

# Odyssey Review

Volume 2, Issue 2

Spring 2008

*Student Writers:*

Stephanie Pagan  
Leslie Romhilt  
Jennifer Cox  
Raven Stephens

*Special points of interest:*

- Having problems with eClassroom? Need directions on how to submit an assignment? Call the tech support hotline 24/7 at 1-877-627-7890
- Computer broken? Just acting funny? OCS offers a computer repair service. Email techsupport@odysseyk12.org for more information
- **Spring Break March 17-21**
- Scholarship Applications now available. See your counselor for details.
- **OCHS Career Week is April 14-18.**

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## Student Union Now Available at OCHS

Odyssey is proud to introduce a student union to its campus. The new student union offers OCHS students a less-restrictive environment in which to study.

Snacks, music and conversation are all welcome in the new student union. Desktop and laptop computers are available for student use.

The student union is located in room E across from the learning lab and is staffed by Mrs. McClain and Mrs. Shillingburg.

Students in need of a quiet and controlled location to study may still use the learning lab.

The learning lab and student union are open from 8-3 Monday through Thursday and Friday from 8-12.



Mrs. McClain and OCHS student, Aanan Butz, take time out from school work to practice their vocabulary with a game of Scrabble.

## March is Safe Place Month at Odyssey High School



“Safe Place is the first step to help for any youth in crisis or at risk. This community collaboration program, operated by youth shelters or youth serving agencies make it possible for any youth to access help at locations including fast food restaurants, convenience stores, fire stations, libraries and city buses which display the Safe Place sign. Youth can easily find help at Safe Place sites in their own neighborhood whenever they need it. Safe Place connects youth to immediate help and safety and offers supportive services to both youth and their fami-

lies.”  
([www.nationalsafeplace.org](http://www.nationalsafeplace.org))

Safe Place of Las Vegas is sponsored by the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth. Every Terrible Herbst Gas Station and all CAT bus stops in Las Vegas are designated Safe Places.

The Nevada Partnership for Homeless youth is the only youth service provider in Nevada with a continuum of care extending from street outreach and 24-hour crisis intervention services to a full-time drop-in center and an independent living program.

The Safe Place drop-in center is located at 4800 S.

Maryland Parkway, Suite E. The hours of operation are Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 6:00pm. The center has a small library, a shower, food pantry, clothing closet, respite room, classroom and personal business station for youth.

Watch for posters and fliers on the OCHS campus the month of March for more information, or you may visit the Nevada Safe Place MySpace page at:

[www.myspace.com/safelacelasvegas](http://www.myspace.com/safelacelasvegas)

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## A Fat Girl's Opinion on Today's Images

### Stephanie Pagan

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*This world isn't  
just made for  
skinny people,  
but it was built  
for people of all  
shapes and sizes.*

Do you know what it's like to walk into a store, or for that matter a restaurant, and have people look at you with disgust because you're obese? Obese! Ha! You might as well just say the word fat. I hate it when people use the terms "obese," "chubby," and "big-boned." Just because people feel sorry for us, doesn't mean they have to use different terms. This world isn't just made for skinny people, but it was built for people of all shapes and sizes. We were all

fabricated differently. Who wants to look like everybody else? They say, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," but who's eyes are we looking through? Apparently all the world wants to see are people who are the size of a toothpick and look like they are going to collapse at any moment. All you see today in the media, on television, and in the ads is the image that Hollywood has created, you know the type the skinny beautiful people, but that image does not represent

the average American. Not everyone can live and look like that. It's too unrealistic. I want to see an actual reality show with people of unique shapes, sizes, age and race. But all you get to see are "jocks" and "cheerleaders," and I'm tired seeing the "pretty" people on those shows. We live in a world with diverse looking people and that's how it should be shown around the world. Give us reality, not unrealistic images.

