



## A VIRTUAL HOLIDAY GATHERING By Alex Emmanuelli('10)

From the humble beginnings of *Pac Man* and *Tetris*, the videogame industry has become a tremendous force in the home entertainment industry. Growing and expanding into a multi-billion dollar business, PC World magazine stated that the global videogame industry revenue in 2007 was \$40 billion. *Common Sense* investigates this media outlet's impact on our students.

Gaming has expanded beyond the home and has taken the Internet by storm. Popular Massive Multiplayer Online (MMO) games such as *World of Warcraft*, have subscribers numbering in the millions. According to Wired Magazine, *World of Warcraft* hit 11.5 million members in late 2008.

Similarly, videogame consoles are dropping off the shelves like crazy with the Wii, Xbox 360, and Playstation 3 selling over 100 million units combined.

Many, including this reporter's mother, argue that videogames cause anti-social behavior in youth. But for those who own and play videogames, it is often a social forum.



Image staged by A. Emmanuelli('10)

Ms. Peterson begins her game play while others toil.

The most popular feature of almost every videogame is online game play. For a game such as *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare*, there are thousands of people at any given moment connected to the internet playing people across the nation from the comfort of their own homes. The online game experience is not restricted to the game though, as subscribers have the opportunity to talk to each other via headsets.

When *Common Sense* asked

Alex Miller('12) if he thinks videogames can provide a social setting he replied "of course!"

"Things like Xbox Live let us get together and kill things," Alex added. He also believes that moderation is important, as well as keeping reality separate from a virtual world found in gaming.

When asked if he felt that videogames bring people together in a positive setting, Vlad Barbu('10)

(Continued on page 2)

## NOT EVERYONE'S HOLIDAY SEASON

By Jemaal Alexander('10)

As students in a New York City public high school, the only days we get off are the ones the Department of Education (DOE) sees fit. *Common Sense* investigates whether this is an inclusive process.

Current observed holidays include Veterans' and Memorial Day but more are religious holidays. It's obvious that certain religions have a stronger voice when it comes to this because they are a majority in New York, such as Christianity and Judaism.

We get days off like Yom Kippur and have Winter (Christmas) Break because they are major Christian and Jewish holidays.

*Common Sense* wonders where's there love for other significant holidays for minority faiths in New York City.

The Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion. But that doesn't necessarily mean that we can take a day off from school or from work because of our faith as we will miss academic work on

(Continued on page 2)

## A HOLIDAY WE CAN AFFORD

By Jacob Cintron('10)

As the holiday season draws near there is one question looming above our heads, whether or not we can afford to buy the things we want for our family and friends.

In previous years, holiday shopping was a relatively simple process. With money saved up from that year and vacation time to spare, you would drive off to all sorts of stores, crossing out things on your to-buy list as you go. Christmas bonuses were bigger, wages were higher and people were willing to spend more of their money on others.

There was also the alluring day of Black Friday. This happens on the Friday after Thanksgiving, and most department stores have sales ranging from 25% to 75% off of every last product in the store. For years now, hundreds of thousands of shoppers flock desperately to stores in the wee hours of the morning hoping to get the best deals.

Jahaira Flores('10) remembered these days saying "when I was a little younger, my

(Continued on page 2)

## KWANZAA: AMERICAN HOLIDAY HITS 43

By Devin Mullin('10)

*Common Sense* recently discovered that many people don't know much about Kwanzaa.

Landan Goldfarb('11) shared that "all I know about Kwanzaa is from a Rugrats episode."

Due to this comment and others like it, *Common Sense* is going to educate the masses about this holiday.

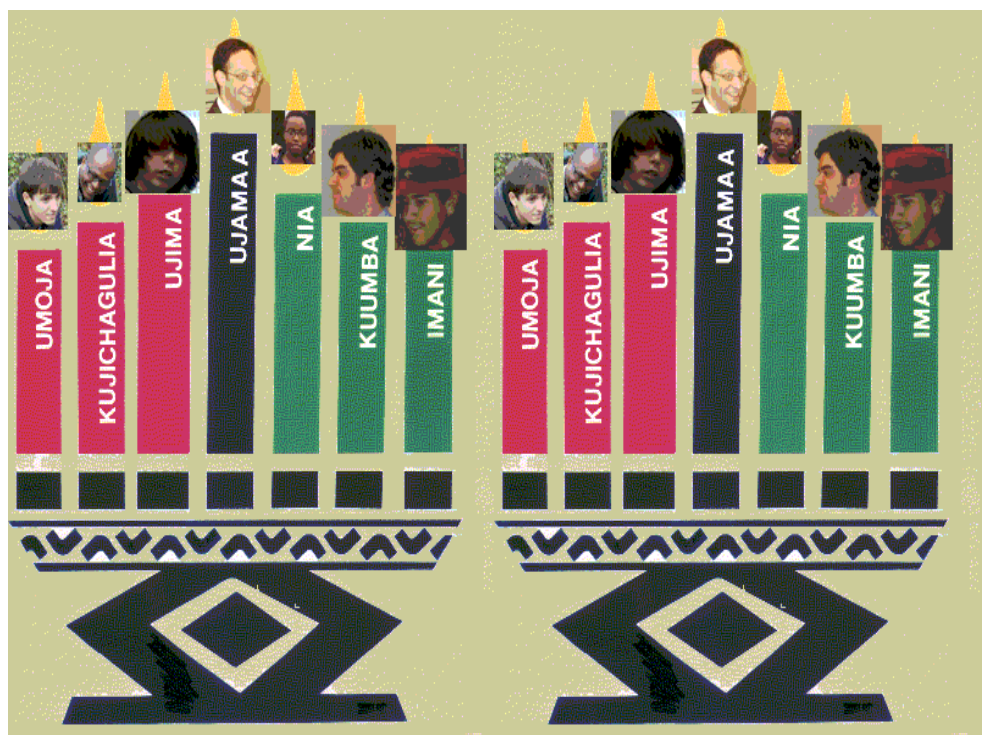
Kwanzaa is a non-religious pan-African holiday beginning on December 26<sup>th</sup> and ending on January 1<sup>st</sup>. It was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, an American, as part of the black power movement that decade.

There are some people like Jared Rosenthal('12) who feels that it is a real holiday, but that "it being so recent doesn't help its legitimacy."

Sinika Martin-Gonzalez('13) said that its relatively recent creation does nothing to de-legitimize Kwanzaa as "thanksgiving hasn't been a holiday for that long either."

Despite some people doubting the legitimacy of Kwanzaa, people should not be deterred from celebrating the holiday as it consists of seven days of preaching positive messages to others.

Each day is used to honor the



D. Mullin imagines how each characteristic of Kwanza match one of our own.

ideals of the *Nguzo Saba*, the seven principles.

These principles are *Umoja* (unity), *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination), *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility), *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics), *Nia* (Purpose), *Kuumba* (Creativity) and *Imani* (Faith).

These principles are represented by seven candles, known as the *Mishumaa Saba*. Three of the candles are red representing *Kujichagulia*, *Ujamaa* and *Kuumba*, three are green representing *Ujima*, *Nia* and *Imani*, and one is black

representing *Umoja*. The colors are representative of the African experience.

Black is for the people, red is for the struggle, and green is for the hope many have for the future.

These candles are meant to be placed and lit in a specific order. The black candle is placed in the middle, with the red candles to the left and the green candles to the right. The black candle is lit first, and the remaining candles are then lit from left to right.

These candles are placed on a  
(Continued on page 2)