

### AFFORDING OUR HOLIDAYS... *Continued from page 1*

family and I went shopping a few times.”

She told this reporter of a time in particular where she and her family bought ten really nice shirts for less than ten dollars.

Roman Velez('12) also recalled an experience of his own when “about three or four years ago my parents left the house at around five in the morning and they came back with trash bags full of brand new toys.”

**“But for the past few years, my mom canceled Christmas because she has a mortgage to pay.” –F. Francis('11)**

With the recent economic problems we are facing this year, chances are nothing will be the same.

“We used to go and buy everything really cheap for the whole family” said a somber faced Fabian Francis('11), “but for the past few years my mom cancelled Christmas, because she has a mortgage to pay.”

Besides the economic crisis of today, the overall fun and inviting mood of Black Friday changed as

well from that of a few years back. When asked if he would go shopping on Black Friday this year Mr. Weiss just began to shake his head and chuckle.

“I would never,” he said, “oh no. It’s just too cuckoo out there for me.” When asked if he would ever again go shopping on Black Friday he responded no, saying he cared too much for his health and safety.

Still, despite the economic hardship that has affected nearly every one of us and how life-threatening Black Friday has become, some still wish to go one day.

Victor Vasquez Jr.('13) told this reporter “sure I would like to go, if not in high school then at least when I could drive myself.” When asked if he wouldn’t mind the general havoc, he simply said that he would be one of those people pushing through hordes of people to get into the stores.

So, despite the upset now surrounding Black Friday, there is still hope for its future.

Hope that there will be a day where deals can be found just about everywhere; to fill the trunks of our cars, the backs of our closets and the space under our beds with all of the holiday gifts we want to give away for the season. ☞



Will an economic grim reaper ruin all holiday plans?

### KWANZA SEASON... *Continued from page 1*

mat called the *Mkeka* along with ears of corn and the *Cha Umoja* (unity cup) which is used to pour *tobiko* (libations).

Other than this it is suggested to decorate the house with African cloths and art, depending on personal preference.

It is said by the founder of Kwanzaa, Dr. Maulena Karenga, that the celebration of this holiday is not to be mixed with other holiday celebrations. Despite this, it is very common for the *Mishumaa Saba* to be seen laid out alongside a Christmas tree. In fact Danelia Dillion('10) said “I celebrate Kwanzaa with my

church.”

This reporter has discovered that, just like any other holiday, there are traditions, but people choose to celebrate Kwanzaa in their own way.

For families who celebrate it, Kwanzaa provides a forum to celebrate their heritage as well as the struggles and successes of the people who came before them.

As for people who choose not to celebrate, this reporter would hope they don’t question its legitimacy. Hopefully they’ll agree with Landon Goldfarb('11) who said “if you celebrate it, it’s legitimate and it doesn’t matter what I think.” ☞



Not all students feel included in traditional holiday celebrations.

### VIRTUAL HOLIDAY GATHERINGS...

*Continued from page 1*

believes that, “the Wii is great for having fun and laughing with friends.”

Vlad points out that “games like *Madden* or *Fifa* really bring on the competition, and are fantastic in a social setting.”

There were some students who voiced skepticism on videogames as a social medium. Rifat Hossain('11) said of videogames, “They can be good in a social setting, but they make people stay indoors.”

It’s true that videogames are

typically played inside, however, in regions where there are long and harsh winter months there isn’t much else to do but stay indoors. Even more so, in settings such as college, videogames can help new roommates get past the awkward getting-to-know-each-other phase by providing a common interest. Andrej Vogel('13) had just this feeling: “Videogames can be a great way to get to know people and bond with them.” Mr. Evans shared this view as well, stating, “It can be a great icebreaker.”

### DEPT OF ED SHOW’S LITTLE HOLIDAY FAIRNESS... *Continued from page 1*

those days.

Buddhism and Islam are the number four and five faiths in the United States, yet rarely if ever do we as Americans schedule a day off from our busy lives to honor their holidays.

Islam is the fastest growing religion in our nation, yet no days are given off.

Troion Marshall('10) believes that this current issue is “indicative of how Christian the American system is” today.

There are some students like Rifat Hossain('11) who stay home on major holidays that their family honors.

Antonio Aquino('13) expanded his definition of important days to observe stating that he wants school off for the Dominican Day Parade, simply because it is a significant day for him.

Zachary Jones('10) shared too that he doesn’t come to school on St. Patrick’s Day because he “is Irish” and his parents “are fine with this.”

**“It’s not fair...I think we should get days off for all the major holidays” of all religions and ethnic groups.**

**–K. Thom('12)**

Keenan Thom('12) declared, “it’s not fair...I think we should get days off for all the major holidays” of all religions and ethnic groups.

Rifat feels “angered...and I want to do something about it.”

**“They get their holidays; where are mine?” –S. Ahmed('10)**

Sakib Ahmed('10) seemed to sum

up the feelings of all students who practice the nation’s less common religions when he asked, “They get their holidays; where are mine?”

