

Pollution Has Been Solved!

The World is Flat and Littering is Not an Issue



JT Cambria and Daniel Guinan
staff writers

According to a recent scientific breakthrough, there appears to be a solution to the earth's waste. Earth Scientist Dr. James McCarthy was researching the earth's curvature since 2006 and came to a shocking conclusion: the earth has no curve. In other words, our globe is not a globe, but a plane. It is in fact, flat. Dr. McCarthy elaborates on his research, "Look outside. There's no curve! None. There's a bump and a hill here and there, but it's mostly flat." Dr. McCarthy explains that while the Earth isn't completely flat, it is by no means a sphere, but more of a blanket. It is common knowledge that a blanket has a few valleys and hills here and there. It is honestly quite astounding that this information is only spreading now. The Earth has always been flat, but ancient civilizations thought otherwise. Another scientist in this study, Dr. Anne Williams says, "The people who said the Earth is round also believed that Athena was birthed out of Zeus' head. It's absolute lunacy if you ask

me. These people had no idea what they were talking about, so we rely on modern day facts to prove our point." The point they're referring to is the lack of visible curve in the Earth. McCarthy's and Williams' research is truly ground-breaking. After the government was caught materializing projects, like the moon landing and evolution, McCarthy and his team set up an exploration to see what else they could find. Their experiment was quite simple. They gave 20 test subjects the option to walk three miles or forty-five minutes until they felt the Earth curve or until they could see the Earth's curve. Every single person came back and reported the same thing: "There's no curve." This indisputable evidence shows that not only is the Earth flat, but also provides the solution to a bigger issue. We have all been affected by pollution and litter in our everyday lives, so it makes no sense that a solution has not been found to erase this problem. Thus, we here at the RHS High Times have the solution. A wise man once said, "Why don't we just take Bikini Bot-

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Spence not Pence

Joseph O'Keefe
editor in chief

In today's current political climate, there is a rising demand for outsiders to take over key positions of government. The common voter is fed up and tired of the career politicians who are bought out by corporations and only lead this country to serve their bottom line, not the will of the people. Some voters may relate such a delegate to current President, Donald J. Trump, a real estate mogul and billionaire who ran his campaign with promises of "draining the swamp" and lambasted career politicians like his opponent, Hilary Clinton. Much like the swamp of Washington D.C, the Ridgewood Village Council is rife with corruption, lobbying, and mayoral mismanagement. Spencer Campbell, a wholehearted supporter of President Trump, believes that we should drain the swamp that is the Ridgewood Village Council.

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Amazon Chooses Next HQ Location: Mars

Swathi Kella
editor in chief

Coming off a lucrative business deal with Whole Foods, Amazon is larger and more successful than it has ever been, and this upward trend is poised to continue. According to an RHS High Times inside source, Amazon is now looking beyond earth to expand its business; a business executive privately announced that the next stop for the multibillion dollar corporation is a colony on Mars. "We were just out of ideas," reported William Jennings Bryan, who holds the prestigious position of college intern, "and then, it just came to me. I was staring at my friend's communist sweatshirt, and thought, red... red... red... Stalin... Mars. This is it. THIS is it." And this was it. Bryan

immediately went to the highest authority in Amazon- Human Resources- to confirm that this should be the next great leap for Amazonkind. Since that glorious moment, many officers in the company have recognized the booming potential of the land and have agreed that intergalactic expansion is the way to go. "The Martians open up a great new sales platform for us," remarked Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos. "They lack many of the essential survival products that we have here on earth, such as high-end cat litter and two-person sweatshirts, both of which can currently be found on Amazon. And their greasy, porous skin makes them a great consumer base for our ever-expanding array of skin care products." Martians have also reached out in facilitating an agreement with the company.

