasmine Marshall, and Kate Primich

UNION CATHOLIC STUDENTS DISCOVERED many changes upon their return in September: hallways switched, lockers replaced, exams shaken up, dress codes made stricter, and summer reading radically different. (The parking lot changed, too; see article on page 3.)

Lockers

The administration switched the sophomore and junior hallways, moving the juniors downstairs and the sophomores upstairs. Mrs. Doherty, junior wing supervisor for the



Old lockers

last four years, spent her summer "moving every single piece of my old room downstairs to my new room, including the bookcases and students' desks" in order to remain with the juniors in their new hallway. Mr.



New lockers

Cahill, the new sophomore wing supervisor, filled in as junior wing supervisor last year when Mrs. Doherty took maternity leave. "Sophomores are different," said Mr. Cahill. "They are a little more excited and they're still feeling their way around the school."

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UC Welcomes Middle States

Stefanie Messercola

THE MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF Secondary Schools arrived at Union Catholic on October 19. Over the course of two-and-one-half days, a team of professional educators from New Jersey and New York sat in on classes, walked the halls, and struck up conversations with students to evaluate the school. Brother Michael McAward, S.M., former principal of Chaminade High School in Long Island, led the seven-member committee. According to the Middle States website, accreditation is "the

affirmation that a school provides the quality education that the community has a right to expect and the education world endorses."

Middle States evaluation occurs once every ten years. For the past eighteen months, members of the UC faculty and staff have been preparing for this important visit. Assistant Principal for Academics Mrs. Andrews and Humanities Department Chairperson Mrs. Dellanno have overseen most of the planning.

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Introducing the New Propheteers

Amanda Parker

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF LAURA MORTKOWITZ '05, ALONG WITH RETURNING STAFF MEMBERS LIZ COLOMBO '05, Nicole Desiato '06, Jasmine Marshall '05, Katelyn Primich '06, and Megan Stahlberg '05, welcomes a lively new group of striving journalists to *The Prophet*. These new faces include those of Amanda Arciero '06, Sara Backof '05, Kaitlin Butler '07, Lee Comeau '07, Toni Anne Corsi '05, Kristin Davie '05, Jill Hernandez '07, Ashley Martin '05, April McKee '05, Stefanie Messercola '05, Amanda Parker '07, Karen Rivera '05, Merissa Rose '05, Marisol Ruiz '06, Nicole Straffi '05, Ryan Wallace '05, and Ally Walls '06.

Until two years ago, the journalism course was strictly for seniors and a few select juniors. Mortkowitz was the first and, at that time, only sophomore to enter the class. "It was a scheduling mistake," said journalism teacher Mr. Leib, "and it worked out wonderfully."

Mortkowitz was supposed to be taking a publishing course, which for the first semester would outline journalism layout. The second semester would be the journalism course itself. However, not enough students elected to take the publishing course, which automatically placed Mortkowitz into Journalism I right away. "It was a nice surprise," Mortkowitz recalled. "I was very happy."

After one year of experience, Mortkowitz became Assistant Editor, and this year became Editor-in-Chief. Stahlberg joined Mortkowitz as her Assistant Editor. "I just want the paper to be better than the previous year," Mortkowitz said. "I'd like for everything to be more organized than it's been."

Since Mortkowitz' accidental admission to the journalism course, Mr. Leib has allowed a few sophomores into the class based on her success. Though feeling nervous and slightly pressured, the four sophomores working on *The Prophet* this year are eagerly looking forward to a great year. "This is a nifty course," said Butler. "It's great to be in this course as a sophomore because I can start earlier and take it longer." And, Butler added, "It's great to know the news before everyone else does!" Comeau named the journalism course as one of her favorite classes this year, one that gives her a chance to get a feel for the profession. "Taking this course will help me decide whether I want to be a journalist or not."

"One thing we always want to do is produce a better paper than the previous year," said Mr. Leib, who hopes to improve the consistency of distribution. Mr. Leib has set a goal of delivering at least one issue per month. Last year, *The Prophet* released a total of nine issues.

***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 may 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.

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

Editor-in-chief: Laura Mortkowitz

News Editor: Megan Stahlberg

Features Editor: Liz Colombo

Amanda Arciero	April McKee
Sara Backof	Stefanie Messercola
Kaitlin Butler	Amanda Parker
Lee Comeau	Katelyn Primich
Toni Anne Corsi	Karen Rivera
Kristin Davie	Merissa Rose
Nicole Desiato	Marisol Ruiz
Jillian Hernandez	Nicole Straffi
Jasmine Marshall	Ryan Wallace
Ashley Martin	Ally Walls

Faculty Advisor: Mr. Philip Leib

UC Student Parking Lot Gets a New Look

Kristin Davie

STUDENT DRIVERS ARRIVING ON THE FIRST DAY of school noticed the newly repaired student parking lot. The lot, adjacent to the auditorium, was paved in July. Painting the lines and numbers took place in August. Transportation Director Mr. Venezia, however, admits the rear of the parking lot still needs to be completed, adding that funding is currently in the works.

