

## Off-season proves more exciting than football

The off season for the NFL for the past two years has been nothing but spectacular. Five Cincinnati Bengals were arrested on various charges last year; the Chicago Bears Terry "Tank" Johnson was arrested for violating his parole for having a concealed firearm which leads us to this summer.

Two major NFL stories have shaken the sports world. On Feb. 19 Adam "Pacman" Jones was involved in a nightclub shooting on Las Vegas strip during the 2007 NBA All Star Weekend. Jones, who had previously been arrested five times, was arrested for assault after allegedly hitting one of the club's dancers while he was trying to "make it rain" on the stage, by throwing hundreds of one dollar bills. Jones was also questioned on a shooting that happened the same night, when a member of his entourage shot down a bodyguard outside the same club.

Jones was suspended for the 2007-2008 NFL season for actions by NFL commissioner Roger Goodell. Jones, who believed his punishment was too harsh, tried to appeal the suspension in April, but later dropped the appeal due to the overwhelming evidence and his prior arrest history.

The other, more recent, NFL story

comes from Michael Vick. Early in July, ESPN claimed that Vick had been indicted for allegedly operating a dog fighting ring in the state of Virginia. The numerous counts of dog fighting activities and animal cruelty were so long, the indictment just for Vick was 19 pages long. Vick and three other men were arrested after a house, owned by Vick, was searched by Virginia police. Police stated they found dog fighting operational tools such as a pry bar, nooses, treadmills, and an actual fighting pit. Along with equipment, police also stated they found remains of dogs on the property as well other abused dogs. Police also they found performance enhancing drugs and syringes that hinted that Vick might have injected the dogs with steroids to help rebuild their muscles after a fight and/or possibly a massive "freak" dog. Vick was also indicted on counts that he helped execute dogs who did poorly in dog fights and tortured the dogs to help aggravate and make them more aggressive.

After these two blockbuster events happen, what should people think about the NFL players and their new way of life? This new "thug" and "gangster" mentality, as NFL com-

missioner Goodell says, is not suitable for children who idolize these athletes. Both Vick and Jones have such tremendous talents and seem to just put them to waste on idiotic crimes. These men live gifted lives of being multi-millionaires by doing a job that they actually enjoy. But is the new youth culture and celebrity peers to blame for these actions?

In a new day when Lindsey Lohan and Britney Spears all are seen in the tabloids or on television publicly intoxicated or doing something else completely stupid, does that coerce athletes and other athletes to behave badly? Does "hip hop" culture, make these men do heinous crimes? The answer is no. Jones and Vick should both be responsible for what they have done. Both men, who although were in groups of people during their time of crimes, chose to be hanging out with these people. It wasn't this hip hop life style of "wanting to go torture some dogs", or "let's hit someone" that made these men do this. The thought that kids are going to start gambling on dog fights or start random fights is a little far-fetched. But it does make a person wonder how kids will react to Vick and Jones. Will this "gang-like" men-

The Gro-ing  
Fact  
By Nick  
Groman



tality start pushing kids over the edge into a life of crime?

Although nothing too drastic should happen to the youth of the new generation, there is an actual sensible reason for these mens' actions. These men just plainly made a mistake. A mistake that both men have apologized for. I'm sure Vick doesn't want to have the reputation for being a dog killer for the rest of his life. And I'm sure Jones doesn't want to be thought of as some thug the rest of his life either. I believe both men were just in too deep with situations they couldn't handle. And as they surrounded themselves by worse people, they started to dig a hole deeper and deeper around them. A hole that simply got so large and bearing, that there lives started to crumble.

So as the 2007-2008 NFL season starts, one question should be in the back of everyone's mind, can I forgive Michael Vick and Pacman Jones?

