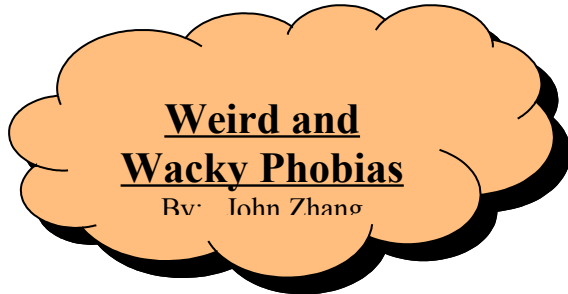


# The Talon Times

December 2008

## FAIRGROUNDS MIDDLE SCHOOL



In Mrs. Couture's science class, we had an interesting lesson about strange phobias (a.k.a. fears) that some people have. Lots of us were interested, so I decided to share 11 of them:

1. Hippopotomontrosesquippedaliophobia:  
The fear of long words
2. Nephophobia: Fear of clouds (How do people with this survive?)
3. Phagophobia: Fear of being eaten up.
4. Amatophobia: Fear of dust.
5. Sitiophobia: Fear of food.
6. Nyctophobia: Fear of the night.
7. Homochlophobia: Fear of fog.
8. Haphephobia: Fear of being touched.
9. Geumatophobia: Fear of taste.
10. Ommatophobia: Fear of eyes.
11. Ancraophobia: Fear of wind.



### The Video Game

By: Michael Preminger

Calling all gamers! Calling all gamers!  
Are you looking for a new game? Try SPORE.  
Spore won the "Breakthrough Award" from  
*Popular*

*Mechanics* for its achievement in design, creativity and engineering and was honored for its procedural animation system, joining the ranks of such ground-breaking innovations such as affordable cancer detection tests, renewable diesel fuel and a transparent-wall camera. It is arguably the best game ever created. And no, I am not talking about the not-so-good-not-so-bad DS version; I'm talking about the computer version.

To start the player selects and names a planet and then chooses either to be an herbivore, omnivore, or carnivore. It doesn't really matter, because this can instantly change during cell stage. Next, the player watches a video - witness a meteorite hurling toward a planet. On impact, it creates a giant explosion. A shard of this meteorite then falls into the ocean causing the player's one-celled organism to appear.

Now, this organism travels through 5 different phases. First there is the Cell Phase an eating and growing phase. Then the brain grows, that is called the Creature Phase. Parts are added including making the spine more detailed. During the next phase, Tribal, the player's species discovers fire which can be used to create tools to destroy or befriend other tribes. It is also possible to learn to build with metal and stone which ushers in the Civilization Stage! Players can create vehicles, boats, and airplanes to conquer or befriend other cities. Why not take the universe on in Space Stage? Create a spaceship and search every planet, while playing the role of either space tyrant or friendly explorer. It is possible to even change the landforms of planets using certain tools. All this and more is on SPORE, the quest for evolution.

### New President

By Alexander Jaferey

Look who is in the spotlight in Washington, DC. There's a new President-elect in America, and his name is Barack Obama. Obama won in an electoral landslide victory which was surprising because when he first entered the race, he was considered an underdog. Some people wondered if America was ready to elect an African American president, but it is. The Republican candidate, John McCain was the one who was endorsed by current President George W. Bush.

Obama won two traditionally  
Republican states that most people thought

would go to McCain: Indiana and Virginia. He also won New England, NY, PA, and a lot more. John McCain won GA, TN, AL, MS, AR, and a few more.

During the primaries, Barack Obama wasn't even predicted to win the Democratic nomination. Hillary Clinton was considered the most likely winner. Then again, John McCain wasn't expected to win the Republican nomination, either. Mitt Romney was the likely candidate.

Anyway, many Americans are looking forward to President-elect Barack Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden to take office on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

### Autumn to Winter, Winter to Spring

By: Anonymous

The fall leaves are covered by a soft blanket of white,  
When small flakes fall from the sky  
the clouds cover every bit of light,  
Watch the wind and snow fly by.  
Cold air gives your nose quite a bite.  
After the sight of the cold,  
The colors grow bold.  
The sun shines on the beautiful flowers,  
April will bring the spring showers.



### Confessions of Obsession

Mia Eisenhandler

Books are the key to leaving reality behind, and immersing yourself into a different world. They are wonderful for relaxing, unwinding, and escaping. Almost everyone can choose from millions of books, and discover which ones drag you into their universe.