Another innovation in student parking, the recently implemented numbered parking spaces, surprised some student drivers. Mrs. Farrell, Coordinator of Student Affairs, and Mr. Venezia agreed that the numbered parking spaces were much more efficient. The approximately 100 numbered parking spaces in the student lot represent a slightly larger number than the average number of junior and senior student drivers last year. Students must park in their assigned numbered spaces. Students who have not registered their cars may do so at Student Affairs.

Some students have complained about the distance from their respective cars to the school, but Mr. Venezia says that the longest distance is approximately 150 feet, "less than that of a corridor in school." Mrs. Farrell adds that spaces were assigned "in the exact order in which I received permit applications," saying that "it's impossible to do it any other way fairly."

After registering their cars in Student Affairs, students received parking permit hang tags. The tags are placed on the rear-view mirror of each student's car every morning to assure that his or her car has been registered with the school and is parked in the correct space. Mr. Venezia says that "the advantage to the hangtag is that the number identifies the student." The numerical parking allows the school to locate and notify the student driver much quicker in case of a problem.

The \$15 fee charged to register last year was raised to \$25 this year, to the dismay of some students. "We already pay about \$7,000 a year in tuition," said Tommy Mintel '05. "I would assume the \$25 registration fee would be included." Megan Conheeny '05 wondered, "Where is the money going to?" According to Mr. Venezia, the price rise covers overhead fees such as the cost of the permits, the striping and numbering of the parking lot this past summer, and the guarantee that students will always have their own parking space when they arrive at school.

Other schools also charge students to register their cars. St. Joseph's High School in Metuchen charges \$8 per student; Colonia High School and Bishop George Ahr High School in Edison charge \$5. At other schools, like Mother Seton High School in Clark and J.P. Stevens High School in Edison, parking is free. Mr. Venezia pointed out that some schools, such as Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, have no student parking.

Morris Catholic High School in Denville forces students to pay a \$75 registration fee for their cars.

In the senior class meeting held on September 21, Vice Principal Mr. Reagan addressed concerns about the parking lot dismissal procedure following school. Student drivers must wait until all of the buses leave before they may. "I have a job to get to after school, sometimes as early as 3," Dana Kinney '05 said, "and it's inconvenient to have to wait until the buses have left. I might be late." With 24 buses to stage, there is no way for drivers to see onto Martine Avenue, creating dangerous blind spots. Mr. Venezia adds that the buses must leave at 2:30, because they have students from other schools to transport. The wait, "primarily a safety concern," has been taken for the students' protection.



Be Prepared for The New SAT

Ally Walls

BEGINNING IN MARCH 2005, THE COLLEGE Board will administer a new version of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Members of the class of 2006 will be the first to take the new test. Several changes have been made to the SAT, including the elimination of analogies and quantitative comparisons, and the addition of more challenging math problems, as well as an entire new section pertaining to writing skills. The highest cumulative score will be 2400 instead of 1600.

The College Board feels that the new SAT will more closely align with the typical high school curriculum. The new version theoretically assesses what students know already, whereas the old SAT supposedly determined what a student's potential was for his or her freshman year of college.

The writing section will consist of a twenty-five minute section with thirty-five multiple-choice questions and a ten minute section with fourteen multiple-choice questions, which together will count for 70% of the writing score. These questions include twenty-five sentence improvement questions, eighteen sentence error questions, and six paragraph improvement questions. A twenty-five minute section for a free-response essay that begins the test counts for 30% of the writing score.

Typical essay questions ask the student to take a position on a particular issue. "The free response section adds another dimension for looking at a student," said Dr. Jakubik, the new junior guidance counselor "The College Board wants to see how a student uses the English language to express him- or herself."

Each essay will be scored by two high school or college teachers on a rubric of one to six. A one indicates a very undeveloped idea with several grammatical errors; a six indicates a well developed essay with

minimal grammatical errors. Both scores will be added together to determine the student's final score on the essay section.

Some students question the need for an essay on the SAT, since college applications require admission essays. "I don't see what the point is since you have to write a million admissions essays already anyway," commented Ashley Meyn '06. However, the twenty-five minute section allows colleges to see how effectively students can formulate their essays in a limited amount of time, whereas there is an unlimited amount of time, as well as access to professional assistance, for admissions applications essays. "More and more students are not writing their own admissions essays," noted Dr. Jakubik. "I think that is one of the key reasons that the College Board feels it is necessary to add the writing section."

Some colleges may choose to use the essays for admissions purposes, while some will use the essays for placement in freshman writing composition classes. However, the majority of schools will probably use the results for research. Once there are sufficient statistics pertaining to the success of students on the writing section it will be used for admissions purposes.