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Fake News

Talia Rosen
news editor

The phenomenon of “fake news” is sweeping the nation, and has swept up the High Times in its coattails. We, the defenders of truth and justice, thought it might serve our readership to reveal that the High Times editing and writing process involves this fake news. The “Opinion” section must come under examination,

RHS High Times is Fake News

as there is an unforgivable degree of bias which has gone unnoticed. Also, reports of the “News” section have been faulty in regards to journalistic standards. The High Times has not only come under the sway of, but is indicative of, this fake news epidemic. There has been chatter of “fake news” regarding the High Times in the hallways. Reporters have been beaten, tarred and feathered, drawn and quartered, and in

one instance, bathed in soot. The newspaper staff is scared to return to school during this period of low journalistic appreciation. Given the disaster that has happened, it is necessary to discuss how High Times has published fake news throughout all of their issues. In the September issue of the High Times, the Big Bad Bullion column predicted a 15% rise in zinc, which was not reflected in the market. Furthermore, the paper was almost shut down for its false reporting of a school board meeting in which it claimed RHS would be converted into an arcade. The High Times also reported several false snow days during July of last year. When it comes to funding, the High Times depends on financial revenue from deals made with wealthy oil tycoons in the Middle East. Therefore, the journalistic credit of the High Times in regards to middle-Eastern affairs is obviously biased. In addition, the High Times is guilty of bilingualism, anthropomorphism, speciesism, planetism, and Zoroastrianism.

We open our chromebooks and High Times online site is always the first site to pop up. Whispers have been traveling the school and students say it is tyrannical; they must be stopped. There are rumors that High Times is looking for a way to make the online version of the newspaper the only site besides Google Drive that is not blocked on school wifi. Students will be forced to read the articles during classes instead of doing class work. When RHS students are assigned research papers, they may be forced to use the High Times site as the only source in their entire essay. Sophomores and juniors who are in the midst of writing their yearly term papers have been protesting outside the school each morning in order to allow other sources to be used in their research papers. In the end, we must make a change and bring to light the disgusting epidemic of fake news and tyranny in the High Times school newspaper. We tried to reach out to the High Times to comment on the issue, but they declined.



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Campbell for Ridgewood Dictator

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Is there a swamp to drain? Does Ridgewood need the revolutionary leader that is Spencer Campbell? Yes. One could write a novel about the problems that plague this village, but in reality, all of these issues can be broken down to a single problem: freedom. We live in a village with freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and our high school even has an open campus. This is ridiculous. Campbell does not believe in such freedoms, and under a Campbell administration, Ridgewood High School will be converted into a military training facility for our local militia. Conquering HoHoKus and Glen Rock will require unity, strength, and, most of all, military might. Freedom will not accomplish these things - only the strong, steadfast, and unquestioned leadership of Spencer Campbell can bring this rebellious local government to the heel of the people. But who is Spencer Campbell, and why should you trust him with the task of dealing with the failed government that runs this town? The answer to that question is simple: Campbell is a deal maker, a fake news destroyer, a speedy rower, and a good friend whom many in the Ridgewood community hold dear. Spencer answers to the people because he is one of the people. Spence is not an elitist, and he does not subscribe to the socialist intellectualism that has destroyed this country.

He is not a progressive; Spencer is a proud regressive. One of his first orders of business will be to eliminate the position of mayor in Ridgewood. The Village of Ridgewood may need a mayor, but the Empire of Ridgewood will need a dictator. Spencer is the man for the job. You may ask, what is Spencer's mission? Is it to help the elderly? Is it to give socialist handouts to the pond scum of the Ridgewood west side? Spence ain't Pence; Spence has got some sense! Upon assuming the throne of Ridgewood, Spencer Campbell plans to institute a broad crackdown on political corruption. Any dissenters will be dealt with through appropriate means, even if they are elderly. Under a Campbell administration, strict curfews will be introduced and physical training will be mandated. And the fake news cesspool of a newspaper that is the RHS High Times will be censored! Ridgewood will at last be free from this horrendous freedom. Who are his opponents? Career politicians! Spence is original, Spence is fresh, Spence is a clean cut hard working boy. Home break-in after dark? No need to worry. Spence, or should I say public defender Campbell, is trained in mixed martial arts! All of your problems can be solved by one simple vote for Spencer Campbell. Spencer is a man who takes the bread. Just remember, Spence not Pence!

Pollution Solved!

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We are taking these ideas and using them for our own benefit. We suggest that we take all the litter and just keep pushing it away until we hit the end of the Earth. Once we are there, we can just push it into space, and it will be gone forever. It's really simple, and we are surprised that these acclaimed “scientists” haven't been able to come up with a solution. So to conclude, you're welcome for opening your eyes and saving the world.