## Student Sound Off: The Writers Guild Strike

Leslie Romhilt

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Gotta beef with something in the paper? Write a letter to the editor! Send your beef to

[nhaaksma@odysseyk12.org](mailto:nhaaksma@odysseyk12.org)

How would you feel if you worked for someone, did most of the brainwork, and received little money and no credit? I am not the only one who says a strike is called for. According to the Writers Guild of America, they want to be rewarded for the success of the product to which they have made a primary contribution. They would like to be paid a percentage of the products earnings, instead of a fee. The screenwriter's contract expired on October 31, and immediately went into a strike at 12:01.

Without the writers, just about all our shows would be on constant re-runs. For us that sounds boring, but for the producers, it does not

make a difference; they still are paid for them.

WGA writes for all of daytime television, such as "The View" and all soaps. Since they only tape shows for a week at a time, they are expected to be going into re-runs shortly, if they haven't already. I wouldn't worry about your prime time or late night TV shows, they have scripts for months at a time, and some even enough to last us until early next year. According to the writers, they get about three cents for every 20 dollars on DVD retails. As far as the internet, pod casting, and mobile phone distribution profits, they are being determined whether the writers should

even make profit from that. So, what do the producers say? The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers previously called the strike, precipitous and irresponsible.

Hmm, maybe they should make note of what WGA is saying. If the producers keep being stubborn, this strike will out last the last one in 1988, which lasted five months and delayed the start of the fall TV season. They should come to satisfying terms with the WGA, and pay them an agreeable amount, instead of wasting money on actors who just portray the characters that the writers worked so hard to create.

*The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various authors in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of OCHS or official policies of OCHS.*

## Jennifer Cox

Recently I was asked to write a paper on anything of my choosing; I fought with many ideas of what to write about when suddenly something seemed to fall into my hands (or brain) so to speak. I have just recently celebrated my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday; as I went to blow out the candles on my cake I realized that I will never be able to do this again. Every year I blow out a number on a candle, since I was a child it has always served as a ritual, but it wasn't until this year that I actually noticed that I will never be able to get the past year of my life back. As I started to dwell on this epiphany it hit me; how I live one year will determine how I will live the next, granted that at any one moment I am able to change my destiny but overall, choices and mistakes are inevitable. This reminded me of the classic New Year's resolu-

tion, each year millions of people vow to make something in their lives better or different. I decided that this year instead of making a New Year's resolution I was going to make a New Year's revolution. So many times in our lives we have epiphanies when we see 'the light' so to speak and we go with the feeling for a few days and then it fade's, but what if our lives were really lived as if we had no guarantee of tomorrow, how would my life change, how would your life change; it is a scary thought I must admit, but if that's what it takes, then that is what it takes. If living life to its fullest and creating a legacy means that I have to take more risks, love more, or even take time to do nothing, then that is truly worth it 'for what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.'



Jennifer Cox, above posing for the HS yearbook, is a junior at OCHS and in her first year of publications.



Raven, left, with fellow publications student, Aarika Counce.

## Journalist Spotlight: Raven Stephens

Hi! I'm Raven Stephens. I moved to Las Vegas from Los Angeles, CA, eight years ago. I only attended public school for two and a half years, through half of third grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade. I entered Odyssey Charter School right after that. I chose Odyssey because I didn't want to have to deal with all the pressures of a regular middle and high school. When I entered the high school program, I was excited to see all the elective choices we had. If I could add one elective, I would probably add drama. I know it isn't practical to have a drama class in an online school, but I love to act.

I am currently taking eight classes right now, so I don't have a lot of free time. When I do have an instant, though, I'll grab a book and read until I have to do something else. I like getting lost in the fantasy worlds that books provide. I like listening to music as well- currently; it's my Hairspray soundtrack that I listen to most! My favorite type of music is country. I like how the songs tell a story, plus, you can actually *understand* the words. My favorite artists are Rascal Flatts and Carrie Underwood.