"Colleges will have to take into consideration the fact that this is the first year students will take the new SAT," stated English teacher Mr. Leib, who has extensive experience as an SAT tutor. "Your score isn't being compared to a set score out of 2400; it's being compared to the other students that the college admissions office has to choose among."

With so much attention being paid to the new writing section, most students seem uninformed about the changes made concerning math. The old SAT contained problems mainly in geometry and first-year algebra. Now, there will be a stronger focus on second-year algebra problems. "The new algebra problems will make the math section more challenging," said Ms. Mackenzie, Math Department Chairperson. "The main focus will be on functions, since they are such a big part of algebra II."

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Back-to-School Mass

Toni Anne Corsi

ON SEPTEMBER 15, UNION CATHOLIC HELD ITS Back-to-School and September 11 Memorial Mass. This year, the new Campus Ministry Director, Mrs. Schurtz, organized the Mass along with the peer ministers. Father Philip Latronico and Deacon Lynch provided both students and faculty with a memorable Mass.

The theme of the Mass focused on the

tragic events of September 11, 2001, and the beginning of the new school year. Father Philip captivated both the students and

faculty by creatively making them part of the Mass. Led by Father Philip, students gave a blessing to the teachers, and teachers reciprocated for the students. This was the freshman class's first Mass at UC, the last "first Mass" for seniors, and a very moving and uplifting Mass for all. "The Mass was better than any other I have gone to," said Walter Avans '08. "For having so little preparation time, it truly went well," said Elyssa Di Giovanni '05.

Much preparation went into the Mass, with plenty of student input. Peer ministers held discussions over the summer, reviewing all the possibilities. They chose all the music for the Mass, among other necessary preparations. Mr. Frio, UC's new music teacher, "reinvented" the music ministry. Students volunteered to read and present the gifts during the Mass.

Selecting a priest proved to be difficult because of numerous scheduling conflicts. Finally, Mrs. Thornton, Director of Institutional Advancement, asked Father Philip, a priest at St. John the Apostle in Linden, knowing he worked well with teens. According to Mrs. Schurtz, Father Philip was "brought to Union Catholic by God."

The Mass was the first with Mrs. Schurtz as Campus Ministry Director. "It went well because of the peer ministers. There is a

sense of what they wanted to see," she said. "The liturgy came alive."

"Father Philip held people's interest and touched hearts," said Deacon Lynch. "His message was based on Scripture and still allowed students to understand and enjoy it. Father Philip's humor was very appropriate." The homily proved to be very powerful. "Father Philip showed that he understood the challenges and

difficulties of Christian teenagers," Mrs. Schurtz said. "He educated everyone." The incorporation of students and faculty into the Mass created a sense of community. "It was a lot more interesting than previous Masses," said Danielle Cooley '05.

"I liked how the priest separated each of the classes." Father Philip really kept his audience with his homily, especially when telling a powerful story about his experience with 9/11.

Peer Ministry's goal for the future is to enliven the Masses, so students look forward to attending. A liturgical Mass, including guitars and the gospel choir, is among the goals.

Deacon Lynch has blessed UC with his arrival. He became a deacon after having been turned away three times from the diaconate over a 20-year period and was ordained on June 1, 2002, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark.

Deacons are members of the clergy. There are traditional and permanent deacons. The sacrament is given to men, 35 or older; many are married. They have three characteristics: the Eucharist, prayer, and charity. Deacons can give assistance at Mass, proclaim the word of God, and be a minister of the cup. A deacon lives a life of prayer and is an example to the community. In emergencies, a deacon can serve in the place of a priest, administer baptism, and even witness weddings.



Ch-ch-changes

(continued from page 1)

The hallways were changed to give the juniors new lockers. Last November, UC replaced the lockers in the senior wing with wider, roomier new ones. This year, the school replaced the old lockers for the juniors as well. "They're great," said Tori Derez '06. "They're so much bigger, and all my books finally fit." However, according to Amy Dooley '06, "The lockers still aren't wide enough, and my laptop case gets caught on the sides."

Dress Code

Assistant Principal Mr. Reagan instituted changes to the dress code after consulting with groups of students and teachers. Students must wear shoes that are solid black or brown. Girls are no longer allowed to wear hair ties or rubber bands on their wrists, and some students have been disciplined for wearing yellow rubber "Live Strong" bracelets that support cancer research. "Our students still have a lot of choices," according to Mr. Reagan. Math teacher Ms. Berlingheri, who has taught at UC for nine years, believes enforcement of the dress code has been relaxed for the past three to four years. She agrees with the new rules, saying that the biggest violation for girls is the indecent skirt lengths, while the boys are generally sloppy. "If guys would just come with ironed shirts and dark socks, they would be babe magnets," she said.



Mrs. Carolan evaluates student dress: the good (left) and the not-so-good (right).