All is Fair in Club Fair War

Edward O’Keefe
sports editor

Last week, terror struck the hearts and lives of freshmen and RHS club members at a second club fair as a result of a brawl that turned deadly. It all started when the leaders of Debate Club and Quiz Bowl got into an argument over their respective Harvard acceptance rates. The conflict escalated from a intense argument, spreading throughout Gym 1, to all the club fair attendees being embroiled in a brawl.

A heated debate quickly broke out between the stands of the Young Democrats and Young Republicans. By the end of the fight, all the students agreed that they wanted that one patronizing kid who claimed he was socially liberal and fiscally conservative to stop talking. It was the only thing that both sides could agree on.

The chaos continued, but DECA stayed above the fray because America’s future business leaders would never become in-

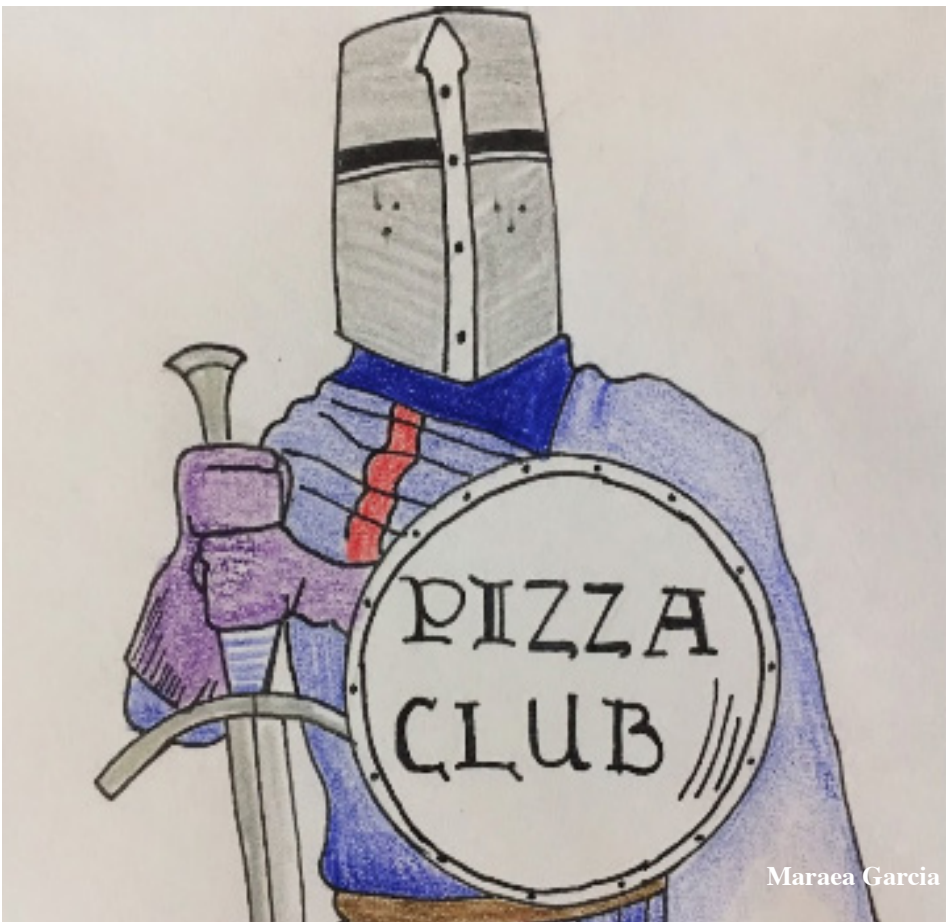
volved in such plebeian nonsense.

Meanwhile, the Meat Lovers Club was finally convinced that humans and animals deserved the same respect, but instead of becoming Vegan, the Meat Lovers ate the members of the Vegan Club. Student Government sat on the bleachers, watching from afar, while making promises about how they would eventually stop the violence.

The fencing club donned their masks and foils, striking only the appropriate areas of their opponents to score a point. The New Players launched into a complicated song and dance routine, while the SEA went around cleaning up the litter.

On the sidelines the Robotics Club unleashed a hoard of angry robots, and members of Mock Trial banged their gavels for order.

Luckily, throughout the entire fight there were minimal casualties thanks to Project Interact. The volunteers risked their lives, making bandages with past issues of the High Times newspapers because nobody was reading them anyway.



