

SFHS Writers@Work

Are Video Games too Expensive?

By Evan Michalski,

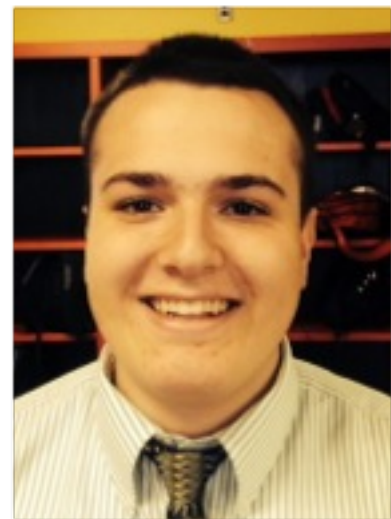
In today's market, new video games cost an average of \$60. On top of that Deluxe and Premium versions are available for an extra \$10 or \$20. To increase that price even more, collector's edition versions of games are released and can go for an upwards of \$100. For example, at release the CoD Black Ops 2 Collector's Edition Sold for \$180. Upon release, Battlefield Hardline will cost \$70 for the deluxe version, and \$60 for the standard version. The costs of new games can be prohibitive to budget gamers.

However this does not have to be the case. For example self-proclaimed PC Master Race member, Eric Michnik, has only spent \$250 on games over the past five years that at retail price, would have cost an upwards of \$3500. His secret? Steam and a gaming PC. Steam has many sales and discounts galore. The Steam Summer sale has many games up to 75% off. Eric has saved so much money buy being a smart shopper and finding deals on Steam. However Steam is only for PC gamers...

For the cost of a new console, and the cost of what one would spend on a new computer, a good quality gaming PC can be built. With proper maintenance and a decent understanding of computers, the gaming PC can last a lifetime. Make the move, upgrade to a PC and save thousands on new games every day.

Dear Students,

Hello! I hope everyone's year has gone great and is going the way they wanted. I want to thank all the upperclassmen for being extremely friendly to the incoming freshman. This shows that this school is a brotherhood. School Spirit has been extremely high this year at all the sporting events, especially the homecoming football game. I love all the School Spirit that you have should and I hope it continues throughout the year. The Red Raider Raffle was a huge success this year and it is because of you guys that sell all those tickets. I truly appreciate all the students that sold tickets for the raffle and I hope next year is as big of a success as this year. Thank you and continue the good work.



Tim Wroblewski: Student Council President

Behind the Curtain: Stage Crew

by Ryan Kawalerski

My life is a universe – an infinitely complex one, to be sure – and I am but a journeyman traveling through the reaches of space. I have visited innumerable planets, seen a plethora of peoples, and constructed many friendships along my travels. Nevertheless, there are only two places that I can call my home. Not considering my actual abode, the Earth of my universe, I rank the St. Francis High School auditorium as, without the slightest doubt, my favorite place to spend time. It is to my life as Mars is to our own solar system; although not humanity’s true home (living there would not be pleasant), it is certainly the best alternative.

The auditorium, the world where I have experienced much growth over the past three years, verily represents my home away from home. It is there where I dedicate myself on early Saturday mornings and late school nights to stage crew and the production of our theatrical performances. The auditorium is a place where my creativity manifests itself through set construction for our musicals and dramas, and I can only imagine an existence where I am a part of stage crew and it a part of me. I have developed much of who I am today during my time spent in the St. Francis High School auditorium – stage crew meetings, especially. From developing my skills in using muslin (a sort of cloth) to mend imperfect pieces of a set to facing my fear of heights when climbing atop scaffolding, there are certainly learning experiences around every corner. Above all, stage crew has taught me to learn from my mistakes (of which there have been many). With the sense of brotherhood that encompasses what our small “crew,” as we call it, works on, it is through failure that one can help another to rise again and better himself.

I revel in the size of our stage crew, surely no more than fifteen people including our moderator, Father Mark David Skura. Although the group is small, we are able to construct stunning works of art. We pride ourselves in our consistency to produce extravagant sets with few resources and a short amount of time. It is this very aspect that ignites in me the most passion. It is a small, special world, and it is mine.

The most important aspect of stage crew, and the image of the auditorium as a whole, is surely Father Mark David. Even though we have only known each other for around three years, we have clearly developed a strong relationship. Since we met three years ago, I have always looked up to him as a father figure, one of the most prominent role models in my life. It is an honor to know, work with, and learn from Father Mark.