He pointed out that “Jewish people are a minority in the world compared to Muslims,” insisting that this fact places his holidays in a place of significance.

It is evident that there is need for some change.

Our beloved Dr. Benmoussa returned to Morocco last year possibly because he never got the change he expected here in the United States of America. There is absolutely nothing to suggest this idea has merit.

If that was true, then the DOE needs to act quickly because there is discontent with the current calendar we have, in which only a few beliefs or cultures receive acknowledgement. ☞

**“You shouldn’t be spending hours playing games.”**

**–Mr. Evans**

When *Common Sense* asked the history teacher if he felt videogames could be positive in a social setting he replied, “Yes, but within limits.” He continued to say, “You shouldn’t be spending hours playing games.”

Today, videogames are much more than a little avatar on a TV monitor; they are a part of our youth culture and society. Videogames are as much a part of our social interactions as TV shows, movies, books, or any other entertainment medium.

The videogame world has expanded beyond the cult-like following it was in previous decades, and now, it is as much apart of who we are as any other aspect of our lives. ☞

## TURBO CHARGE HAND DRYING By A. Emmanuelli ('10)

In early December, the students of HSAS had quite a surprise when they walked into the bathrooms and discovered the paper towels were replaced by brand new hand dryers.

The new dryers are made by the company Excel Dryers, they are motion sensing, and very powerful. On their website, Excel guarantees that their dryers will completely dry your hands in 10-15 seconds, and claim to have a 95% cost savings versus paper towels.

The website also boasts that the dryers are GreenSpec Listed; an online directory of environmentally friendly products. Online research into the cost of the hand dryers revealed a price range from \$540 to \$760, a steep dollar value.

When asked who paid for the dryers, Mr. Olivieri didn't want to specify and simply stated, "they got paid for."

Mr. Weiss on the other hand said that he thought the dryers were purchased by both Lehman College and the Department of Education. He went on to explain that the College and the DOE share costs to run the school because of the relationship between them in which the DOE (high school students) uses the building during

the day and Lehman (college students) uses the building at night.

He also stated that the College itself will soon get new hand dryers, HSAS got them first simply because we've been asking for them.

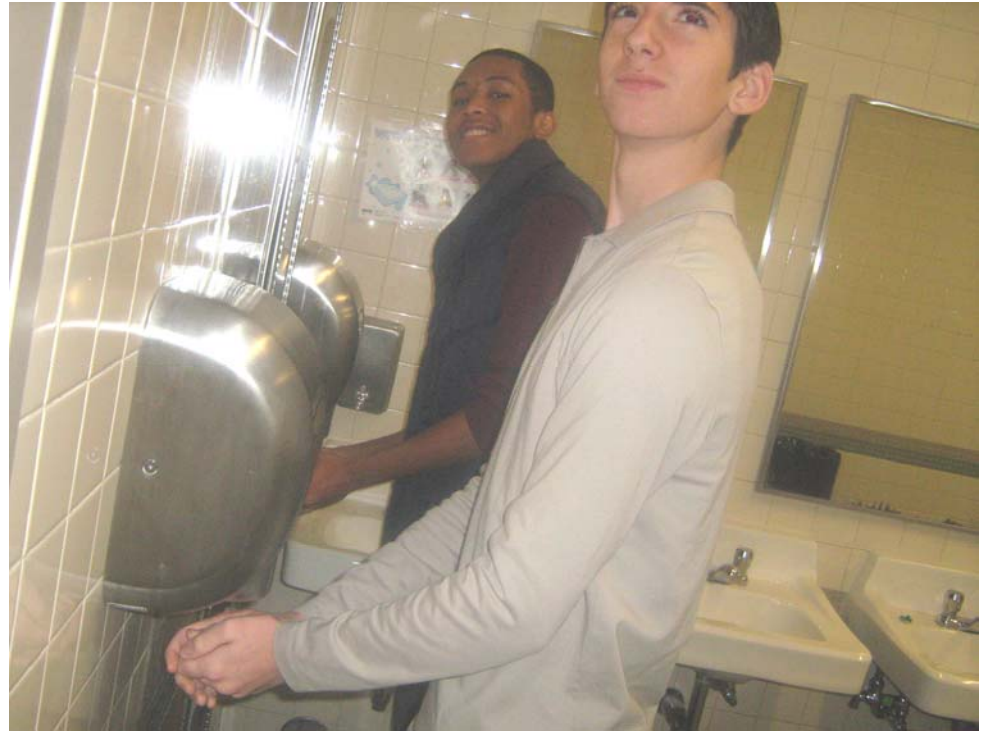
***"It's not like we could have used the money on books instead."*** –Principal Weiss

When asked about the cost, Mr. Weiss said the money came from a fund specified for facilities and that "it's not like we could have used the money on books instead."

Both the Principal and the Assistant Principal shared their feeling that the new hand dryers were far more environmentally friendly, and totally eliminated the mess created by paper towels.