AP Gym Now Offered!

Daniel Greenman
news editor

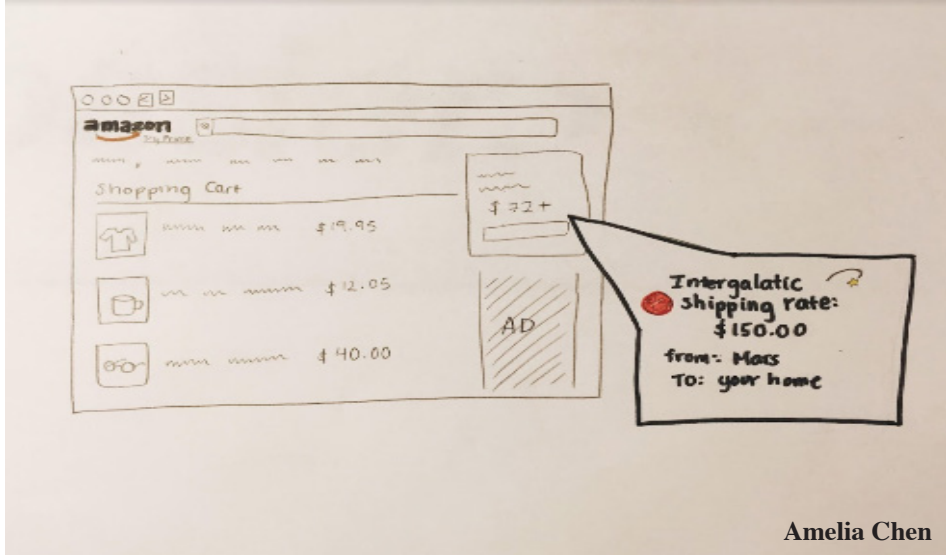
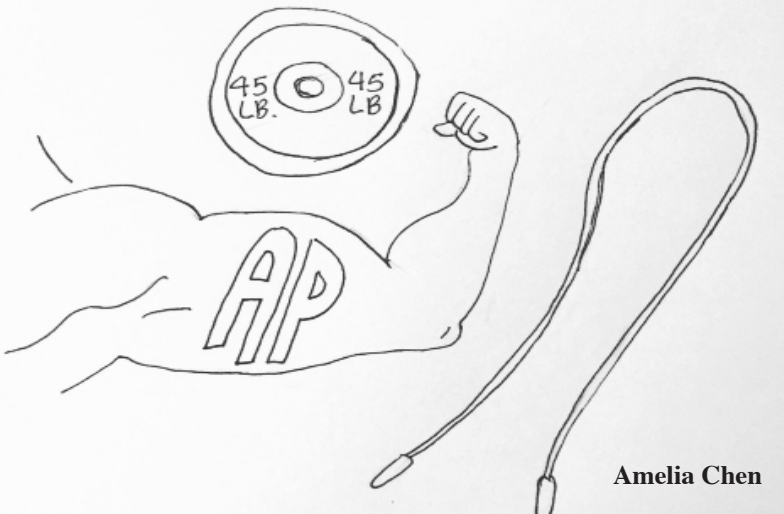
Starting next year, RHS will offer an Advanced Placement gym class. This year-long class, modeled on similar classes across the nation, will allow students to earn high-level academic credit while participating in traditional physical education activities. Prerequisites for AP Gym are the completions of one or more of the honors gym courses, such as Below-Freezing Running Honors, Stretching That Posterior Chain Honors, and Cleaning Your Physical Education Athletic Lockers Honors. RHS has been looking at the program for the last two years, but only adopted the curriculum this past winter. "It really is a long time coming," said Thomas Gorman. "The school prides itself on combining academic rigor with an interest in the whole student. This lets us do exactly that."

The course began in California after pressure from students who complained that their mandatory gym courses were holding down their grade-point averages. Academically ambitious schools across the country followed suit. In the original AP Gym curriculum, students ran for a mile or lifted weights while listening to podcasts ranging in topic from physiology to Circadian rhythms. Ridgewood High School has made its own additions to the curriculum, such as modifying the 4 participation points students usually earn in P.E. classes to 5, in order to better

match the 5 available points on the AP exam. Ridgewood High School is also adding a midterm to the AP Gym course, in which students must either defeat Coach Charles Johnson in a staring contest, or admit immediately to Coach Johnson that it is foolish to engage him in a staring contest. "I expect lots of quick submissions on the midterm," says Coach Johnson. "Here's a tip: both my eyes popped out of my head in a squatting accident 35 years ago. The ones I have now are glass. I will not lose."