**In this home-away-from-home I have learned
 Much more than to saw, hammer, and build.
 To fail is to be able to renew.
 In sense of brotherhood we work; we strive
 To make a masterpiece of priceless hard work’s dues.
 I know I will regret the day I leave**

Reality?

by John Osborn

Cape lashing around in the wind, a blue and red figure jettied towards Washington, D.C. Landing at his destination in dramatic fashion, the extraordinary man bent one knee and smashed the ground with his fist, sending shock waves through the lawn of the White House. Standing up, the "S" of Superman was now visible.



Roused at this great hero's presence, the winged robot abandoned its rampant destruction of the president's residence and turned toward Superman. With amazing quickness the mechanized menace turned to flight. However, Superman also mobilized himself, and the pair collided in flight.

The giant contraption crashed into Superman, sending him sprawling backwards. He landed with planted feet and slid back before charging once again. Swinging both

hands as if he were holding a baseball bat, he made contact with the machine, sending it into left field (of the White House.) Slowly, he drew towards the now immobilized terror.

There, gleaming out of a crack in the structure, he saw the power source of this evil creation. Grabbing each side of the gash, he slowly widened the opening. There it was, right in front of him. All he had to do was reach out and rip out this glowing ball. He extended his hand when suddenly - "Alexander, get down here right now!"

With a groan, Alex logged off of his laptop. Opening his poster-laden door, he trudged down the stairs to see what kind of annoying chore his mom had in mind. As he approached the bottom of the stairs he saw his mother transfixed by the television.

"What do you want mom?" he asked.

"Alex, look." She pointed dreamily at the screen. There on the screen was news footage of the White House. And Superman battling a robot...

To be continued.

Interview with Dr. Tad Patzek

by Jack Hayes

Do you believe petroleum has a long lifespan as the massive industry it is now, or will it decline as the oil starts to run out?

Oil, and petroleum in particular has an expiration date, there is no doubt about that. The earth is a finite place and thus has finite resources, and when you're removing 4 million barrels of oil every single day from a single oil field, that expiration date is going to come sooner rather than later. But as for right now, the evidence has shown me that there is enough oil in fairly accessible areas to at least outlast either of our lifetimes. It may not be the massive industry it is now, due to increases in alternate and renewable sources of energy, but oil will be a major industry for a long time.

What are your opinions on fracking?

Fracking, while it has been highly touted as being the savior for domestic energy, is simply not all it has been made up to be. While the fracking of natural gas can go on to serve the United States as a massive source of energy for years to come, the fact is that we cannot keep producing it at the same rate. Fracking wells slow down considerably after their initial output, and thus we keep having to dig more and more wells to keep up the production rate. This comes at great cost, and not just monetarily. There will come a point in time when the energy used to extract the natural gas is greater than the gas produced, and at that point fracking will become useless.

What are your opinions on second-generation bio-fuels?

There is very little promise and huge environmental cost. ... I can tell you that most notions surrounding bio-fuels of whatever generation and of whatever source are simply misconceptions and wishful thinking. While misconceptions will have you believe that these bio-fuels are safer for the environment than fossil fuels, the fact of the matter is that they all require huge amounts of water and energy to produce, which causes a refining process that is many times dirtier than any fossil fuel.

Dr. Tad Patzek is the current head of the Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering Department at the University of Texas at Austin.

THE BENZINGER BEAT

Like a cop on patrol, Marty Benzinger keeps an eye on great music for you. Stand down. You're under arrest

The band's name is Iceage; they have been around since 2008; they are classified as Danish Post Punk. If that last one isn't somewhat intriguing, I don't know what is. Iceage's latest album, *Plowing Into the Field of Love*, is...interesting, to say the least. This album takes some getting used to. Having never listened to this band before, I wasn't sure if what I was listening to was what they



usually sounded like. Iceage's sound can be described as a mixture of 1980's skater punk (i.e. Minor Threat) and a little bit of Reggae punk (i.e. The Clash). When listening to lead singer Elias Bender Ronnenfelt, it's hard not to hear what seems to be a Joe Strummer inspired growl and raspy-ness. The guitars in the background are extremely distorted, and the drums are fuzzy. It reminds me of listening to a poorly produced grunge album. In the

midst of all this craziness, there is an element of genius. The band plays together so well.

