

# The Challenger

## Literature Around Campus

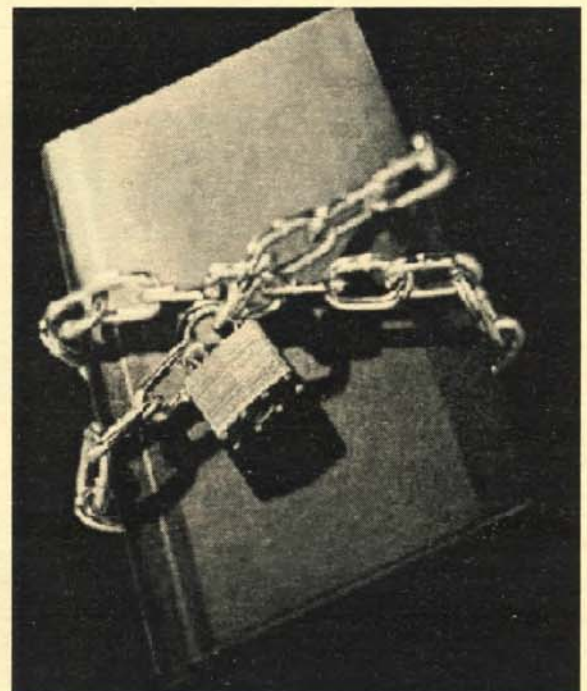
A Publication of the Harper College Honors Program

December, 2008



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# THE HARRY POTTER GENERATION

by Sydney Lara

1997. A lightning bolt struck the world. Not a typical weather-related one, but one that formed on a young wizard's forehead. Most people are familiar with the Harry Potter series, and some have literally grown up with Harry Potter. They started to read him when they were in elementary school and as the books ended so did their childhood. It took author J.K. Rowling a decade to complete the series, giving readers the time to grow with the characters.

Many of the hardcore "muggle" (non-magical person) fans started reading the Potter books when they first came out in 1997. They began reading the books when they were in the wee years of their educational careers; they had no idea that the Harry saga would end around the time of their adolescence, nor would they know how many similarities they would have with the characters of the novels. Ashley, a Harper second year, says, "When I was reading the books, I could so easily relate to Ron and Hermione because they were going through awkward stages of life at the same time I was and that could be why I like [the books] so much."

The Potter generation went through all the things the characters of the books went through - minus the magic. It's not unlikely that you'll hear any person (not just fans of the series) say, "I wish I was a wizard; my life would be so much easier." However, by reading the books, one can see that being a wizard is just as hard as being magic-less. Harry Potter still has to go to school and on top of that he has to fight the infamous Lord Voldemort, deal with the social awkwardness of being a teenager, live with a family who completely despises him, and pass his O.W.L.S. - which determine what he will be when he grows up. Like most books, Harry Potter readers tend to identify themselves with a character, or house. If you hear someone say he or she loves Slytherin, make a note to yourself that he or she is a dark individual, while people who say they really like Gryffindor are probably courageous and smart (or would like to think that they are). The Ravenclaw house is for the cunning and tactful, and the Hufflepuff house is typically for every other wizard who does not fit in at the other houses.

True fans would reserve their copy of the latest Harry Potter book months in advance and would attend the midnight celebration at a local Barnes & Nobel to count down the minutes to the release. Other fans joined online forums on websites such as Mugglenet.com to gossip and predict what they think would happen in the next book. Now that the series has ended, many people feel a void in their lives. Mackenzie, Harper first year, says, "at least there are still the movies to look forward to. When that's over it will really be over. I mean I'll still probably read the series every winter break, but I really miss



having something to look forward to.” Since there are no more books to read or book premieres to go to, many fans will go to the movie premiere next July decked out in their Harry Potter gear.

Some young kids and older adults who have not grown to adore the books of Harry still follow along with the movies, but Mugglenet blogger Harry-queen312 argues that “movie fans don’t get the same type of excitement as the book fans. They also miss out on a lot of detail that goes on in the book. When I watch the movies, I don’t think I would know what was going on if I hadn’t read the books.”

Harry Potter has changed the lives of many individuals and gave some children a reason to read and like books. Despite fans being sad the series has ended, Harry Potter will live on and be spread to later generations. If it can spark so much magic with one generation, it is bound to do the same with others.