This is happening in concert with a program called Faculty Fitness, which installs treadmills in the offices of administrators. "[That program] is already happening," Gorman said. "Actually, I'm on a treadmill right now, which is why I had to conduct this interview by phone and not in person. Five miles! I've run five miles today while having phone meetings and handling student reporters. Five!" He then hung up.

Ridgewood Superintendent of Schools Daniel Fishbein said that he hopes an AP Gym program will make it clear to students that they can excel in any part of high school: "What AP Gym lets us do is recognize and reward excellence in a physically active subject. A student who excels in their physical education class can excel at anything in high school." He adds, "Ridgewood High School already had some of the nation's most challenging gym classes, and I hope we'll see that students really earn those 5 points this year."



Amazon's New HQ on Mars

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Tim, a well-known Martian representative, reported feeling insulted by Bezos's skin comment and thus declined to respond to it, but did acknowledge the scarcity of the much-needed high-end cat litter on the planet. "The truth is," Tim began, "Mars is a barren land. People joke, say there's no life here, but there is; this planet is suffering from Seemingly Nonliving Disorder, SND. Once Amazon arrives here with its abundance of Prime TVs and free-shipping Swifter dusters, this place will finally feel alive."

And Tim could not be more correct. Once Amazon expands beyond Earth, it will bring life everywhere. Mars may not have water, but it will soon have something much more essential to the populations living there: ready access to antique pinball machines, Nicholas Cage pillow cases, and presidential toilet paper rolls.

It seems as though Mars is a perfect fit for the ever-expanding conglomerate that is Amazon. Recent studies show that Martians are 14% more likely than Earthlings to accept monopolistic business practices. Giuseppe, a registered Martian, remarked, "Yeah, I'm glad we beat out Atlanta, Chicago, and Baltimore for the next Amazon lo-

cation. They may have strong local economies, transportation, and culture, but we've got something much, much better- dry, dead land. Bezos would be a fool not to come here."

Now, how will Amazon set up a base on another planet? Intergalactic travel requires years of research and study on transporting vessels, spacial weather patterns, and adaptation to Mars' climate. But don't worry, highly acclaimed Amazon astrophysicist Michael Scott has got it all figured out. With 100% confidence in the simplicity of establishing a base on a different planet, Scott reportedly stated, "It's not rocket science... oh, shoot, it is."

And how has President Donald J. Trump- POTUS, Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the military, and Leader of the Free World- responded, you may ask? According to RHS High Times undercover government spy Ted Cruz, Donald Trump remarked upon hearing of this extraterrestrial corporate ambitions, "There's big space in the sky... a lot a space. I'm all up for us invading other nations, but I better see none of those Martians down here. We're gonna need to build a space wall- you can get Mars to pay for it- to keep those green hombres where they are." And there you have it RHS, it seems Amazon will be continuing their reign for years to come, on Mars.

Opinion

Is Society the Problem?

Erin Kim
staff writer

Who is at fault for shaming people's weight, setting unrealistically high beauty standards, alienating people of color, and staying complacent about outdated gun laws? The answer is simple: society. But who is society? Again, a simple answer: all of us.

Humans have grown accustomed to putting the blame on society for every problem we encounter without a second thought of considering who the broad label of 'society' truly is. While dictionary.com may define society as "an organized group of persons associated together for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purposes," the way we use it does not fit this description. We do not associate ourselves with society. Instead, we tend to see ourselves as morally superior to society.

Because society is such an inclusive term, it becomes a faceless, no-name scapegoat, making it the perfect target of our judgement. After all, blaming someone else is much easier than having to face the repercussions of one's own wrongdoings, especially when that person who you blame has no personal ties to you. By not acknowledging your own mistakes, you maintain your self-esteem and self-image of innocence and righteousness. Not only that, but by deflecting liability, you also evade the requirement of reforming and ameliorating your behavior, which means less work for you.