I admire Taylor Swift, because she is only eighteen and she is already a self-made star. "Our Song" is one of my favorite songs. The people who I admire the most, though, are not famous at all. I admire my parents. They have always been there for me, ready to understand. We sometimes have spats, but they are really small- especially when compared to some other kids. We're really close; I tend to spend time with them than go out with friends. We stay at home and watch movies, or play board games together. Their marriage is really close. This is really comforting to me- with the high divorce rate nowadays, I know they won't be going anywhere.

One thing most people don't know about me is that I like to sing- a lot. Sometimes, I don't even realize I'm singing until someone tells me to shut up. I memorize songs easily, so they stay in my head, ready to be called up at a moments notice. Often-times, I will be engaged in a conversation, and a certain word or topic can trigger a song in my head. Sometimes, my friends will test me out by saying random words, trying to see if I know a song that relates to that topic. This is actually pretty easy, which attests to the amount of songs floating around my head.

If I could change one thing about the world today, I would eradicate starvation. Earth has more than enough food to feed the entire human race. It is only human greed that starves people. I would make sure that everyone got enough food to eat and feel satisfied after every meal.

Well, there you have it. This essay was a snapshot of Raven Stephens. Now you know what I am basically like. Bye!

# Important Information on The Nevada High School Proficiency Tests

## March 31 - April 3, 2008 is Proficiency Exams Week

During the week of March 31, through April 3, (Mon.-Thur.) 2008, Odyssey Charter High School will be administering the Nevada High School Proficiency Exams on campus. This week has been set by the State of Nevada and by the Clark County School District.

### Personal Testing Schedules

During the upcoming weeks, all students will receive their personal testing schedule. Students will also receive weekly reminders as the testing week approaches. Once again, this is mandatory testing, therefore, all students must attend these exams according to their assigned testing schedule.

### Students in Grade 10

All students in grade 10 will be taking the Reading, Math, and Science examinations. These tests are mandatory for all students in grade 10, and therefore, 10th graders are required to participate.

### Students in Grade 11

All students in grade 11 are required to complete the grade 11 Writing Assessment. Eleventh grade students who have not passed or taken this exam will take it on one day only **Wednesday, April 2, 2008**. Again, this is mandatory testing which is required by the State of Nevada.

*Also (on April 2), 11th graders will be re-taking the Reading, Math, and/or Writing exams, if they have not already passed or taken these examinations.*

### Students in Grade 12

Twelfth graders who have NOT passed the Reading, Writing or Math proficiency tests will re-take those exams during the week of March 31, 2008 to April 3, 2008. All students in Nevada must pass these exams in order to graduate.

### No Regular Classes

Testing will be the only activity on campus during the week of March 31, 2008 through April 3, 2008. Due to the large number of students taking exams regular classes will not be held.

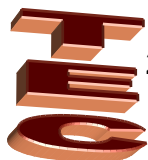
**HOWEVER, all students are required to complete their weekly assignments at home as usual. There will be no classes Friday, April 4.**

### 9th Grade Students (and students who have taken and passed all exams)

Students in the 9th grade and those who have passed all of their proficiencies, will not need to come on campus during this week of March 31 to April 3.

**Students remember to follow your testing schedule.**

**Parents and students if you have any questions regarding testing, please feel free to contact Elaine Mastracchio at 257-0578, ext. 5525, or email her at [emastracchio@odysseyk12.org](mailto:emastracchio@odysseyk12.org).**



## 2007-2008 Activity Schedule

March.....March Madness Movie Night  
 April.....Family Night: 51s Baseball Game  
 May.....End of the Year Movie Night

Interested in joining TEC: Teen Entertainment Committee?  
 Email Mr. Meier at [mmeier@odysseyk12.org](mailto:mmeier@odysseyk12.org) OR  
 Mrs. McClain at [kmcclain@odysseyk12.org](mailto:kmcclain@odysseyk12.org)