Summer Reading

In previous years, students were required to keep reading journals for assigned summer books. According to the directions for summer journals on the UC website, "Reading journals provide a place for you to interact with the author and world he/she has created. This interaction makes you an active reader." This year, students were required to do a creative project. "Writing is important, but students need to use their creativity as well," said Humanities Department Chairperson Mrs. Dellanno. The projects gave students the opportunity to use their creativity in an advertisement, computer program, painting, video, collage, game, or any of a wide variety of projects. "We wanted to make summer reading more fun," added Mrs. Dellanno. "[The English Department] decided to try creative projects." However, most students saw creative projects as a hassle that did not show comprehension of the book as well as journals did. "The journals showed that we had read the book," said Ashley Meyn '06, "while the projects were just busy work that could have been done by reading the back cover of the book." Erin Hughes '07 disagreed. "I like the projects, because we were able to show what we did, and the journals are really boring."

Exams

UC's policy on exams has undergone extensive changes this year. All students will be required to take midterms but they may be exempted from finals at the teacher's discretion. "After speaking with some recent graduates, we thought it would be better to allow exemptions from finals," said Mr. Reagan, "since it's so hot in school around that time and no one really wants to be here anyway. Graduates need a little more preparation in test taking, so making the midterms a requirement seemed

like a good idea to us and the students." In previous years, exemption from midterms was not unusual, but exemption from finals was usually a senior privilege. "I don't like the new rules for midterms at all!" said Danielle Cooley '05. "My goal was to take no exams this year and I think that people aren't going to strive to do their best if getting an A doesn't exempt them from midterms. It's definitely not fair for seniors especially since the previous classes had the privilege of being exempt from both exams. I don't think underclassmen should be exempt from finals because it doesn't leave much significance between the seniors and underclassmen now." "Exemption from finals makes the students work harder until finals instead of giving up after midterms," said English teacher Mrs. Carolan. "Change is good!"

"I think its better to be exempt from midterms and HAVE to take finals," said Jessica Madden '07, "because then at the end of the year, finals will prove what you actually learned during the course of the year." Despite the changes, the schedule remains the same. Monday periods 1 and 2 will be the first midterms taken, then Monday 3 and 4 the following day, Monday 5 and 6 the third day and Tuesday 5 the last day. Midterms begin at 8:15 and end at 11:30, with a 15 minute break between exams for students to retrieve materials needed for the next exam or to take care of necessities.

Middle States

(continued from page 1)

"I was asked about two years ago to work on this project and I'm really looking forward to the school visit," Mrs. Andrews said. "I am excited to see the school at its best, and I am certain we will receive a stamp of approval from the association." Joining Mrs. Andrews and Mrs. Dellanno were Mrs. Thornton, Director of Institutional Advancement, and Mrs. Palenik, Coordinator of Special Events and Market-

ing, who oversaw hospitality for the committee.

During the committee's visit, a randomly chosen group of about twenty students was given passes to meet with the committee in the library. This meeting allowed the committee to better understand UC from the students' point of view. Students were asked to share their thoughts and opinions on the school.

Getting re-accredited by the commission is critical to UC's future. The state of New Jersey does not recognize diplomas issued by unaccredited high schools, nor do most colleges and universities. For that reason, many prospective students and their families view accreditation as a critical requirement when choosing a high school. Middle States accreditation lets everyone know that the school meets all the requirements for a well-functioning school.

The Middle States committee members do not focus on one specific area, nor were they here to criticize. Instead, they evaluated the school for positive attributes and offered suggestions for improvement. UC's philosophy, goals, community, programs, and facility were all taken into consideration.

With thirty years' experience at UC, art teacher Mr. Merola has experienced Middle States evaluation several times. "The process is much easier and more efficient than it was years ago, in my opinion," he said. One reason for this, according to Mrs. Dellanno, is that "when we began the self-study required by Middle States, we were able to use much of the work that we had already done as part of UC's Long-Range Strategic Planning." Committee members received a copy of the self-study report before their arrival.

UC Welcomes Thirteen New Faculty Members

Karen Rivera and April McKee

THIS YEAR, THIRTEEN NEW FACULTY MEMBERS JOINED THE UNION CATHOLIC COMMUNITY. THE DIVERSITY IS CLEARER THAN EVER AS THE COMMUNITY WELCOMED MORE MEMBERS THAN USUAL.

Mrs. Caffrey teaches current events, writing and study skills. She received her bachelor's degree in political science and history from Kean University. For three years before coming to UC, she was a "stay-at-home" mom for her daughter Kennedy. "I chose to work at UC because of its close proximity and because the Catholic aspect of education is interesting," she said. Originally from Rahway and now a Woodbridge resident, Mrs. Caffrey is an avid reader and a very big fan of baseball and the Mets.

Mrs. Dixon, the remedial guidance counselor, is one of two new counselors this year. She graduated from Rowan University with a master's degree in psychology. Prior to coming to UC, Mrs. Dixon, who currently lives in Metuchen, worked at an ophthalmologist's office while in graduate school and worked as an addiction counselor. Mrs. Dixon chose to come to UC because she liked the fact that it was regional, so she would work with a small but diverse group of students.