I've recently experienced a personal problem with a specific series of books. These books have captivated the attention of millions, every age, and every gender; none other than the hypnotizing series of *Twilight*, written by now famous, Stephanie Mayer. I used to wonder why *everyone* I knew was so extremely attached to these books. Never liking to follow the crowds, I refused to read the books, and was incredibly annoyed by anyone who

brought them up, which was almost everyone who surrounded me.

Just recently, Stephanie Mayer signed to have her first New York Times #1 Bestseller, *Twilight*, made into a major motion picture. Crazed fans went mental, never failing to *not* bring it up. Eventually, I decided to give the books a try, since I really could not escape the talk. As soon as I started reading the borrowed book from my friend, (I refused to buy it because I was sure I wouldn't like it) my mind immediately slipped into a state of numbness, only responding to my own thoughts, which were of course, only about the book.

### Pack Monadnock Field Trip

By "Kitty Man"

Pack Monadnock got a visit from FMS students this fall. The Starfish 6<sup>th</sup> grade team field trip was a marvelous day. There were birds, salamanders, and even some chipmunks out and about. The rocks were very slippery and there were leaves all over the place. Many students were falling and slipping, but thankfully no one got seriously hurt. Our three teachers, Mr. Bourque, Mrs. Rouleau, and Mrs. Winkler were there, plus our 10+ chaperones, so we had a lot of supervision. All in the entire Pack Monadnock trip was a great day for the Starfish Team.

### Mr. Hoffman

Aaron Wang

Are you in the BULLS team with Mr. Hoffman? Wow, you are one lucky kid. Mr. Hoffman is a teacher that teaches social studies or history. There are many exciting things to learn in his class. Mr. Hoffman is, in my opinion, one of the best teachers in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. For example, when it comes time to study the Persian War, he allows students to make historical swords and spears and then everyone goes outside to try them out in a lighthearted battle with Mr. Hoffman.

Mr. Hoffman is the funniest of all the teachers in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade too. Here are some tips if you happen to have him for class:

1. Don't talk out during class or you will lose 1 point off your average. (I lost 9 points off mine...)
2. Don't use too much duct tape when you make a spear or else he makes you

- buy another roll. (I had to pay him because I used too much duct tape...)
3. Don't ask him for a pencil or else he will send you outside. ( I got sent out many times)
  4. Don't go to the bathroom more than five times a year or he will take lots of points off you average. (Hooray! I went to bathroom 2 times in the whole entire year, beat that.)
  5. Don't talk during quizzes or else he will take 20 whole points off your quiz.

Because he keeps things amusing and interesting, I hope that you will have the opportunity to have Mr. Hoffman for social studies.

### **Fun Facts for Christmas**

By: Marina McIntosh  
Did you know...?



- More than 25 million kids visit Santa in malls nationwide each year.
- The average shopping mall Santa weighs 218 pounds and has a 43-inch waist.
- Every year, 1.76 billion candy canes are made.
- The holiday song most often played in malls is "Jingle Bells."
- Fake Christmas trees have sold out real ones every year since 1991.
- 15% of women start Christmas shopping in July. 25% of men wait two weeks before Christmas to do their shopping.
- Americans send an estimated 2 billion holiday cards every year, a tradition that originated in England in 1843.
- Worldwide, Christmas has been celebrated on 135 different days of the year.
- About 83% of U.S. families put up a Christmas tree every year. 58% are artificial.
- Studies show that four-year-olds believe in Santa more than any other age group.

\* Uncle John's Bathroom Reader Extraordinary Book of Facts and Bizarre Information. Pages 17&102.

### **Select Choir's** **Barnes and Noble Night**

By "Robert Wicket"

For all Select Choir students that wanted to honor veterans, this was what you had been waiting for! At Barnes & Noble we showed off FMS talent and the veterans loved it! The veterans have been working very hard defending our country and they deserve this special concert. Thank you to Mrs. Pispitos, the Select Choir instructor, for organizing this event.

### **The History Club**

By: "Poseidon"

COME ONE, COME ALL! The History Club introduces the students to many aspects of history. You can join anytime, any place. The History Club has many activities, and one will include meeting politicians this spring! The History Club is located in room **803**, Mr. Sommese's room, in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade wing, from 2:45 – 3:45pm. The History Club was the recent sponsor of the ever popular Ben Franklin look-a-like contest! The club also reads a weekly, This Day in History during announcements.

### **The M&M Trip**

By Nik Williams and Zack D'Amico

M&Ms? An enjoyable snack, or a fun trip? Well as much as we love food, for the so called "M&M" trip, it is about visiting the movies and the mall. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade team called the Pathfinders went on a trip to AMC movie theatre to see the movie *The Express*. *The Express* is a movie about a football player, Ernest Davis, who had an extremely successful college football career. However, when the time came for him to be eligible for the NFL (National Football League) Cleveland Browns, he accepted their offer. Then tragedy struck and at the age of 23 he died from leukemia.