## Summer reading: student/teacher treachery Or our school's smartest idea yet?

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times (my apologies to Dickens, I'm a quote thief). It was one heck of a hot summer, and students were spending it reading books. I'm talking page-turning, spine-bending labor. What terrible, horrible teachers would assign such gruesome work to be completed over break? New Richmond teachers, villainous for wanting to expand our minds with forgotten culture and literary enrichment! *And you call yourselves human...*

After the new requirements were released for summer reading at the end of the 2007 school year, all I heard were complaints from the student body. Occasionally, I ran into New Richmond students while I was out and about, and I would stop for a minute to catch up on things, be polite. But guess what they talked about almost every single time? Summer reading. They either said they hadn't

done it yet, complained about having to do it, or put the educational system down for making them do it. But the assignment wasn't hard: standard English students were required to read and complete *one* book over the three long months of summer. Only one. But here's the kicker: they were able to pick from titles such as *Harry Potter and the deathly Hallows* and *The Hobbit*. And for a quick read, *Anthem*, with a short 88 pages of large print text. They had no papers to write, no journals to keep; all they had to do was read the book before the 2007/2008 school year began in August.

It grew ridiculous, listening to all of the complaints, when advanced English students were required to read two books over the summer, and AP English had to read five. But students in those courses were assigned books; they couldn't read Tolkien or Rowling and get away with it for

school. Standard students get by as easily as they can while doing absolutely nothing.

It seems that in society today, reading is looked down upon by most individuals my age. Why in god's name would I read a book when I don't absolutely have to? Because I want to. And there's nothing wrong with that. But it's like the pre-society *wants* a stupid culture where literary references and allusions don't exist. People *want* to go through high school without cracking a reading book. And I'm sure some do. The standard English III class last year listened to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* on an audio CD instead of reading it. These are juniors, 16 and 17 years of age, having a classic story read aloud to them. And why? Because teachers knew most wouldn't bother to read it on their own.

Someone with power somewhere

Who could  
have  
thought?



By Brandi Dickerson

came to some senses before summer break and enforced the reading requirement, and I think it was one of the best decisions New Richmond ever made for its students. Students might not care much for it, and I'm sure I'll be blamed if they continue summer reading next year, because I support it (yes, I'm sorry student body; I betrayed the majority of you). But trust me when I say reading, even if only one book a year, is healthy for the mind. The world is smart, and getting smarter. Would students rather keep up with this expansion of knowledge? Or fall behind as the literary society moves forward without them? It's a choice, not an obligation. But it will affect us, nonetheless.

## The Messenger Editorial

So, what were you doing the weekend before school started? Last swim in the backyard pool? Last chance for late night barbecue parties with your favorite group of friends? Last minute road trip to the destination of your choice?

While you were indulging yourself in the last rites of summer, our custodial staff members were playing hero, getting the high school ready for school opening. If you didn't see the building prior to the custodial tornado that last weekend, let's just say disaster area is a grotesque understatement. In addition to the piles of furniture in every single room, the mountainous stacks of books and supplies in the cafeteria, and the leftover construction debris in the hallways, every single surface in the entire building was covered in a gritty, white dust.

Every custodian in the district pitched in to help our NRHS custodial staff and miraculously, in typical superhero fashion, they got the job done. When teachers reported to school on Aug. 20, the floors were waxed, the classrooms were clean, the furniture was where it belonged and other than those pesky barricades covering rooms not quite ready, not a sign of construction debris lingered anywhere.

Sometimes we forget that the behind-the-scenes people are perhaps the most indispensable. Our custodians proved on that obnoxiously hot weekend in August that we truly can't run this district without them. They sweated their way through what looked like an insurmountable task and came out victorious--exhausted, no doubt, but victorious.

We started school on time because of our custodial staff. We want to officially announce our gratitude and appreciation and share both with our readers, and encourage everyone in our district to do the same.

## The Messenger

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The Messenger would like to remember Mrs. Betty McKenney as we begin our 68th year, and once again, thank her for her many contributions to our paper.

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Opinions expressed in *The Messenger* are the opinions of the writers only and not necessarily the opinions of the adviser or administration of New Richmond High School.

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Letters to the editor are always welcome and we will print them as space allows. Please submit any correspondence to the high school office or drop off in Mrs. Griffin's mailbox, or email at [griffin\\_s@nrschools.org](mailto:griffin_s@nrschools.org). Questions should be directed to Sue Griffin, x10204.