## 2007-2008 Schedule of College Recruiter Visits

Wednesday, March 12.....College of Southern NV  
 Friday, April 11.....College of Southern NV  
 Friday, May 16.....College of Southern NV

## Student Writing Corner

### Friend or Foe

By Aarika Counce

We talk every day  
Then I hear you say  
We are Best Friends  
Friends till the end  
Then you go and befriend a foe  
Ask me what my problem is  
Why ask me if I'm a friend  
I was always there so you could  
depend  
Where were you when I needed  
This friendship is no one way  
street  
So you can just go  
And stay away  
Right now I don't need you to

stay  
I can do it myself  
I don't need your help  
Deep down we will always be  
friends  
But I need time for these  
wounds to mend  
So I guess give it some time  
I will love you always no lie  
Our history is long  
But right now I wonder if that  
matters at all  
Will our friendship stand or fall  
So I am left with the Question  
Friend or foe

How to tell  
I don't know  
People are fake, phony, untrue  
I have to ask which one are you

## Terra

Terra suddenly sat upright, her senses heightened by adrenaline. At first, she could not imagine what disrupted her few precious, stolen moments of rest. Another thundering boom rocked the starship, quickly bringing her back to reality. She leapt into action, racing for the command deck.

"Another meteor storm?" she questioned. Nadir, her second-in-command, nodded grimly. "All right then. I'll contact the other ships, tell them to stay close. We don't want to lose anyone else." For hours, the spaceships battled the fierce winds and boulders the meteor shower brought about. As quickly as it had come, the storm receded. After the long hours of restless inactivity, Terra was glad to have something to do. She immediately radioed the other ships. "Sound off: Teams Vale, Terrane, Threa, Titan, Rowld, Grundo, Ridt, Ari, Revir, and Niar, this is team Terra. How are you holding up?" One by one, the captains began to respond, reporting severe storm damage. The ships were battered and weary, but not ready to quit yet. Teams Rowld, Grundo, and Ridt did not respond. Terra summoned them again, feeling the first stirrings of worry. There was no answer.

Finally, Threa, another surviving captain, said, "Team Terra, I lost visual and audio contact with those teams midway through the storm. They seemed to be in the thick of it. I think it's safe to assume they are no longer among us." Terra bowed her head in frustration. There were one hundred ships containing mankind's population when this journey began. Now, there were only eight. She sighed.

"All right. There will be a mourning ceremony in two hours. In the meantime, we shall press on toward the Hope Planet. Terra out." Terra returned to her quarters.

Sitting down at her desk, she mentally reviewed the plan to come. Normally this would help her clear her head, but this time she only felt restless. Out of habit, she opened her old-fashioned diary and began to write:

*Today we lost three ships to the ravages of a meteor shower. Stars above! Will there be no rest for our weary race? I fear I am beginning to crack under the pressure of being the leader of the remnants of the entire human race. Every time my loyal captains look confidently to me for answers, I feel myself wanting to shout at them, "You fools! You would put your trust in an eighteen-year-old girl? How blind can you be?" Yet, I cannot show any weakness, for their sakes. I must stay strong, and be the leader my father was. It is so difficult; I feel failure lurking behind me, as a menacing shadow. How I wish he had trusted someone else with the location of the Hope Planet! But he would tell no one else. I would gladly, though cowardly, give this burden to anyone else, but he swore me to secrecy on his deathbed. Although that moment was three years ago to this day, I can remember every word he spoke, every gesture he made. He told me that only I—his fifteen-year-old daughter, could lead the human race to the Hope Planet, the world so much like our own, they are almost twins. If I cannot obey the final words of my father, then what sort of child will I be? I*

*know, due to the knowledge drilled deep into my brain that we draw closer to the Hope Planet every day. I pray for it to soon appear through the visual screens of our ships, restoring my confidence and that of my fellow humans.*

Terra signed her name to her journal entry and went to consult with Nadir. She needed to correct her course so that they would encounter fewer storms on the way to the Hope planet. She knew the travel-weary starships would not hold out forever.