After we saw this movie, we went to the Pheasant Lane Mall food court and proceeded to walk throughout the mall with friends for 50 minutes. One of the newspaper reporters had three 3' long pixie sticks and a "monster" energy drink.

Warning: be sure to behave appropriately during fieldtrips so that your team can continue to take them in the future.

### **Sixth Grade Social**

By: "Paul Nicholas Bosold"

The FMS Student Council planned a Sixth Grade Social. At the social there were dancing, games, refreshments and even a DJ. One good thing about the social was that you could dance with a girl or a guy or just hang with your friends. Also the gym and cafeteria was occupied by sixth grade students and parent chaperones. I hope everyone had a great time!

Also, Student Council ran the Basket Contest. There were many different kinds of baskets such as the New England Basket, the Candy Basket, Coffee Basket, Sports Basket and many, many more. Special thanks to everyone who brought in whatever they could to add to their advisory's basket.



### **Awesome Book Series**

By: "Slushy Man"  
The Inheritance Cycle, a fantasy series from the young author Christopher Paolini, is one of the

best series of books out there at your local bookstore. So far, the books *Eragon*, *Eldest*, and *Brisingsr* have come out, with one more book in the series remaining that hasn't come out yet. *Eragon* is about a teenage boy who finds a dragon egg while he is hunting in the woods. He decided to keep the egg. Finally, it hatched through. The story is then about Eragon meeting many people, bonding with his dragon, Saphira, and saving the rest of the Alagaesia from the horrid King Galbatorix. You won't regret trying out this book!

The second book of the series, *Eldest*, continues Eragon and Saphira's grand adventure. This time, Eragon and Saphira travel many places to undergo training, which is the main objective of the second book. But, Eragon and Saphira still don't get to finish their training, due to a huge war that King Galbatorix is about to bring upon the rest of the Varden. Eragon and Saphira are needed in this battle, so they head out to meet their match. Eragon uses all he learned to combat his old friend.

### **The Boys Soccer Team**

By Christian Sullivan

The day before school started was the first day of the FMS soccer. Well actually, it was the first day of 6<sup>th</sup> grade try-outs for the

school team. The try-out was held by a wonderful coach by the name of Mr. Lalime. He also happens to be the art teacher at FMS.

Tryouts were held for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders the next day and then all 3 grades tried out together. Twenty-two players were chosen out of the twenty-eight that tried out. Once Mr. Lalime chose the players, we had practice every day for the next two weeks from 3:30 to 5:00. It was both fun and a good way to stay fit. In addition, the members of the team got to know each other well.

During the season we participated in ten games. Once the games started we looked unstoppable and looked like we already clinched the playoffs through the first four games. We happened to by 3-0-1 after those games. The year before the same Fairgrounds team went only 4-6 and made the playoffs. So we thought we could win one game and make it. That would have been true, only we lost four straight games and sadly missed the playoffs. Despite this, it was an outstanding season and was lots of fun. Next year more people should tryouts for the team and participate in the fun that the school soccer team is.

### **Halloween**

By Nik Williams and Zachary D'Amico

Halloween is the greatest thing that ever happened to dentists. The Halloween candy that you eat causes cavities. Halloween is also a very nice holiday for orthodontists. If you eat too much candy, and don't brush your teeth, your braces might break. That means paying your orthodontist a lot of money.

The following message is to all of those people that don't give out candy because they don't like the holiday. I think that anyone who sits at their house and doesn't do this, excluding those who can't afford it, really disappoint hundreds of people each year. Is 7 dollars worth that much? I think not, think of all that candy you got as a kid! It's only fair. Now....Treat-or-TRAITOR!

### **Star Wars Battlefront 2!**

By "Brambleclaw"

I would like to share a video game that I think you would really like. It's called Star Wars Battlefront 2. You can choose to do "training", where you learn the basics, "Space Overview", where you learn to fly a space craft, "Rise of the Empire", where you go around on special missions, first working for

the Republic, then the Empire, there is “Galactic Conquest”, where you choose between four different teams. There is the Republic, CIS, Rebels, or Empire. There is “Instant Action”, where you can choose between around 20 different worlds, and 7 space worlds. You can choose to be in the “Clone Wars, or the “Galactic Civil War.” In the “Clone Wars”, there is the CIS, who are bad robots with a sense of humor and heavy artillery. There is also the Republic, who are the good humans with a lot of encouragement. In the “Galactic Civil War”, there’s the Empire, the turned-to-the-Dark-Side version of the Republic, with a lot of weapon choices, and the Rebels, who are people against the Empire. Those are all the people in Conquest, and CTF. In “Space”, you can choose the same teams, but you can choose to be a Pilot, who can heal ships, or the Marine, who are good at landing in the enemy hangar, and then blowing up the Life Support Systems, Engine, and the Shield Generator. In “Land Assault,” you can either play as the “Heroes” or “Villains.” Now you know all you need to know about STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT 2!