Mr. Elmera, formerly a teen center director in Morristown, teaches social studies. He graduated from Caldwell College with a bachelor's degree in social studies and currently resides in Fairlawn. A Catholic high school alumnus, Mr. Elmera thought that working at UC would be a good start because "it is a secure and stable environment" and he is familiar with the Catholic education system. Outside of school, Mr. Elmera enjoys surfing the Internet, traveling, and sports, including basketball, football, and golf. The best thing about being a teacher, according to Mr. Elmera, is that "you never know what to expect."

Mr. Fay teaches in the math department,

specializing in algebra. He began teaching in 1974 and spent six years at UC, starting in 1976. In 1982, he went to work for AT&T, where he remained for twenty-one years. He received his bachelor's degree from Seton Hall University in biology and math education. He has a master's degree from Stevens Institute of Technology in engineering.

Mrs. Frey teaches English. She worked for thirteen years at Stevens Institute of Technology as the Director of Career Services, preparing seniors for interviews and helping write résumés. Mrs. Frey received her bachelor's degree from Fairleigh Dickinson University and her master's degree from Rutgers University, both in human resources and management. She has two sons, Spencer, 11, and Connor, 5.

Mr. Frio is the new instrumental music teacher. He worked as a music teacher for three years at St. Joseph the Carpenter School in Roselle and as pianist and assistant choir director at Cranford High School before coming to UC. "I love the sense of community that Union Catholic has and the kids in the music program have a lot of potential," he said. He studied biology for three years at the University of Arizona before switching to music, which he has studied intensely since the age of four. A New Jersey native, he returned to study at William Paterson University and received his bachelor's degree in music composition and fine arts. His primary instrument is the keyboard and he composes his own music. Mr. Frio has performed all over the world and compiled three albums. When he's not working or jamming, he enjoys working on his house in Linden, gardening and fixing things. His current band, Daddy Pop, plays gigs regularly.

Dr. Jakubik, the new junior guidance counselor, attended Seton Hall University, received his master's degree in counseling from Rutgers University, and his doctorate in counseling from St. John's University. Before coming to UC, Dr. Jakubik was the director of guidance in Westfield. After twenty-six years in school administration, he came to UC so that he could work directly with students. A resident of Scotch Plains for twenty-five years, Dr. Jakubik enjoys traveling and spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren. He feels the best thing about UC so far is helping the students with their concerns and seeing results.

Deacon Lynch, UC's newest science teacher, went to Bloomfield College where he received a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in biology. After graduation, Deacon Lynch worked for 35 years as the principal trainer at Merck & Co. Upon retirement, he decided to pursue his goal of becoming a teacher. Now, Deacon Lynch, a Fanwood resident for thirty years, teaches freshmen biology and first year chemistry. His primary interest, outside of school, is his ministry work. He is assigned to St. Helen's in Westfield and administers sacraments, including baptism, marriage and the Eucharist. Deacon Lynch also likes to garden and read books by his favorite author, Mary Higgins Clark.

Mr. Marino teaches religion. He graduated with a degree in English from Mary Washington College in 2000, a classmate of Assistant Principal Mr. Reagan. He planned to become a lawyer but, after teaching CCD and volunteering with a youth group at St. Bartholomew's, decided that he enjoyed teaching more. In his spare time, Mr. Marino, who lives in Fanwood, writes for the *Fanwood Times* and the *Westfield Leader*. He also plans to become a contributor to *The Prophet*.

Mrs. Mullin, the new biology teacher, taught for three years at Aquinas Academy in Livingston. She received her bachelor's

degree in family studies from the University of Maryland. A serious athlete, Mrs. Mullin plays tennis and volleyball and is a fan of hockey and baseball. "My father was a football coach while I was growing up so I was always interested in sports," she noted. Mrs. Mullin lives in Chatham.

Miss Patricia Nuwer teaches Spanish I. A UC alumna, she studied at the College of St. Elizabeth and received her bachelor's degree in Spanish. "I really enjoyed learning Spanish here at UC, especially with such great teachers like Señor Zehnle and Mrs. McHugh," she explained. Her older sister, Miss Meg Nuwer, also teaches here. Miss Nuwer currently lives in New Providence.

Mr. Ryan, better known as Coach, started teaching at UC in the middle of last year. He attended Rutgers University and received his master's from Kean University in health/physical education. Mr. Ryan, who resides in Piscataway, currently teaches health, physical education, and drivers education at UC. After school, he is most likely to be found outside coaching JV girls soccer in the fall or varsity softball in the spring. Although he enjoys teaching at UC "because it is a good atmosphere, academically and athletically," Mr. Ryan says that his favorite thing at UC is the sports program.