Ronnenfelt's vocals match the music perfectly, and the music couldn't be more fitting for Ronnenfelt's personality and voice. While this album took some getting used to, there definitely were tracks that immediately caught my attention. For example, the song "The Lord's Favorite" is one of my favorite songs off the album. Although you may not be able to make them out, the lyrics to this song are well written and poetic. For example, Ronnenfelt sings, "Vast scarlet leisure, less blood pressure/scatterbrained love lecture/come here and be gorgeous for me now." In keeping the true spirit of punk, Iceage provides fast beats and a fuzzy sound, but remains poetic in their lyrical structure. Another one of my favorites is "How Many." This song is very unique. It has screeching vocals and loud guitars, but also a piano backtracking. The piano offers a sad side to the song. While the rest of the band plays away, the sound of a piano can be heard over the music. It is quite the interesting dynamic. That can be said for the whole album. While this album wasn't one of my favorites, it's worth a listen or two. Actually, it will probably take a couple listens to get used to. I'll leave on a good note: this album was unique and I would recommend it to anyone who is a fan of bands like *Mudhoney* or a fan of old punk music.

Favorite tracks: "*The Lord's Favorite*", "*How Many*", "*Abundant Living*", "*Against the Moon*."

Pre- Holiday Movie Throwback

Star Wars

by Nick Ward

In nearly a year (December 18, 2015 to be exact), the next film in an epic and renowned series will be released. Just like 1999, a galaxy far, far away has a chance to be reborn again. The Phantom was truly a menace, as much disdain was the result. However, we still remember this fictional cosmos fondly, and it stays fresh in the facets of popular culture. There is some magic to be found, something to keep the legends alive in the magnificent saga - *Star Wars*. Just what causes this film series to be held dearly in the hearts of moviegoers and to have it be rediscovered by generations and time continues to move forward? As a *Star Wars* fan myself, I have my theories, and it only seems logical, definite that it was here to stay from the start.

The truth is that *Star Wars* is a synthesis of classical stories that we all know and love. The timeless stories throughout time that entertain us and are presented to us in different forms. Aspects of history, mythology, and just epic storytelling are put together into a fine stew. We have the demise of the tragic hero, Anikan Skywalker, as a promising young Jedi is taken in by the Dark Side and descends into evil. Taken from Greek mythology and classic literature, this is an evident part of the old and new trilogies, and rumors hint at it being part of the next one. In addition, we have the story of the revolutionaries against an evil empire. Massive kingdoms like this of Mongolia, Rome, and even Britain have been present throughout history. Repeatedly, there is a group of rebels that rises up and overpowers those with rule. Not surprisingly, we see the Rebel Alliance in *Star Wars* overtake the Galactic Empire and the Emperor. Society loves the story of the underdog and its struggle to win over evil. Lastly, we have the hero with an irrefutable destiny. This is seen countless times throughout the history of storytelling, Hercules, Aragorn from *Lord of the Rings*, or King Arthur. In *Star Wars*, we have Luke Skywalker. Who crosses the many hurdles of the iconic hero's journey, and works to fulfill his fate, like the story has gone so many times before.

Bringing all these stories and more together does not result in one big rehash however. The neat thing about *Star Wars* is that it takes the synthesis of classic mythology and stories, and transforms into something completely unique with a breathtaking universe and unforgettable characters. We have arguably the most menacing and famous villain of all time, Darth Vader, whose raspy breathing is instantly noticeable. We have the rogue daredevil Hans Solo, whose grit and rough charisma powers his crew through adventures. We have Princess Leia, the female heroine with an edge. And as mentioned before, we have Luke, the naive but heroic young man who learns the ways of a great power and uses it to topple his father's regime. Take the adventures that this crew and more experiences, and it set it in an extraterrestrial wonderland that only George Lucas could dream up. The classic stories blend with unique characters and the perils of the Death Star, rolling deserts of Tatooine, rustic forests of Endor, and snowy wasteland of Hoth, and you have yourself one incredible epic to tell.

When *Star Wars* returns, I'm confident it will come back with a bang. With the magnificent J.J. Abrams on the helm, he's bringing back the storytelling and epic feel that made the saga so memorable. again.

Greg Jacobs

STREET TALK

I asked six seniors a few questions regarding their college search. I asked, how (the college search) is going,

Travis Bitner: Travis said his college search is going pretty good. He plans to attend SUNY Oswego. If he does not get in he plans to attend community college then transfer into SUNY Oswego as a back up plan. He wants to major in Software Engineering.

