

'The Office' entertains new, old viewers alike

jeremy SPIEGEL
opinion chief

One of the funniest shows on television continues to get funnier.

Such is the reaction to the new season of NBC's "The Office," a 'mockumentary' about life in a fictional Pennsylvania paper company. "The Office" is one of the most popular comedies on TV, and the new season continues to draw rave reviews.

"It just keeps getting funnier and funnier. 'The Office' definitely has created a unique way to make people laugh,"

said **Kartik Warikoo**, 12.

"The Office" follows the lives of several employees at the Scranton, PA branch of Dunder Mifflin Paper Company. In particular,

the show focuses on **Michael Scott**, the inept Regional Manager, **Jim** and **Pam**, employees who are in a relationship, and **Dwight Schrute**, the socially awkward salesman.

In the fifth season, events included Pam and Jim getting engaged outside a gas station halfway between New York and Scranton, Michael taking on new responsibilities on the national level, the relationships of other key characters falling apart, and Michael finally thinking he has

found true love.

Of course, these events are interspersed with the dry sense of humor fans expect to find in "The Office."

"I think that this is the best season of 'The Office' yet. The episodes only continue to get more outrageous each week, such as when Dwight starts a fire in the office," said **Brian Koesters**, 12.

The season was highlighted by a special hour-long episode airing

immediately after the Super Bowl. Featuring **Jack Black** and **Jessica Alba**, the special garnered great reviews and drew over 20 million fans.

"I have al-

ways loved the office, and seeing the hour long episode air immediately after the Super Bowl was awesome. That episode was so funny, and this season in general has been really good," said **Jeremy Dock**, 10.

With just a few episodes left until the season finale, fans will be sure to turn in to see how yet another outstanding season will continue to amaze viewers, leaving them in laughter well after the closing commercials.

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-Kartik Warikoo, 12

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Senior attends premier art camp Indian dancer top in nation

mary ann JIANG
editor-in-chief

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hile most SHS students spent each morning taking tests and each afternoon recuperating, in the week of Jan. 12, **Meena Thatikunta**, 12, was experiencing a different sort of enrichment.

She attended youngARTS, a program set up by the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts (NFAA), as one of the top young dancers in the country.

Selected by NFAA, Thatikunta was among 21 dancers in a group of 141 artists coming together in Miami, Fla. to study and prepare their own performances in contention for monetary awards. Thatikunta received \$1,500 as a Level II award winner.

"Every minute was about improving, so you grew so fast in one week. I've probably learned more in that one week than I've learned in my months practicing at home. It was so focused...everything was perfect about it. It's a really surreal experience to be

wowed and to be continually wowed after every performance. The entire show has goose bumps," said Thatikunta.

In retrospect, this traditional Indian dancer considers youngARTS as the best week of her life. Although she practices every day in her studio, the program brought her into the company of a vibrant, enthusiastic artistic community that has given her a new uplifting sense of belonging.

"It's hard to realize what dance means in the context of society and how it's really applicable outside of your studio. Once I went to youngARTS I really connected with other people because I realized the importance of what I was doing. The week is more about experiencing and being in a community of really passionate people and just taking in that creative energy and learning what technical and artistic things you can do to improve. I've never been around so many talented people. It's a wonderful feeling" said Thatikunta.

She found out about the program through one of her mother's former students who received recognition by the foundation. Her mother's studio, Cultural Centre of India, is also going to tap into a greater community in June, by participating in Choreographers Without Companies with Contemporary Dance Theatre.

"I feel like everything is sort of coming together now and connecting. It's nice to realize there's a whole community out there, to really feel like I belong there and my purpose is complete in that community," said Thatikunta.

I've never been around so many talented people. It's a wonderful feeling.

-Meena Thatikunta, 12

THATIKUNTA STRIKES A dance pose while attending the youngARTS program in Miami, Fla. Thatikunta was able to work with 21 other talented dancers, and she found the program to be a very rewarding experience.

photo courtesy of meena thatikunta

'Backstage can be crazy'

Theater students dish about rehearsals, gossip

emma ROSEN
staff writer

"Ten push-ups, go!" said **Mr. John Whapham**. The students groan, and drop to the floor to execute their punishment, in the form of ten pushups.

However, this is not a gym class. This is "Parade" rehearsals.

With a cast of over 60 members, the after-school rehearsals for the spring musical "Parade" are sometimes anything but "chill."

Whether it is blocking a tough scene, learning a tough piece of music, or attempting to keep everyone quiet during a run-through, rehearsals can be particularly challenging.

"Rehearsals can be exhausting. Some are easy, and some just make you want to curl up in your bed and sleep," said **Laura Birkhead**, 10.

Just like any other sport or club, being in the musical takes dedication and hard work. What most people do not realize is that putting on a good show is harder than it looks. Getting a scene to the point of perfection takes weeks in some cases.

"We work on some of the same scenes over and over and over. We just have to get them drilled in our heads," said **Drew Gelwicks**, 9.

Although there is a lot of grueling work involved, there is an enjoyable side to all of the rehearsals.

"I laugh more at rehearsals than I do the entire day! The entire cast makes me smile," said **Alex Cole**, 12.

Like Cole, "Parade" is many other seniors' last show too. The Aves Theater senior class is huge, and definitely influences rehearsals.

"They're hilarious. They make rehearsal funnier, crazier, and a lot more hectic, but in a good way," said **Chris Lerner**, 11.

Hectic is the right word to use. And not just offstage, either. On stage, many scenes in "Parade" are fast-paced and complicated.

"Harness your inner anger!" said Whapham. There is one scene in particular that is proving to be a challenge. The song is "Where Will

you Stand When the Flood Comes?" It is a particularly difficult piece of music, and is challenging to get right on-stage.

"It is one of the toughest pieces we've ever done," said **Kerry Verdier**, 12.

With all of the drama happening on-stage, there is bound to be some offstage, too. **Becky Caspersz**, 11, dishes about what really happens when the curtains are closed.

"Backstage can be crazy. There is definitely a lot of talking and laughing going on. I'm not going to deny that there is theater gossip, there's some in every activity. But for the most part, we all get along pretty well," said Caspersz.

With the show dates quickly approaching, the cast will really be cracking down with numerous rehearsals. But in the end, it all really pays off.

"The shows here are always so great. This one will be no different," said **Hannah D'Souza**, 11.