Mrs. Tomshe teaches U.S. history and world studies. Before she came to UC, she was a social studies teacher at Aquinas Academy. She taught for five years prior to coming to UC. "I wanted to make the jump to high school because the teaching material is more interesting and the older kids get my jokes," she said. She double majored in history and political science at Rutgers University and received her master's degree from St. Peter's University. In addition to living in New Jersey and California for prolonged periods of time, she has also spent significant time in Europe, specifically Belgium and Greece.

Everybody Out of the Box

Megan Stahlberg

ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, OVER 200 FRESHMEN experienced another Union Catholic tradition—the annual “Out-of-Box Night”



Mrs. Doherty (left) and Miss Piasecki (right).

when new students receive their laptops. The large class, divided into two sessions, arrived at 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM.

This year’s computer, the IBM ThinkPad R51, has a much faster processor than previous models. The freshmen also

received laptop cases with a totally new design. Assistant Principal for Technology Miss Piasecki said, “Out-of-Box Night is my favorite time of the year. It’s as exciting for the students as it is for the school.”



Miss Piasecki discussed the evening’s special attraction, a visit from the IBM bus. The students were invited to walk through the bus to see new IBM products first-hand and receive free IBM giveaways. As always, the UC students were enth-



siastic about receiving their new laptops for a variety of reasons. James Harbison ‘08 joked, “I’m excited because now I won’t have to pay attention in class.” Garrett Ellis ‘08 was happy about receiving his laptop because “it will make taking notes in classes easier.”

Fresh Faces in Class of ‘08

Sara Backof

THE HALLS OF UNION CATHOLIC ARE FILLED with the fresh faces of the Class of 2008. UC enrolled 220 ninth graders this year, similar to the 226 enrolled in the Class of 2007 and continuing the trend of larger classes started with the Class of 2006.

In addition to having the same graduation year, they have one other thing in common—change. The transition from middle school to high school is the scariest experience of adolescence.

“I never took a bus to school before,” stated Angelica Glover ‘08. “I have to wake up at about 5 AM just to get ready, and sometimes the bus isn’t even there.”

The multicultural atmosphere of Union Catholic excites Glover, as does the opportunity to learn about the differences of her fellow classmates. “I’m also looking forward to using the laptops. I mean, I’ve used one before, but just not in school.” Nicole Johnson ‘08 said, “I came to this school because of the laptop program and cheerleading.”

All upperclassmen agree that freshman year isn’t all about computer games and activities. It is also about making huge adjustments. “The hallways are the biggest problem for me. It takes me way too long to get to class!” Bobby Jacques ‘08 noted. “My old school, St. Michael’s [Cranford], was smaller. It was still two floors, but it wasn’t so long.” “My biggest problem was my locker,” Johnson said, “because I’ve never had a locker before. I lost my combination the first day!”

Fools Takes the Stage

Jillian Hernandez

THE UNION CATHOLIC PERFORMING ARTS Company (UCPAC) will be presenting *Fools—A Comic Fable* by Neil Simon as the annual fall play on Friday, November 5 and Saturday, November 6 at 8:00 PM. The cast, under the direction of Mrs. Addison, includes Kaz Filus '06, Vinny Napolitano '05, Victoria Spellman '06, Jillian Hernandez '07, Ed Sagendorf '07, Alex Johnson '06, Katie McGhee '06, Allie Slomko '06, John Rotondo '07, and Dave King '06.

Set in the fictitious Russian village of Kulyenchikov circa 1890, *Fools* concerns a curse placed on the inhabitants, plaguing them and all of their descendents with chronic stupidity. In their desperation to lift the curse, they hire a young school teacher, Leon Tolchinsky, to attempt to educate them. What they fail to tell him is that if he cannot lift the curse in twenty-four hours, he too will fall victim to the spell.

UC's first fall play, *Barefoot in the Park*, was presented two years ago, followed last autumn by *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Mrs. Addison chose *Fools* from about a dozen scripts for its entertainment value. It is ridiculously harebrained and filled with ob-



vious humor and absurdity. "I think *Fools* appeals more to people our age than *Arsenic* did," said Johnson, who plays the role of Slovich. "But I hope that *Fools* is as liked and successful as *Arsenic* was."

The auditions for the show were very competitive, and the challenges at the call-back auditions were equally fierce. Mrs. Addison confessed that she made a lot of tough choices when constructing the final cast list due to the number of talented students in the running. "When you're casting

for a show, you have a certain vision," said Mrs. Addison. "You have ideas about how the characters should look, speak, and act. With *Fools*, there were different directions we could have gone with each of them. During the auditions, we tried to match different people with each character and make sure

that we were fair to everyone. In the end, you just know when it's right. The great thing about *Fools* is that it's a simple show, which allows for more leeway when developing the characters."

Tickets for the show are \$6 for students and senior citizens, \$8 for adults.

21 Students Transfer to UC

Nicole Straffi

TWENTY-ONE STUDENTS TRANSFERRED TO Union Catholic for the 2004–2005 school year, including fifteen new sophomores, five new juniors, and one new senior. Although a slight decrease from last year, this year's transfers represent a larger than normal contingent.