## Warriors, The Series 1,2,3, and Manga

By: Riley D. Tournas

*SPOILER ALERT: don't read if you want to keep the story a surprise.*

The Warriors series is huge! The main part is over 18 books. The first part is all about this one cat that lives with humans. This cat goes out of his garden and ends up living with wild cats. His name is Rusty. Through the books he goes on lots of adventures and gains new friends along the way. The second series describes 8 cats that go on a very hard journey to save their forest. They climb mountains, run through streets, and talk with a badger to save the forest from humans. In the end the four clans move to a lake side forest and call it home. The third and incomplete series is about three cats, brothers and a sister, who have to help the clans.

There are five main clans + another clan. The clans are ThunderClan, Riverclan, WindClan, ShadowClan, and StarClan. There are two more special clans, BloodClan and SkyClan. They have their own ways and styles of living. Learn more about the Warriors series at [Warriorcats.com](http://Warriorcats.com). P.S. There are Warriors books in the library at school.

## Our Favorite Books

By Caitlyn and Sarah

- ***Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer**  
Bella Swan, a seventeen year old, has just moved to Forks. She has met great friends, and a vampire named Edward Cullen. They fall in love, but will everything work out?
- ***Perfect* by Natasha Friend**  
Perfect is about a girl named Isabelle who has to go to “Eating Disorder and Body Image Therapy Group”, because her little sister told her mother that Isabelle has an eating disorder. Will she get the help that she needs?
- ***Fairest* by Gail Carson Levine**  
Fairest is about a girl named Aza. She was adopted as a child. Since Aza is considered ugly, she hasn’t had the life that most people would wish for. Once the duchess of Olixo invites her to Ayorthaian king’s wedding, Aza life changes drastically. Will her life change for the good, or the bad?
- ***The Melting of Maggie Bean* by Tricia Rayburn**  
The Melting of Maggie Bean is about a young girl that is overweight. It has always been her dream to be on the “Water Wings” swimming team. Will Maggie make this years tryouts?

## Video Game Review: Super Smash Bros. Brawl

By Raju and “Kira”

Do you remember Super Smash Bros. Melee? It was the hit game at the time, and is still selling. However, a new and improved version, known as Super Smash Bros. Brawl has come to replace it for the Wii.

Brawl includes a whole new set of characters, like Sonic, Solid Snake, and Wolf. It also has classic characters, like Link and Mario. It has brand new moves, including the super powerful Final Smash. It’s a finishing move, and attacks and power levels vary from character to character. It also has a new adventure mode called Sub-Space Emissary. It also includes a lot of single-player games, such as All-Star, Classic, and other games. The graphics and interface has changed, giving it a

nice crisp look to it. Have no one to play at home? Then play online! Online play is completely anonymous, so there's no danger at all! Brawl is also slowed down a bit, so it's easier to play, but intense enough to get the best gamers on the edge of their seats.

Let's first talk about the Subspace Emissary. It is a great way to unlock new characters as well as enjoying the amazing storyline. It all starts out as Mario and Kirby are fighting. Suddenly, at the end of their match, Meta Knight's ship, the Halberd, shows up and dumps all this black, spherical things, called Subspace everywhere. These transform into a giant monster and starts attacking Mario and Kirby. Later, Wario shows up with a strange cannon. It turns Zelda or Peach into a ... trophy, and takes them away! Finally, two R.O.B.s come, set off a huge bomb, and the stadium is swallowed into a huge explosion of Subspace. Why did this happen? Who planned it? Why did they get transformed into a ... trophy? Play the Subspace Emissary and find the answers to all these questions and more.

New characters including Pokémon Trainer, Sonic the Hedgehog, Solid Snake, Wolf, Ike, and Pit, are never before seen characters added to the collection of characters. Unlock them all and see which one is the best! SSBB has a 9 out of 10 or higher from a lot of game reviewers, including Nintendo Power, IGN, and NGameR. The music, which includes classic pieces, also includes awesome remixes, such as the new Kirby guitar theme, was given a very high rating, and the graphics are jacked-up from Melee. Buy this great game, because you won't regret it!