### Real Life Quidditch

In the magical world of Harry Potter, there is a sporting game that captures the interest of many witches and wizards – the sport of quidditch. Quidditch is somewhat like soccer, but on brooms.

Students at Middlebury College have made their own “muggle” version of this game, have formed many quidditch teams, and are successfully having tournaments against other east coast schools. The muggle version of this game consists of seven players on each team – just like the book. Three of the seven players are chasers, who chase around a slightly deflated volleyball and try to get it through one of the three circular goals – which are made from hula hoops on poles. Two of the team members are beaters who throw around a dodge ball at whomever they wish in order to try to interrupt the opposing team’s focus. One is a keeper who is like a goalie in the game, trying to block the goals from being made. The last player is the seeker, who chases around a “golden snitch” during the game. When caught, the golden snitch is worth 150 points, and the game ends. Those familiar with the books might be wondering, how are they making a golden snitch? It is true that in the series the snitch is a little gold ball that flies everywhere, so the Middlebury students have a person



dress in all yellow and tie a tennis ball to the waist to suffice for the snitch.

In reality, there are three games going on in this one – tag, soccer, and dodge ball. These three mixed together make up what the players of the game call “the most exciting thing on campus.” Oh, did I mention that each player has to run around with a broomstick between his or her legs? Talk about difficult.

Erin Wilson, a co-founder of the sport, told RedandBlack.com, “It was the love of Harry Potter, and the crazy idea that this might work. We were kind of like, ‘Hey, this may work.’ And we made a Facebook group, and people thought it was cool.”

Quidditch is getting big at Middlebury and some students are even basing their college decision on the game. Administrators at the schools who support the game love that fact because it’s something with which to bribe students. Who knows? Maybe someday (hopefully), quidditch will be a real sport and available at all colleges. ♡

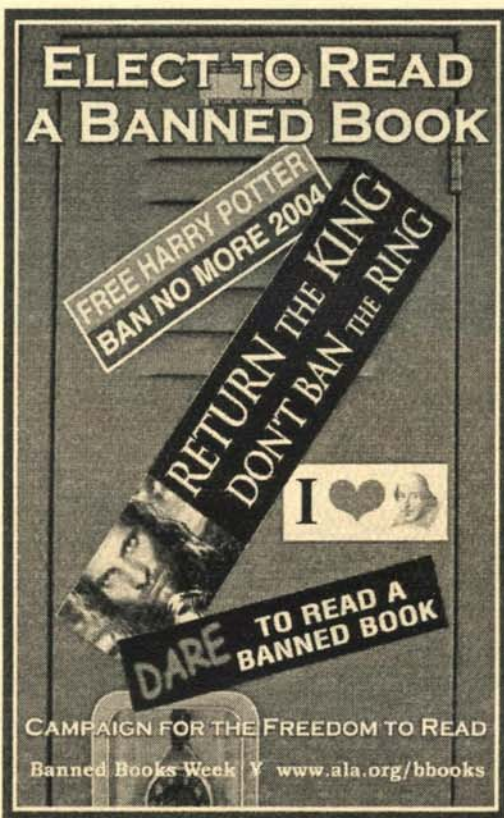
# BBW: What?

by Sharon Gonzalez

It is always at the end of September, when one is finally getting used to the classes, the professors, the homework, when the posters go up. Plastered around the buildings, bright, some cheery, others mysterious, but all announcing the same thing:

## BANNED BOOKS WEEK!

Of course, as is typical of college students, the flyers, often around the library encouraging visitors to 'Read A Banned Book!' and to then come in to discuss the book, are often glanced at and forgotten if not



completely ignored. There are some that read a book and enjoy going to the discussions, but the majority of people do not seem to care. They forget that the beloved book titled *The Hobbit* was challenged on the grounds of Satanism or that the series behind the hit TV series *Gossip Girl* was challenged because it contained sexuality and homosexuality. Perhaps boys did not know that the book series they read, *Scary Stories*, was charged with being unsuited for the intended audience and for speaking of the occult, among other things. The concept of Banned Books Weeks is often lost on people and thus, easily discarded.

Started in 1982, Banned Books Week, or BBW, emerged from the desire to protect the First Amendment right: the freedom of speech. Librarians believed that people trying to take books from the public eye trespassed into the free speech right and as such banded together to fight against the action. According to the American Library Association's website,

"BBW celebrates the freedom to choose or the freedom to express one's opinion even if that opinion might be considered unorthodox or unpopular and stresses the importance of ensuring the

availability of those unorthodox or unpopular viewpoints to all who wish to read them."