"Sophomore year is definitely the biggest year to transfer," said Mrs. Thornton, Head of Admissions. "Students attend a high school and realize it's not the 'right fit' for them." Most transfers take place

over the summer. The students go through an interview process with Mrs. McCoid, Assistant Principal for Student Services.

Christy Denny '06, who transferred from Cranford High School, noted, "It's a nicer environment." "My classes are much better here," said Joe Fortunato '07, who transferred from Rahway High School, "I'm a lot happier here." Heather Christy '07, who transferred from Mount Saint Mary High School, said, "Everyone here is nice, the environment is great, and I just love it."

The Prophet *Guide to the Election*

Liz Colombo and Kate Primich

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WILL BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 2, AFTER AN INTENSE RACE THAT HAS helped polarize the nation. *The Prophet* presents, free of charge, an explanation of where the two major candidates stand on some of the more important issues affecting the nation.

Candidate	President George W. Bush (R-Tex.)	Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.)
Running Mate	Vice President Dick Cheney (R-Wyo.)	Senator John Edwards (D-N.C.)
The War on Terror	Plans to fight the terrorists wherever they may be, and supports the idea of pre-emptive war. Also plans to oppose spread of weapons of mass destruction.	Plans to use U.S. forces more effectively by deploying forces in strategic locations around the world. Plans to enlist global allies in the war on terror to help us share the burden in Iraq and around the world. Also plans to lessen the U.S. dependence on foreign oil.
Homeland Security	Plans to improve U.S. intelligence-gathering capabilities by establishing a National Intelligence Director who will oversee all aspects of the U.S. intelligence system.	Plans to secure U.S. borders by tightening security at ports and airports, tighten security at nuclear plants and train and subway stations. Also wants to protect American civil liberties.
Abortion	Is opposed to abortion, and has worked to outlaw certain types.	Thinks that abortion should be safe, rare, and legal.
Gay Marriage	Supports the Federal Marriage Amendment, which would amend the constitution to outlaw gay marriages in all of the states. However, believes states should be able to recognize domestic partnerships.	Believes that marriage is between a man and woman, but thinks that domestic partnerships should be recognized.
Economy	Supports tax reform to make it easier for people to understand the tax code. Also plans to continue providing tax breaks to some groups. and help small businesses.	Wants to give a tax cut to middle and lower class Americans, and raise taxes on the upper class. Also plans to cut the U.S. budget deficit.
Education	Plans to provide more job training to help U.S. workers compete in a global market. Also plans to strengthen Head Start programs to help students become literate quicker.	Plans to offer a \$4000 tax credit for college education for each year of college. Also plans to increase funding for after-school programs to help younger students learn better.

UC Mock Election Results

THE HISTORY CLUB CONDUCTED A MOCK PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON OCTOBER 26 FOR UNION Catholic students and faculty. The results:

	Freshman	Sophomore	Juniors	Seniors	Faculty	Totals
Bush	91 (44%)	80 (38%)	110 (55%)	58 (39%)	34 (55%)	373 (45%)
Kerry	94 (45%)	89 (43%)	62 (31%)	75 (50%)	25 (40%)	345 (42%)
Nader	22 (11%)	37 (18%)	24 (12%)	14 (10%)	2 (3%)	99 (12%)
Other	—	1 (1%)	5 (5%)	2 (1%)	1 (2%)	9 (1%)
Total	207	207	201	149	62	826

Mrs. Caffrey, moderator of the History Club, noted that the split results (three out of four classes for Senator Kerry but an overall plurality for President Bush) mirrors one possible outcome of the real presidential balloting. "With the electoral college system, the candidate who wins the most states or most popular votes does not necessarily win the election."

Two write-in votes particularly caught Mrs. Caffrey's eye. "To the person who wrote in Bill Clinton, you need to come see me for a discussion of the twenty-second amendment to the Constitution. But my favorite presidential ballot was the one cast for Chocolate. Now that's a candidate we can all support."



The Facts Behind Every Chocoholic's Favorite Holiday

Liz Colombo

EVERY YEAR, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE CELEBRATE the holiday of Halloween by dressing up, eating candy, and going to parties. Nearly everyone has celebrated Halloween in some form or another. However, there are many facts about Halloween that the average person does not know.

- ❑ 65% of Americans decorate their homes and offices for Halloween, exceeded only by the percentage of Americans who decorate their homes and offices for Christmas.
- ❑ Halloween is the holiday when the most candy is sold; Americans spend \$21 million on Halloween candy every year.
- ❑ In many jurisdictions, Halloween is held on October 30 when October 31 falls on a Sunday. This is to avoid conflicts between Halloween celebrations and church services.
- ❑ The jack o'lantern was originally made out of a turnip. It was an Irish custom; when the Irish immigrated to the US, they found that pumpkins were larger and easier to carve.
- ❑ Halloween is the third most common occasion for a party, surpassed only by Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Although the media and other public figures continually warn the public about the "dangers" of candy being tampered with, there has never been a case where this has been proven to have occurred—

- ❑ One boy died in 1970, and his parents

cited poisoned candy as the cause. However, it was later proven that the real reason he died was because he ate his uncle's heroin. The parents had lied in order to protect the uncle.

