

# The Observer

## Weekly

Cloverleaf Inside and Out

February 3, 2011

## Cleveland Zoo Welcomes Home Three Big Friends

*By Alison Sheldon*

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is thrilled about the return of Moshi, Martika, and Jo, the main attractions of the African Elephant Crossing.

The three female elephants have been residing at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium while their new home was being completed. The wait was well worth it.

The new home for the elephants is five acres large and will be perhaps the most environmental-friendly facility to be seen in outdoor animal exhibits in zoos across America.

Sue Allen, the zoo's public relations contact, reports that a new water filtration system will cut water usage by 72 percent at the elephant house - from 26.3 million gallons per year to only 7.5 million.

According to the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, the African Elephant Crossing quadruples space for the elephants and provides new features such as two yards for roaming, ponds for swimming, and a heated outdoor range that allows the elephants to be outside during the night.

The project, which cost approximately \$25 million, was funded by Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and the Cleveland Zoological Society.

The Crossing is also hailed to be a living classroom with conservation education for spectators of all ages.

"I am pretty excited about the



Elephants roaming in the Cleveland Zoo. *Photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons*

new and improved elephant house," said junior Kierstin Jenkins.

The zoo also works to ensure that the elephants are healthy and happy by providing the necessary tools. A press release ensured that "accredited zoos, like Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, provide elephants with high quality veterinary care, dedicated keepers, excellent daily nutrition, environmental enrichment programs and safe, comfortable homes."

The zoo is not only focused on their star elephants, though. The Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, as well as hundreds of zoos across

America, not only educate visitors about these majestic animals, but also spread awareness about endangerment and the dangers they face, such as poaching and habitat destruction.

The exhibit will feature other animals from Africa as well, such as meerkats, naked mole rats, and rock pythons.

The grand opening of the African Elephant Crossing will be in May 2011, tentatively on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Save the date and make your way out to check out the new attraction. It is amazing to have such a great exhibit so close to home.

## Does Gore Make Everything Better?

By Marc Frary

In movies and television, gore is almost as important as the plot or any of the characters. All of the best zombie, vampire, or other monster movies have been jam packed with blood and limbs. It's why we love horror movies and television shows like *Dexter*, *The Walking Dead*, and *True Blood*.

Think of your favorite modern scary movie, chances are that they have the gore that causes a feeling of blood lust. Today, when we list the best parts of a movie, at least 75 percent of the time we list some kind of bloody scene. Gore isn't only used to make movies and television shows scary, but it has also been seen as kind of funny.

Almost every movie could be made better with an occasional splatter of blood. Comedies, romances, and even dramas could be improved with a little violence. An action movie would be practically pointless with-

out some kind of physical violence.

"Gore doesn't necessarily make a movie better, but it doesn't hurt," said junior Jake Elliott.

When we do get the blood and violence that we want, it never seems enough. To any of the senior generations, our thirst for blood would be seen as twisted or crazy. Growing up in society today, it is acceptable to enjoy scenes where people are ripped apart or blown to pieces. As seen in the *Saw* movies, a plot isn't really needed when you see someone being tortured every ten minutes.

Will our future generations look back at us and think we were all just a bunch of savages?

"It's not bad; it's normal to have gore movies," said sophomore Kevan Frierson. "I don't have a problem with it."

A good example of how gore made a movie better would be movies like *Dawn of the Dead* by George A.

Romero. Romero started the zombie trend that quickly spread. Everyone loves a good zombie movie and Romero has provided.

These movies are full of people either being eaten alive or stumbling around missing arms and legs and anything else you can think of. Director Romero is only one of the individuals that have answered our call for violence.

Video games these days are also major providers of gore, like in the titles *Gears of War* or *Condemned: Bloodshot*. Video games take gore to a new level where you really are the one who is running around in the blood and probably causing it.

Unlike movies and TV however, video games have something different to offer. They offer the thrill of being the one that is in control. In the end, if all the violence is too much for you, you can still have fun watching chick flicks and playing whatever the new Mario game is.