When thinking of banned books, one immediately thinks that the books have been banned already and that we are being encouraged to read literature that has been 'banned' for some reason or another. The majority really could care less. They think if the book has been labeled a 'banned book', it has been banned, and this means that it should not be read. They fail to recognize that common books –like *To Kill A Mockingbird*, charged with using the word "nigger", and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, charged with being degrading to African Americans and actually pulled from three public high schools' reading lists in the state of Washington in 2004 – are included on the list. There are others as well; anyone remember *The Giver* by Lois Lowry? Yes, that, too, was challenged.

*Continued on Page 6*

# The Kindle

by Sydney Lara

As years go on technology develops and the items that used to be necessities vanish while new items become indispensable. Amazon.com recently came out with an alternative way to read – the Kindle. The Kindle allows an individual to read a book electronically. There is no physical action of turning the page, and you no longer have to carry around the three novels you are reading at a time. All you need is this one device.

The Kindle is light, compact, and sleek. There is no question that if you are seen in a college class with one somebody will ask you if they can take a look at it. Lindsey, Harper second year, owns a Kindle and says “I only use it for some classes, but whenever anyone sees it I always get a lot of glares. It’s like people think it’s a bomb or something.” So if you want to be noticed, the Kindle is for sure one way that may happen. When I asked Lindsey if she would recommend it to anyone, she said “only if you’re willing to dish out the dough. My mom and I share this one so it’s not that bad, but I don’t think I’ll ever have one of my own. I don’t know how to work it other than flip the pages, and I don’t really care to learn either.”

After purchasing the Kindle, consumers are able to access Amazon.com’s electronic library and purchase books for a lower fee than the book would be if purchased at a local bookstore. There seems to be advantages to this new device; it’s lighter, easier to purchase, and seemingly more affordable. This brings up interesting questions; will this mini-computer take the place of the home library? Are we developing into a world that no longer needs books?

It seems very unlikely. Books have sentimental value to people worldwide and are everlasting. Many college students feel that the Kindle would ultimately be nice. They wouldn’t have to lug around four giant textbooks anymore. They could fit their one Kindle into a handbag of choice. However, not all textbooks are offered electronically and the ones that are often cost just as much as their paper counterparts. The Kindle itself costs \$399, and one of the few math textbooks that is offered is still \$120.00.

*Continued on Page 8*

**Lindsey, Harper Second Year,  
on her Kindle:**

**“I only use it for some classes, but whenever anyone sees it I always get a lot of glares. It’s like people think it’s a bomb or something.”**



**BBW: Continued from Page 4**

To try to get the attention of these fickle-minded readers – and the general public for that matter – the American Library Association prepares a kit every year for libraries to use to promote BBW. The kits are filled with materials like posters, bookmarks, and a Resource Guide that is useful for setting up the BBW display and events that would be presented throughout the entire week. The kits are not free; they do have to be bought. It is a small price to pay in an effort to inform the public of books being threatened to be pulled from the shelves. For this year, the theme chosen was: “Closing Books Shuts Out Ideas”. Our own library was part of BBW. Offered throughout the week were discussions on banned books that anyone could participate in, though it did help if the book was actually read.

The Association has a list of the books that have been challenged in the past – though most of the books have only been challenged and not necessarily banned, which is why some critics wonder why the event is called Banned Books. The ALA has taken to responding with two logical reasons on their website. One, it is because they are not the sole owners of the name and they do not wish to change ‘Banned’ to ‘Challenged’; two, because of the groups involved in BBW believe

“...a challenge is an attempt to ban or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group. A successful challenge would result in materials being banned or restricted.”

Each year, along with the kit’s materials, the ALA releases a list of banned books from the past as well as those that have been challenged recently. Reasons for books being challenged range widely, but most often, they are challenged by concerned parents who believe the material is inappropriate or contains offensive language for the intended audience if the audience is children. In fact, according to the ALA’s statistics, of the 3,019 challenges recorded in the 2000-2005 period, 811 were carrying the argument of offensive language and 714 argued that a certain book was sexually explicit. Parents ultimately decide what kind of books their children should read and children will follow the example. There are children that are rebellious and nevertheless read the books their parents find offensive, but in general, parents can set the standard. As such,

In a Poll of Harper Students, **47%** said they read 1-9 hours per week for school compared to **23%** who choose not to read at all.



librarians cannot intercede by blocking off books – that would be keeping books away from other patrons and taking away the choice that parents have to make.