Two days later, Terra stood looking out her window into outer space. Certain older, more experienced members of her crew had been challenging her earlier that day. Terra sighed as she recalled their cruel words- that she was incapable of leading an entire race, that she would inevitably get them lost in space, with no provisions left. What made it even harder for her to refute these accusations and assert her leadership was that she harbored the same fears deep within her heart. Unbidden, the memory of her father's death sprang into her mind. He was lying on the bed in his quarters, his bones weakened greatly from the many years in outer space. He had whispered something, too low for Terra to hear. Seeing she had not heard, he tried to raise his voice a little. He told her, urgently, that she knew where the Hope Planet was.

"I – what? You never told anyone that."

"Terra, darling, I'm not a fool. When I first discovered the Hope Planet so many years ago, I knew it would take many more years to get there- I knew that the space bone disease would eventually come for me. So, ten years ago, I came to the conclusion that I must tell someone who I trusted implicitly to guide the human race to the Hope Planet. I could not trust just anyone- my instructions need to be followed exactly. No one else respected me so much as to trust me. So, I put the instructions into a fairytale format, one that you would enjoy and beg to hear until you could recite it back to me. You alone know the way to the Hope Planet, and you alone can lead mankind there. Our future rests in your hands." Terra had been at a loss. Her father smiled gently. "When I first examined the Hope Planet under the gaze of my telescope, I knew that there would finally be a safe place for my little girl to grow up in. Our planet was so glutted with pollution and waste that we were dying in the garbage dump of our own creation." He gripped her hand as a spasm of pain tore through him. "Don't be afraid," he whispered. "You'll be fine." With that, he had died.

Terra pulled herself back to the present. She had no time for daydreams; she had a race to preserve. She knew that she needed to make sure that no interstellar winds had blown the ships off course unknowingly. She smiled wryly, knowing that she had just checked the course a few hours ago. Still, it wouldn't hurt to check. Terra turned away from the window. As she did so, something- a small glimmer- caught her eye. Scarcely daring to hope, she looked back again. There! A minuscule speck far in the distance gleamed temptingly. It was a planet, the glow coming from its sun. But was it the Hope Planet? Terra knew the planet was supposedly surround by others, all orbiting the sun at different rates. Nonetheless, if the planet she saw was one of the outer planets, the human race was saved. Her father would no longer be scorned, but hailed as a great hero. Her own confidence and her peoples' confidence in her would be restored. She raced to the observatory to check her course and investigate the planet.

They were on a course straight for the Hope Planet! Terra let out a very un-leader-like whoop of joy. Now that the planet was in sight, the ships could open up their engines to full throttle. They would be able to reach the Hope Planet within a matter of months. There was more than enough fuel and provisions to reach the planet. The human race would have a home, never to travel the universe like nomads again. Terra sprinted to the bridge to tell everyone the news.

Five months passed quickly. There was much to be done in preparation of reaching the Hope Planet. The planet would be in its wildest state, having no sentient life upon it, only animals. It would have to be colonized, environment-friendly cities built. The ships were practically buzzing with activity as people raced about, making sure that everything was perfect for their arrival. Finally, the blue-green planet came into view. Everyone gasped, their breath taken away by the beauty of the planet beneath them.