## Unprecedented Southern Storm Just Like North

By Kelly Schaffter

The South has always been thought of as warmest part of the United States. The place where northerners travel to for the summer, or whenever they want a warm get-a-way. This winter however that is not the case. The South has been bombarded with the winter cold and snow. It's no longer the safe-haven for summer lovers.

"I think it's slightly unusual," commented sophomore Sammie Hobson. "Considering it is the South and they rarely get colder weather."

Cold air filled the south and brought a huge snowstorm that started Monday night. With the promise of dangerous roadways for the next day, schools and busi-

nesses closed throughout the South.

"I think it's crazy," said junior Sam Arndt. "The amount of snow the south is getting is unheard of."

Below freezing temperatures and ice coatings on power lines caused many power outages.

Also with so many not being prepared to handle the snow and cold temperatures, they had to take drastic measures—from wiping the snow off their vehicles with their bare hands to dealing with snow-filled driveways and no shovels.

With no school or work, many families took advantage of the fun break. Many built their first snowman and had their first snowball fight. It was a fun time for many families.

"I think it's a good opportunity for southerners to learn how to ski and enjoy the winter time fun," stated sophomore Kari Morris.

Yet, some families were not so lucky. With the unusual weather, many were not prepared for the drive. The storm caused two fatalities in Alabama alone. Another passed away in an accident in Mississippi. Some of the highways were even shut down to try and prevent any more of these occurrences.

"It's unfortunate," said senior Tera Staten. "Most of the residents probably can't drive in it."

The snow continues to cover the South hopefully bringing more family memories and a relaxing break.

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# Quiz & Quotes

What do you think about the Super Bowl Commercials?



**Brady Kotlarek (9):**  
“They are super fly. I like them a lot.”



**Hap Markeson (10):**  
“They are cool. They make me LOL.”



**Kelly Geig (11):**  
“They are funny and awesome.”



**Joy Zader (12):**  
“They are quite comical.”

# Adjusting to *American Idol* Season 10

By Haley Ploucha

The popular TV show, *American Idol*, has recently started its tenth season. That’s right, double digits. Simon Cowell’s bitter, but true, remarks are gone, Kara DioGuardi’s self-centered views are waved goodbye and Ellen DeGeneres’ unknowledgeable remarks about the music industry are history.

After four years of declining ratings, and a previous season that was described as “lackluster” due to the fewest record sales ever, producers tried to gain back a much needed audience.

“I don’t know,” junior Katie Carino said. “It’s just getting boring. It’s the same thing year after year.”

Season 10 of *American Idol* has gotten an extreme makeover and the only judge left standing after the decade is former Journey band member Randy Jackson. After the allegedly worst season of *Idol*, producers booted judges Ellen DeGeneres and Kara DioGuardi. Now, TV executives brought in singer and actress Jennifer Lopez and Aerosmith star Steven Tyler. The main question that many people are asking is, “What is this season going to be like without Simon Cowell?”

“I loved Simon,” junior Ashley Mullins said. “It’s definitely not the same without him. I miss the way he made fun of people.”

According to some rumors, the elimination process will be much faster, with the singing competition skipping the Top 24 and going straight to the Top 12.

As well as changes to the judges and eliminations, the contestants will also experience change during the show. Besides living in the *Idol* mansion, contestants will also have the chance to perform original songs and make music videos. And when it comes to “theme week,” every song will be customized to that certain contestant. That’s right – no more rockers trying to sing country.

“I think it was a little awkward when they had to do that kind of challenge,” junior Claire Turner said. “And I can relate, since I’m awkward.”

Also, as most viewers have learned, producers of the show have lowered the age limit to 15 in the hopes to find a larger talent pool this season. *Idol* audiences can now expect younger faces to appear on their television, but some people are wondering, “Can a 15 year old really win it all?”

“Hey, if I can’t be famous at 15,” junior Alaina Ortega said, “I don’t think anyone can, especially on *American Idol*.”

Are you a fan of the new *American Idol*? Well, you can decide Wednesdays and Thursdays every week, starting at 8 p.m. on FOX.