Some challenged books are commonly known, and these books are often challenged by parents. With such high publicity, it is quite likely that the child will wish to read a book. The Bible has been challenged the most. One of the most widely known book series, The Harry Potter Series, was challenged immensely – J.K. Rowling is actually listed as number four on the Top Ten Challenged Authors of 1990-2004. *The Half Blood Prince* was actually taken out of a school! Some might argue against it, but there were those that considered the books to be offensive. Perhaps that was the best example of the fight BBW participates in: the fight to keep books available to the public in order to expand their views. ♡



# A Novel History: Taylor's “Trenchmouth”

by Sharon Gonzalez

History is not usually the subject that makes one's day. In general, most students would rather think about other matters in their lives than ponder a battle that occurred a hundred years ago. Once in a while, however, there come along very helpful tools that grab a student's interest in the past. The teacher comes along that is able to meld history with stories – and pair them in a book that offers insight into certain time periods. When grouped together, amazing things come to happen and a student is engrossed in the lesson. Harper has many professors that have melded the two tools together. One of them is Professor M. Glenn Taylor. He recently published a fiction book of his own titled *The Ballad of Trenchmouth Taggart*, which takes place in the early twentieth century and follows protagonist 'Trenchmouth' as he goes through his long life.

It must be said that the thought of reading something that has historical content does not appeal to many. It certainly does not appeal to me as a reader. Simply put, it is not a genre I prefer – I revel in fantasy fiction. However, while exploring literature at Harper, it was not long before the mention of Professor Taylor's new book reached interested ears. I decided to look into it, though I was secretly a little disappointed to discover the protagonist is male – and that it is all in his perspective. It is not often that a book with a male protagonist intrigues me and as such, I was hesitant to begin reading. But the title was too intriguing and the thought that one of Harper's professors had spent time writing a novel won me over. I finished the novel at a leisurely pace, drinking in the details and liking the way the story flowed. *Continued on Page 9*

**Kindle: Continued from Page 7**

This is a hefty price to invest on a student's salary, and it is hard to do because the Kindle does not allow one to sell back a used electronic book. Why should one buy a Kindle book for \$120, when he or she could inevitably by a used one for 80% of that price, and then sell it back to get a little bit of his or her investment back?



When asked if she would ever use the Kindle, Harper second year Megan responded, "I don't think so. I like having something in front of me that I can read, highlight, and dog-ear." Megan is not alone. Reporter Robert Mohns doesn't think the Kindle appeals to many either because "[the Kindle's] sharing system is too complicated." He goes on to say that more people would use it if it were set up like an iPod, where file sharing becomes easier and essentially free to anyone who knows how to work the system.

The Kindle does appeal to some, but until they find a more affordable way, I don't think anyone at Harper will be using one. With the economy how it is right now, it's hard to spend money on items for which there are cheaper alternatives. ↗

**40% of those surveyed said they read 1-9 hours a week for their own enjoyment. 28% do not read for enjoyment at all.**

**Trenchmouth: continued from Page 7**

Then again, this was from a professor of fiction writing. I found the book pleasing to read, though it was very different from my usual tastes. I would go so far as to say, sensitive readers take care. There is a violent scene and some coarse language is used.

The book definitely has a more masculine feel to it. Set in the beginnings of the twentieth century, the novel places historical events in key points of the plot. It allows some hint of the times to shine through, all the while keeping the focus on Trenchmouth, a boy who receives his nickname from his oral condition (although his name does change later on). I was not the only one to think the book was a good read. On the book's website, reviews from other authors who have read the novel are displayed. All are favorable and that is to be expected – it is an intriguing book. Eric Miles Williamston from the *Houston Chronicle* writes that the book "bridges the usually irreconcilable gap between popular fiction and literary fiction". Clyde Edgerton, author of *Walking Across Egypt* and *The Bible Salesman*, seems to agree, saying "It's a testament to Taylor's craft as a writer that this story is so detailed, present, and personal, yet covers so much time--a hundred years or so. It's as if we were there, marveling at something in danger of being lost". Whith such reviews, it was time to get a better look at the author behind the book.