"It's perfect," Terra breathed. Then she shook herself- she had to guide the ships down to the planet's surface gently. She cleared her throat nervously. "All right teams, back down from full speed. We don't want to spook the inhabitants." She heard chuckles over the network. One by one, the ships pulled out of full throttle. Terra frowned. The planet was still drawing closer, as fast as if they were still under full power. The ships needed to slow down- otherwise, they would crash into the planet below. In an instant, she understood what was going on. She had not accounted for the Hope Planet having a stronger gravitational pull than their home planet. It was drawing the ships in too quickly to make a gentle landing. Despite the sudden panic rising within her, she made an effort to sound calm. "Teams, pull all engines into reverse- full power. Now!" The ships kicked into gear, retreating from the planet. But the man-made machines were no match for the gravitational pull. The engines failed completely, and the Hope Planet reeled them in faster than ever before. As the large ships entered into the atmosphere, they began to scorch with the friction. The metal shrieked and groaned- it was not meant to take such pressure. To Terra's horror, the fleet began to break apart before her disbelieving eyes. She could hear screams and explosions through the network communications. Chaos surrounded her. She had to regain some sort of control quickly, before the human race was lost mere miles above their goal. Over the communication network she shouted, "Get to the life ships!"

There was momentary silence. Then Captain Threa's voice sounded over the network grimly. "Terra," she said in a low voice, "there's no time left." The ships continued to fall.

"No!" Terra screamed. She would not be thwarted at the last moment, within reach of her life's goal. She ran to the ship's command console. It sparked and fizzed; red lights blinked in warning. She scanned the console, looking for manual override. There it was! She was now in momentary control of all the ships. The only way to get them down safely was to use the passenger transport. It would transfer all humans down to the surface safely, but nothing else would follow. Terra didn't hesitate. She slammed the button with all her might.

Terra opened her eyes. She was lying on her back in grass. She smiled. She only knew what grass looked like; mankind had destroyed it completely by the time she was born. Now she was getting to feel it for the first time. Terra had always dreamed of this moment- with one difference. In her fantasy, her father was always beside her. She stood up slowly, slightly dizzy from the transport. All around her, people were standing up in amazement, ecstatic to be alive. A sudden explosion rocked the clearing. All looked up, startled. In their rejoicing, they had momentarily forgotten about their starships. The ships exploded randomly, almost as if they were fireworks

celebrating their arrival. All the technology and knowledge the humans had brought with them to recreate their world was lost to the gravitational field of the Hope Planet. This realization sank in slowly, long after the explosions had faded, dropping down only remnants of the lost society along with the smoke. All eyes settled on Terra. Threa stepped toward her.

“I will follow your instructions in this new world, Terra,” she said solemnly. Other captains came forward to pledge their loyalty as well. Threa spoke again. “I move to rename this planet Terra Firma, in honor of our great leader!” Several people cheered in agreement.

“No. No to everything.” Terra shook her head. Everyone looked at her questioningly. “I am done being the leader. I’m only eighteen. I can’t handle the pressure anymore. Let someone else lead. Do not name the planet after me- I am no one.” She turned away, all the while knowing there was nowhere for her to go.

“Wait,” Threa said. “If you will not lead, what will you do? What should we call the Hope Planet now?”

“I am going to remake my life on this new planet. I will help rebuild our society to be magnificent. As for the planet-” She paused, then smiled. “Call the planet Earth.”

There was a light glow in the dark corner of the east horizon. The remnant of the human race turned to watch the first sunrise of their new home. They knew it would be difficult to rebuild their society, but with patience and endurance it would come. Tears came to their eyes as they realized they were finally home.

Unnoticed by all, a sheet of paper drifted down to Earth. It was a page from Terra’s diary, miraculously intact. It was her last entry before sighting the Hope Planet. It read this way:

*“Our time in space has made us weak. Our lives, which we so triumphantly prolonged will grow shorter and shorter as generations will come and go. Yet, we still strive for Hope. When we are destitute, when we have nothing, Hope will still exist. Still, the question remains: Will we learn from our mistakes? As time goes on, will we still cling to hope? Or will man’s greed and desperation of his shortening life lead him to repeat the past? Cleave fast to Hope, mankind, for she is all we have left. From now on, we get no second chance.”*

*- Terra Firma*

**If you wish to submit a piece of writing for publication in the school newspaper, please email your work as an attachment to Mrs. Haaksma at [nhaaksma@odysseyk12.org](mailto:nhaaksma@odysseyk12.org).**