When *Common Sense* took to the hall, it was found that students are very happy with the new hand dryers, and in a recent *Common Sense* survey of 100 students nearly all expressed that the new dryers are an improvement.

Jared Rosenthal('12) shared his great interest in the dryers saying, "we should have a (whole) period where we get to play with the hand dryers."



M. Akbar('11) & A. Miller('12) express pleasure with the new hand dryers.

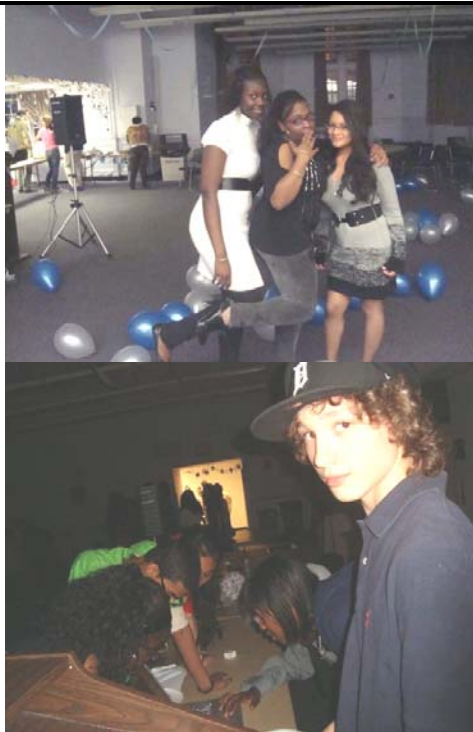
Pietro Bartoli('13) shared skepticism, expressing that he didn't think the hand dryers were much more environmentally friendly than the paper towels. He also commented that "they are really loud, and not much more efficient at drying your hands than paper."

Delia Hernandez('10) also feels that the hand dryers are quite loud and said that "they can be disruptive if you have class next to the bathrooms."

It is true that the dryers are extremely loud, and bathroom

conversations are not easy to conduct if someone wants to dry their hands, though Sam Allison('11) feels "the noise isn't that big a deal, and it's worthwhile if we're being environmentally friendly."

Despite a few complaints the latest addition to HSAS is certainly a step toward making our school cleaner and greener, unless of course the coal generated electricity required to run such powerful machines negates the paper saving aspect. ☞



## HOLIDAY BREAK!

ENJOY THE TIME AWAY FROM SCHOOL.

CLASSES RE-START ON MONDAY JANUARY 4<sup>TH</sup>,



2010.

FINAL EXAMS & REGENTS EXAMS ARE AT THE END OF JANUARY.

## STUDENT GOVERNMENT'S WINTER DANCE 2009 IS A SUCCESS By Jemaal Alexander('10)

On December 9, 2009 HSAS had its first school dance for the year.

For the price of \$3.00, students were granted access into the East Dining Hall and spent their Friday evening with their peers, dancing.

Simultaneously, the student government was undergoing a bake off, where students presented homemade goods to be judged by their friends. *Common Sense* recounts this event.

As an experienced taster of good snacks, this reporter can safely say that the baked goods were scrumptious.

Deshawn Lynch('10) was unable to attend the dance because he was stricken by a sudden case of the common cold that Friday. He was "discontent because I heard the

baked goods were excellent....and my whole intention of going to the dance was to enjoy the treats."

The Winter Wonderland Dance was a great success according to school government president Karnisa Aya('10) and there were over 100 tickets sold. That means about a third of the student body was in attendance.

***"It was one of the best dances ever."*** -F. Francis('11)

Russell Lowe('12) was named the top baker that night with his specialty chocolate pumpkin pie.

"It was one of the best dances ever," shared Fabian Francis('11). This is a strong statement, because he is a veteran dance-goer, and knows these things.

Fabian also shared that he felt the upperclassmen seemed to dominate the dance, meaning they were the most active and loudest. Perhaps this may have been because the younger grades are still getting to know each other.

Despite upperclass dominance, the DJ's and MC were all underclassmen. Jazz Hooks('12) and Ike Lang('12) were the DJ's and played a wide variety of music over the course of the night.

***"I loved it."***  
–E. McBride('12)

Eddie McBride('12) was the voice, for those of you who attended the dance, as he did his part in keeping the audience hyped.

When asked how he felt about the dance, Eddie said, "I loved it." His

only plea for improvements in a future dance would be for more soda and "a longer dance would be nice."

Freshman Alex Quintero's('13) anticipation for participating in the dance was visible all throughout the basketball practice prior to the game as he repeatedly asked about past dances.

When asked if he felt the dances were better in past years, Timothy Watts('11) shared that "The class of '09 was bangin'."

He was probably referring to their unique closeness that was reflected at previous dances by past classes.

So while some may feel that the dances have died down, this dance was a success because we raised more money than was spent and the students who attended seemed to have had a great time. ☞