Professor Taylor teaches English 101, 102, and Lit 115 : Introduction to Fiction here at Harper. He received his Masters from Ohio University in 1999 and his Master of Fine Arts from Southwest Texas State University in 2002. His interests are fiction writing and contemporary fiction – a good thing considering he



teaches those topics. In an effort to know a little bit more behind the novel, a few questions were asked of the busy author.

After reading the book, I was curious. What was it that inspired the novel? Taylor answered that it was inspired by “both my father’s stories of growing up in Matewan, West Virginia, where the book begins, and by the many West Virginia history books I stole from him.” It should be noted that he does say ‘where the book begins’. The novel will allow the reader to visit other places and as such, meet different people from different levels of society in those times. In order to get the people right, Taylor of course did research. Aside from the books he ‘stole’ from his father, Taylor also used “travels and talks with my father” to further expand the story.

I find it interesting that Taylor used his father for research purposes – it parallels the story in a way. *The Ballad of Trenchmouth Taggart* has many themes, but the one concerning a paternal figure is the most evident. The book explores the thought of having no father, of ‘adopting’ a father figure, and of becoming a father figure. Each side is explored throughout the book and in some instances, Trenchmouth’s name changes as he begins to explore a new side of the parental role.

There are more similarities between author and protagonist than just the father figure being influential. Discipline is very big for Trenchmouth. Early on he is given a strict exercise routine that he maintains throughout his lifetime. He keeps certain strictness to his person and his doings. It is something that must have been inherited from Taylor, who, when asked about writer’s block and how it affected his writing, responded that it “may have provided some obstacles, but in the end, there is no such thing as writer’s block. It’s merely an excuse not to get work done.” He completely harmonizes with Trenchmouth when he states that “discipline must always prevail.”

Both Trenchmouth and Taylor ultimately have a message to deliver, some advice to give out. Trenchmouth gives his freely, but places more emphasis on getting it across to one certain person near the end of the novel. Taylor has advice for the up-and-coming writer that is useful and straight to the point:

“My advice for writers just getting started would be the following. Carry a pocket notebook and a pen with you always. When you observe something worth writing down, do it. When you get an idea worth writing down, do it. Also, read, read, read. And finally, put your ass in the chair, to paraphrase many a writer. In other words, be disciplined and scheduled about sitting down to write.”

From the author who was turned to writing by an autobiography of a boxer – and who “... loved it, became obsessed with it, and began to pen my own little books that basically plagiarized the plot line of Graziano’s book...” – we can expect more to come. He has reached beyond the borders of fiction, meddling with poetry and non-fiction. While Taylor admits that “the results were less than stellar,” he has hope that “maybe by the time I’m 75 years old, I’ll be a triple threat.” ♡

Poll results showed that **36%** claimed to use the Internet to stay informed compared to the **19%** who use TV. **32%** said they use two or more variations of the Internet, TV, magazines, and word of mouth.

# Harper Honors Spring 2009 Courses

If you have not signed up yet, here are Honors Courses you can take. Hurry and register! They are almost out of space. Reserve your seat today!

## Honors Credit Courses for Spring 2009

**ENG 102 (“Chicago Literature”)**, with Professor Nancy Davis. English 102 fulfills a Communications gen. ed. requirement. 3 credit hours. Tues./Thurs., 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**GEG 101 & PSC 270 (World Geography & Global Politics)**, with Professors Veronica Mormino and Bobby Summers. (This is a “linked” class; you must sign up for both.) GEG 101 fulfills a Soc. and Behav. Sciences gen. ed. requirement; PSC 270 also fulfills a Soc. and Behav. Sciences gen. ed. requirement. Both courses fulfill Harper’s World Cultures and Diversity requirement. 6 credit hours, total. Tues./Thurs., 9:25 a.m. to 10:40 a.m. (GEG 101), and then 10:50 a.m. to 12:05 p.m. (PSC 270).

**LIT 115 (“Humor and Satire in Fiction”)**, with Professor Trygve Thoreson. Fulfills Humanities gen. ed. requirement. 3 credit hours. Wednesdays, 6:25 p.m. to 9:05 p.m.