- ❑ In 1974, a father in Houston claimed that poisoned candy killed his son. However, it was later proven that the father had been the one to poison his son, and then attempted to cover it up.
- ❑ In 1990, a Los Angeles girl collapsed while trick-or-treating. However, this was not linked to the candy, but to a heart defect.
- ❑ Recently, a rumor circulated on the Internet that claimed people have been giving out lollipops, shaped like pumpkins and Santa Claus, that contain hallucinogenic, and possibly deadly, drugs. However, this is untrue, and police have publicly stated that there is no threat to trick-or-treaters.

Five fun things to do on Halloween:

1. Go trick or treating. Many people have noted a drop in trick-or-treaters in recent years, so you're really doing people a favor. (Tip: To get the most candy, head out around dusk—most young kids will have finished their rounds, since it is a school night, and people will be eager to get rid of their remaining candy.)

2. Throw a costume party. Get a couple (or a lot) of your favorite people together, throw on a scary sound effects CD, and have some fun! You can bob for apples (if you aren't big on hygiene), eat candy (if you aren't big on nutrition), or even hold costume contests (if you can find enough people willing to dress up).

3. Halloween is on a Sunday this year, and that means that Saturday is what is known as "Mischief Night." To deter hooligans from causing trouble at your house, lie in wait with a hose or water gun (or, of course, threaten to call their mothers).



Truly scary.

4. Offer to take younger siblings, neighbors, or family friends trick or treating. It may not be as much fun, but hey, it's a nice thing to do, and you'll probably get good karma. (And also free candy.)

5. Have a scary movie marathon. Go to Blockbuster, rent anything with the words "Zombie," "Ghost," "Blood," or "Dead" in the title, grab some popcorn, and don't leave the couch until you're done. (If you can find a copy of *Ghost Zombies Drink the Blood of the Dead*, you've hit the jackpot.)

Halloween Costume Ideas

Megan Stahlberg

HALLOWEEN IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER, which means you need to plan your costume. This year, you can always opt for one of the standards: baby, cheerleader, ghost, vampire or witch. Then again, you could try something completely original. Here are a few suggestions for the more daring trick-or-treaters.

- ❑ Put on a striped suit and go as Martha Stewart.
- ❑ Grab a partner and dress as a bride and groom—that way you could be Jennifer Lopez and Mark Anthony, Tiger Woods and Elin, or Britney Spears and anyone.
- ❑ Feeling political? Then go as either a cowboy or a windsurfer. Or, if you're an especially avid fan of one particular candidate, dress up as them to show your support.
- ❑ Look up "Weird NJ" myths, choose your favorite story and portray the characters in it.
- ❑ Choose one of the many faces of Michael Jackson, and dress up as your favorite one.
- ❑ Dress in tattered shorts and a bandanna and go as one of the "Survivors."
- ❑ And lastly, you can be especially creative and dress up as one of the teachers who left UC last year. You can choose from Mr. Butchko, Mr. Donahue, Mrs. McManus or, of course, Mr. Marotti.

New SATs

(continued from page 4)

Another change in the SAT is the length. The new test will be forty-five minutes longer than the old three-hour-long one. "From experience, the test is long enough already," observed Vinny Napolitano '05. Several members of the class of 2005, the last class to take the old SAT, agreed with Napolitano and shared his relief in not having to take the new writing section and harder math problems. Kenneth Abel, '05, advises juniors to "pray. Pray a lot."

Despite all the talk about the new SAT, most juniors agree that they do not feel well informed on the actual details. "I know what the changes are," Caitlin Mahler '06 explained, "but we haven't had to practice or prepare for them yet." "There should be an elective class that is offered for SAT prep," observed Hugo Moras '06.

Mr. Leib strongly recommends taking an SAT prep course to better prepare students by March 2005. "So many students are benefiting from the classes that you are at a disadvantage if you don't take a course." There are several prep courses that are available in this area.

While students of the class of '06 have the option of taking the old test in January 2005, the last time it is offered, most advisors strongly recommend waiting until March. Some colleges may not accept scores from the old SAT for students applying for Fall 2006. Waiting until March "gives students three more months to develop their knowledge," said Dr. Jakubik.

Dr. Jakubik reminds prospective college students that the SAT is not the most important aspect when it comes to being accepted into college, although it is important to be prepared and perform well on the SATs. "Colleges really want to see that students take the most challenging courses offered at their high school, maintain a high GPA, and stay involved in extracurricular activities."

For more information on the new SAT, go to <http://www.collegeboard.org>.