Jonathan Hoag: He said the college search is going well. Jonathan said he applied to ESFSyracuse, Cobleskill, and Paul Smith's University He plans to study Conservation biology

Christian Vidal: wants to enlist into the military, specifically the Air Force He says it's a pain to search for colleges, it's a burden for what he wants to do He applying to Ferdonia as a backup If the military doesn't work out, Christian plans to study Computer science

Jacob Redfield: Jacob says the college process, and submitting applications is more tasking and stressful than he thought, he enjoys the common app. It's a big help. He has applied to Ferdonia, Geneseo, U.B., and Edinburgh Pennsylvania.
He plans to study Secondary Education... Teaching grades 7-12 most likely as an English teacher.

Ryan Kawalerski: said the college search is good, though it is stressful, but he's mostly on top.He noted that it's hard to apply to Notre Dame, but after he's done, he said it will feel like a weight off of his shoulders.He applied to U.B., Geneseo, Stony Brook, Canisius, and Duke University. He plans to study Pre-med

Matthew Kowalski: Kwall said the college search is doing swell, he continues to say it's not quite a hassle, but "I must say its not easy" Kwall has applied to Clarkson university, RIT, U.B., Cornell, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He wants to major in Civil engineering.

Gavin Hurley

White

I awoke

to Nature, in whom all creatures live.
The night veils creation, but day comes
to reveal earth, if that be not a dream.

Winter liquid, like marmots,
closes its eyes and becomes dormant.

Through a window in the ground,
waveless serenity reins:

Heaven is under our feet
as well as over our heads.

Wild men, by comings and goings,
stitch towns together, else they would be ripped.

They kept summer locked up
at home

so all the chinks of being
were filled

The Michalek Library: A Gift to the SFHS Family

By: Conor Kellner

Wander around Friar's Hall long enough and eventually you might stumble across a set of double doors that lead into the newly renovated Michalek Library. Modernized over the summer, the new library has been a point of interest since the first few days of school for all members of the St. Francis Family, both new recruits and seasoned veterans. Both students and teachers alike are pleased with the new look. Rumors circulated the tables at lunch at the end of last year about changes to the old library, but few knew what to expect when coming back for the 2014-2015 school year. Upon returning for the new year, I think many would agree that the changes to the library were well worth the wait.

Walk into the library and right away you will discover the new layout and ambience, coupled with a new welcoming atmosphere that beckons you to come in and stay awhile. Whether it be the new tables and chairs, fireplace, flatscreen television, or Mrs. Chen's smiling face, every aspect of the library emits warmth and friendliness.

Not only have the physical aspects of the library changed, but there has also been a large influx of daily visitors, and accompanying, a change in the way it is utilized. According to Mrs. Chen, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of students and faculty frequenting the library on a daily basis. She remarks that there is a more calm and relaxed atmosphere within the library, stating that the renovations have been "like a breath of fresh air". For some students, the library is an after school hangout hot spot. Others use it as a quiet place to get their work done. Whether you're looking for inspiration or searching for a place to talk to your friends, there's always a seat open for you in the library. Stop by anytime and check out the fruits the library has to offer.

SFHS FOOTBALL

Nick Stachowski

As the first day of school rolled around, this year, many saw the school for the first time since the end of the previous year. However, the football team had been at the school for the couple months before practicing and getting ready for the schedule they faced. Eight weeks into the season the team's record does not reflect the work and adversity they have faced and have gone through.

One major change the team had gone through is the change of their offensive coordinator. The coaching staff quickly decided to switch the type of offense to better equip the team and to play to their skills. Watching the games one will notice that the team goes into a no huddle offense. This is very different from previous years and has caused some trouble, but as a team the players worked together to focus on

what lie ahead putting aside their own wants to help the team.

As they journey forward the team found faith in their sophomore quarterback. Starting last year, after the injury of the senior, Gerald Hickson gained experience he uses to help his team during the 2014-2015 season. With this faith the team bonded as they began to know and trust their quarterback who too was going through the struggle of the new offense.

As the team continues forward towards the end of the season, the team dreads the day that it will all be over. Until then, they will fight for one another on the field to honor the bond they share not only with each other but also with the many others that have played before them and the many more that will come afterwards.

Four Years Come and Go by Ryan DiPasquale

The four years you attend high school are the years that have some of the greatest change in them. The fastest years of my life thus far, from a freshman to a senior. The classes, the teachers, and the responsibility changes, but the greatest change is the view. From seats in the middle of Aud, to the front row of the bleachers at sports games; the seniors always lead the way.