**CHM 122 (General Chemistry II)**, with Professor Tom Dowd. Fulfills Physical Sciences gen. ed. lab course requirement. 5 credit hours. Mon./Wed., 1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. (class); Tues., 3:05 p.m. to 5:35 p.m. (lab); Wed., 2:50 p.m. to 3:40 p.m. (discussion).

**ANT 101 (Anthropology)**, with Professor Helmut Publ. Fulfills Soc./Behav. Sciences gen. ed. requirement. 3 credit hours. Mon./Wed., 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

**SPE 101 (Speech)**, with Professor Margaret Bilos. Fulfills Communications gen. ed. requirement. 3 credit hours. Mondays, 6:35 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.

**AST 101 (Astronomy)**, with Professor Paul Sipiara. Fulfills Physical Sciences gen. ed. requirement. 4 credit hours. Mon./Wed., 3:05 p.m. to 5:35 p.m.

**IDS 290 (Independent Study/The Challenger)** Fulfills Approved Electives gen. ed. requirement. 3 or 4 credit hours. Limit: 4 students. Time/place to be decided.

**HUM/HST 105 (Great Ideas of World Civilization)**, Professor TBA. Fulfills Humanities gen. ed. requirement. 3 credit hours. Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. to 9:10 p.m.

**HUM/HST 105, 2nd section (Great Ideas of World Civilization)**, with Professor David Richmond. Tues./Thurs., 1:40 p.m. to 2:55 p.m.

### Works Consulted

BBW: What?

<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/bannedbookweek/bannedbookweek.cfm>

The Kindle

<http://www.macintouch.com/reviews/kindle/>

A Novel History: Taylor’s “Trenchmouth”

<http://www.trenchmouthtaggart.com/the-book.php>



Harper College

Harper College complies with E. E. O. C. requirements.

Editor's Note: As mentioned in the article "The Harry Potter Generation," there is a 'muggle' version of quidditch. To further show evidence of this, here are some rules that are applied on Georgia's campus and a general overview of the game's fouls gathered by Sydney Lara.

## QUIDDITCH AT GEORGIA

- On the field at one time there ought to be seven players of each team, including two beaters and five chasers.
- There will also be one seeker per team.
- There will be a single snitch per game who must not have any affiliations, personal or professional, with either team playing.
- The snitch is released three minutes prior to the start of the game.
- Game play ends when the snitch capture is called in to the referee.
- A goal is worth 10 points, the snitch is worth 150 points.
- The team with the most points upon the snitch being caught wins.

*- University Quidditch Team Facebook Group Page*

## QUIDDITCH FOULS

- Bludger Turnover  
Traveling: walking while holding the bludger or not throwing it beyond 5 feet from one's body while self-passing
- Illegal Knocking of the Quaffle (e.g. wrist slap or frisbee slap)  
Team fouled keeps possession and play continues
- Shootout: immediately playable frisbee; positioned anywhere not blocking the shot
  1. Non-chaser intentionally interferes with a quaffle
  2. Unwarranted physical foul
  3. Defender enters crease to block a shot
- Quaffle Turnover
  1. Traveling: movement that goes beyond a single foot pivot while in possession
  2. Dropping of the Quaffle
  3. Chaser holding the Quaffle gets hit by a bludger
- Five Spins in Place  
Chaser gets struck by a bludger by any means

*- (Redandblack.com)*

# MACBETH



**Tickets are selling out!**

Come see William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* performed in the Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Navy Pier!

Performance: Thursday, February 26, 2009 at 7:30PM

Tickets are \$35 per person (**\$27 for students**)

Money is due with a name and phone number by **January 28, 2009** at 12 noon to Prof. Barb Njus in L203. All checks are asked to be made payable to Barbara Njus.

There is an optional dinner before the showing at 5:15 PM at the Navy Pier Food Court. If interested in the dinner, please confirm with Prof. Njus before February 15.

## **The Challenger is looking for a Fresh Spring Staff!**

With a new semester around the corner, *The Challenger* bids goodbye to its fall staff and eagerly awaits the arrival of the spring staff. Up to four new writers are needed to replace fall's two editors. Will you be on the team?

There is no set meeting or class schedule until all the members are confirmed. You would then decide what theme to focus on for each of the issues to be printed and what topics each member would be in charge of researching. An independent class, *The Challenger* is a great way to experiment working together with others in the field of journalism.