## **Time Warp**

by Teja Karri

Who remembers one of the hit shows, Myth Busters? Or, how about Deadliest Catch? These are all shows on the Discovery Channel. Yes, the famous science channel that the world loves. New shows come and amuse all of those people who watch. Well...do you know how your dog uses its tongue to drink? In what exact way a face contorts when punched by a UFC contender? What happens when an egg falls into the pinwheeling blades of a fan? Or an apple is hit with a bullet? How about how it looks when a water droplet falls? This is all tested on Time Warp.

A new original series that comes on the Discovery Channel every Wednesday at

8:00 P.M. MIT scientist and teacher Jeff Lieberman uses new technologies to bring truly never-before-seen wonders into a form that your body can actually process. Lieberman, and his crew, test some of the coolest and craziest stunts and regular activities in slow motion.

Using extreme high-speed photography, the *Time Warp* team takes some natural events (a cat licking its paw, a champagne bottle being opened) — and some not-so-natural (a water balloon to the face, a raw piece of chicken exploding) — and turns them into a thing of both beauty and learning.



## **The Bombardier Beetle:**

### **The Bug that Defies Evolution**

Michael Preminger

Hello *Talon Times* readers, I am here to tell you about one of nature's most magnificent creatures, the bombardier beetle (bomb-a-deer). It is truly one of the most successful creatures at defending itself. When threatened, it squirts a burning hot acid out of its rear, which can be fatal to other insects, spiders, or even lizards. It can also be terribly painful to humans.

Now you're probably wondering, "How does this work?" The first thing you need to know is the bombardier beetle's defense mechanism is so hot, that upon leaving the explosion chamber, 1/5 of it evaporates!

Wait, wait, and wait! I know what you're thinking; explosion chamber? Well let's start from the beginning, let's go into the intricate systems within the bombardier beetle's body. This explosion begins with two chemicals, hydrogen peroxide and hydroquinone, mixing together in a small chamber, known as the collecting vesicle. Then, a duct opens up, and the concoction is brought into the explosion chamber. The duct is closed and ... Bam! The twin cannons fire the burning hot substance into the air! The cannons, interestingly enough, can fire any which way.

But... defies evolution? Well, think about it. If this mechanism did not all form at once, it could not exist, the bug would simply not be in existence! So, what happened? What

made the bombardier beetle this way? Could it have come into existence with this mechanism? These are questions scientists still have not been able to answer. Well there is your bug, in a quick little summary.

## **Review of The Clone Wars**

By: "Darth Chasus"

Some say that the Star Wars saga is a geeky thing, full of light sabers and laser blasts. Other people, say that its the best movie they've ever seen, mostly because it is the dream of the mind's eye. Regardless of how you feel about it, the Star Wars saga is over now, beginning with *The Phantom Menace* and then capping off with *Return of the Jedi*. For those who rejoiced at the riddance of this Sci-Fi dream, or cried their heart out when it ended, you've got another thing coming. Star Wars is back in action with their new animated motion-picture, *The Clone Wars*.

*Clone Wars* grasps the concept shown in Star Wars: Episode III, the clones' armor expresses their legion, rank, and personality. Any average onlooker would look at the theatrical trailer and think that that this wasn't that great (no offense Dreamworks/Disney). Well, you're wrong, *Clone Wars* would reduce chick-flick lover to tears, action lovers to yelling, and unstable people yelling "Bloody Murder"! The acoustics of the movie were quite good, but it would have been at least sensible to add the original actors' voices. Honestly, what the Death Star Tractor Beam is wrong with Anakin Skywalker's voice, it sounds like he swallowed a Womp Rat! On the bright side, the style of light saber play was very skillful.

I'd say that *Clone Wars* is a must see, no matter the ups and downs, and if you end up hating it, please, no rioting.

## **Boys Basketball Team Tryouts**

by Christian Sullivan

This year several kids tried out for the school boys basketball team. There were several outstanding players, but there were only thirteen spots on the roster. Also, three alternates were chosen. So many very good players were left off the team. The first day of tryouts were held for all of the 6<sup>th</sup> graders trying out. The very next day all of the 7<sup>th</sup> and



8<sup>th</sup> graders had their tryouts. Following that the callbacks came. In total there were 27 callbacks. So eleven of those phenomenal players would be cut and the rest would either be on the teams or fighting for a spot as an alternate.

Finally the day came where players were chosen and many people were thrilled. Many people believe that this team will repeat as state champions. I guess we'll have to find out!