This year it has been a whole new experience cheering on my classmates, but this winter season it is my turn to do the winning. As the fall season soon comes to a close, the winter season will begin. The tryouts are coming for all the new sports to begin. The hockey team is looking to keep building as we expand to five teams like we have had in past years. The basketball team is also coming a decent season and looking to improve. The wrestling team ended the season champions last year once again, and they are looking to continue the dynasty they have created in the Monsignor Martin League. The swimming team is hoping to improve and become stronger also.

Fellow seniors, as we continue on into our fourth year here at St. Francis High School, I encourage you to take advantage of the time you have left, and cheer on the teams here at school as much as possible. That cheer may help our teams get the boost they need to win.

How Does Silly String Relate to Chemistry?

Tyler Morano

Most Saint Francis High School students went to third period on October 24. Meanwhile, students in AP chemistry and those who were in the Chemistry Olympiad visited Honeywell Institute. As a research lab in Buffalo, Honeywell develops products and tests for compounds that will be the most efficient and the most environmentally friendly. Developing compounds for refrigerators or insulation, the company supplies safe and effective goods that are commonly used today. At Honeywell, the students were able to learn about the different jobs people could have there and how chemistry may be applied outside the classroom.

How does silly string relate to chemistry? As a kid, many people would spray a can without thinking about the mechanism behind it. The propellant in a can of silly string is a chemical compound that research labs like Honeywell produce. Unlike today, aerosols like silly string cans used to be filled with dangerous substances, but researchers found ones less harmful to the environment. While students learned about Honeywell as a company, they also saw how the research lab could be a place for future employment. In one of the labs, Mr. Cretacci asked what kinds of degrees scientists held at the facility. While most companies want master's degrees at least, Honeywell accepted workers with Bachelor's degrees as well. Additionally, some of the people were not even science majors and worked as mechanics or mechanical engineers. One will never know the knowledge a person will need.

At school, students sometimes wonder about the real world application of derivatives and the dog's nuts. They will criticize them as terms that are limited to math and science respectively, thinking they are unnecessary for the future. However, nobody knows what will happen next. Do people know for certain what will happen tomorrow, what will be asked, and what will be discussed? At Saint Francis High School, students are privileged to have teachers that care about education and that know the applications of their material in society. If a teacher is explaining a difficult topic, do not deride it as inapplicable and useless. Just learn and understand that, one day, it may be worthwhile.

Chan Ho, Yun

SAT PREP: Two Cultures One Goal

SAT. This abbreviation is one of the most important abbreviations to high school students. To some students, this will relatively come easy and to the other some, it will require a lot of work. This distinction is significantly shown between the two cultures: Asians (Asians who are foreign exchange students) and Americans. There was a big difference between Asians to Americans who are preparing to take SAT. Asians, who have English as second language, prepared more compared to Americans, who have English as first language. However, there was a huge gap in time wise between the two races.

Most of Asians briefly start studying for SAT in their 9th or 10th grades because, once again, they cannot compete with Americans in reading speed when it comes to SAT reading section. Most of Asians focus on reading section while they are studying for SAT. On the other hand, according to 10 American sophomores in St. Francis High School, they said they WILL care about SAT later. There was a clear distinction in attitudes between the two races when it came to preparation for SAT.

The time period of the two cultures preparing for SAT was also different. Most of Asians frequently study and memorize the SAT vocabularies during the school year; however, the intensity and time they spend during the school year is not in depth. They spend summer vacation (few weeks or entire summer vacation) studying for SAT. In that part, we can assume how desperate the Asians are when it comes to SAT grades and how much effort they put into. On the other hand, according to a senior of St. Francis High School, he said he studied during the Christmas vacation, which was only 2 weeks, and took the SAT. By looking at the difference in preparing time the races spent, we can assume that Americans are not as desperate and hard working as Asians when it comes to SAT. I can assume the American attitudes is due to the fact they used and listened to the English language ever since they were born and on. I think they learn the difficult words easily, and their level of reading comprehension skills far exceeds the level of foreign Asians. The previous statement can sound like a cliché; however, it definitely is a cause and root of the American's attitudes when it comes to preparation for SAT. I hope, as one of the foreign Asian student who is studying in America, the Asians to keep up the hard work and pay off their hard works in the SAT Test.