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## 4 ● Features

# Alcohol Detection System Will Help Keep Drunks Off Roads

*By Megan Savick*

Researchers in Massachusetts may have just found a way to put the brakes on drunk drivers. The new technology system would prevent a car from starting if the driver is drunk.

The Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety is the new technology that would keep impaired drivers off the road. By doing so, the system has two possible methods. It could either analyze the driver's breath, or analyze the driver's skin through touch. For example, this would be from touch-based sensors from places like the steering wheel or from door locks.

When the system detects the blood alcohol content of someone to be higher than the legal limit of .08, the vehicle will not start. QinetiQ North America Inc. is the facility where the new technology is currently being developed.

Engineers at QinetiQ said that their system will analyze a driver's blood alcohol content in less than one sec-

ond, in comparison to the current breath-based ignition interlocks.

The project started in 2008 with a \$10 million grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety.

The first demonstration of working prototype cars was held in Waltham, Massachusetts, which was attended by Ray LaHood, who is the U.S. Transportation Secretary. LaHood noted that the technology would be optional for manufacturers to include in the near future. He also explained that the technology is "another arrow in our automotive safety quiver."

During the demonstration, a woman in her 20s attempted to start a vehicle after having two drinks. The technology registered her having a blood content of .06, and she was able to start the car.

Along with LaHood, David Strickland, Head of the National Traffic Safety Administration, also attended the event. He stated that the technology could potentially prevent 9,000

alcohol-related traffic fatalities a year in the United States.

Strickland claimed that the technology would not be implemented unless it is "seamless, unobtrusive, and unfailingly accurate."

However, critics, such as Sarah Longwell, have doubts about the new technology.

"Even if the technology is 99.9 percent reliable, that's still tens of thousands of cars that won't start every day," Longwell said.

Longwell is the Managing Director of the American Beverage Institute, and her group questions whether a .08 blood alcohol content reading would be high enough to stop all drunken drivers.

"It's going to eliminate the ability of people to have a glass of wine with dinner or a beer at a ballgame and then drive home, something that is perfectly safe and currently legal in all 50 states," Longwell stated.

Controversy over the new technology has already risen. However, the system is not set to be manufactured for about a decade.

## Having Year-Round Fun Can Sometimes Be Challenging

*By Mackenzie Greer & Taylor Detwiler*

When the cold weather comes, it puts limits on things to do. But many Cloverleaf students find fun things to do despite the weather.

Winter in Ohio is very unpredictable, there could be a blizzard one day, and the next day it will seem really warm.

One of the most popular things to do is go to Kalahari in the winter. It is one of the popular water parks in Northeast Ohio.

"I would love to go to Kalahari this winter with my friends because it is so much fun! I want to go swimming, but I can't go outside and swim," said junior Katie Carino.

There are other water parks besides Kalahari; there is Great Wolf Lodge, Fort Rapids and Castaway Bay in

Sandusky.

Students' favorite part of winter is having no school because of the snowstorms.

"I love snow days! It gives me extra time to catch up on my sleep," said sophomore Morgan Eyring.

Snow days are a plus, but winter also has its downfalls.

"I hate the cold weather!" said junior Emily Daley.

Even in the cold, kids still go outside and play in the snow. They like to build snowmen, go sledding, tubing, tobogganing, have snowball fights and make snow forts.

"I love building snowmen!" said sophomore Mikayla Burgess.

Sometimes you get stuck inside and do not know what to do. Some of the best indoor activities include watching movies and having some nice

warm cocoa.

"I watch movies all day with hot chocolate and my blanket and stay all cozy," said junior Alex Oring.

Coming up in February is the Medina Ice Festival. It features an ice-carving contest, plenty of food and live music.

Along the Sandusky Harbor is The Artic Ice Festival every year in February. The Festival consists of many activities such as an ice boat race and a soup cook-off.

In March, The Geauga County Maple Fest has parades and rides to celebrate the success of the Maple Industry.

Even though its cold out, there are still many things to do. So do not waste your time and sit inside all day, get outside and do something fun and original.