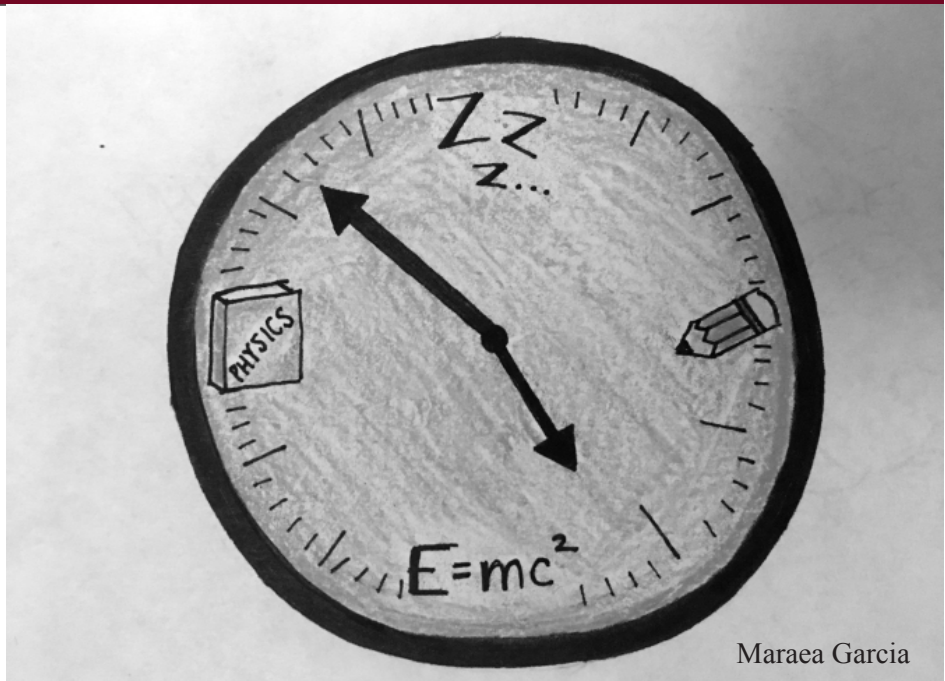
Furthermore, society doesn't cause our behavior but rather explains it. If a girl starves herself to lose weight, it's because society defines skinny as beautiful, not because society is forcing her

to do it. Although it's awful that the girl is going through that, she does have a personal responsibility to use her own judgement to take care of her body, just like a high schooler has to use his or her own judgement to deflect the peer pressure of drinking and smoking.

Society reflects our own opinions and regurgitates them to us in the form of magazines, social media, commercials: you name it. We don't want to admit that these are our own thoughts, so we say it's because of society. Sigmund Freud theorized that thoughts, projections, desires, and motivations that one cannot accept as one's own are projected onto the outside world and attributed to others. In addition, Carl Jung considered that every person has 4 main archetypes, one of which is the Shadow, representing repressed thoughts, feelings, and desires. Everyone has a shadow, but most deny it and instead project it onto others and society.

We can't just choose to be part of society when it is convenient, or jump back in when the conversation is something we can agree to. Instead of blaming others for what's wrong with the world, we should try to become more responsible for our own actions and accountable for those around us. We need to change society not from the outside by being critical of it, but from the inside, starting with ourselves. If we just to point to society for being in the wrong, but we don't do anything to change it, we are part of the problem. We may use society as an excuse for many things; but in reality, solving society's problems means we must first start with solving our own.

With heightened awareness of the choices we make, the world can only get better.



Maraea Garcia

Is Education Overrated?

Ellie Tsapatsaris
staff writer

Grades, tests, colleges, SATs, essays - I bet just reading those words made you cringe, and that's completely normal. As high school students, a majority of our lives revolve around education. This is especially true here at Ridgewood High School, given its immense academic rigor. For me, it seems as though I am constantly doing homework or studying for my next quiz or test. Is this continuous learning too much? Where do we draw the line?

It's no secret that RHS is a high performing school. With this increased level of intensity, however, comes an increased amount of work. I conducted a survey with a handful of RHS students from all different grades asking them this question: how long do you usually spend on homework each night? The results were quite shocking.

Of all of the students reviewed, 88% admitted to spending two or more hours on homework each night. Even more appalling is the fact that 32% spend more than four hours each night to complete their work. This overwhelming number of students solidifies one thing; education is certainly a significant part of the vast majority of our lives.

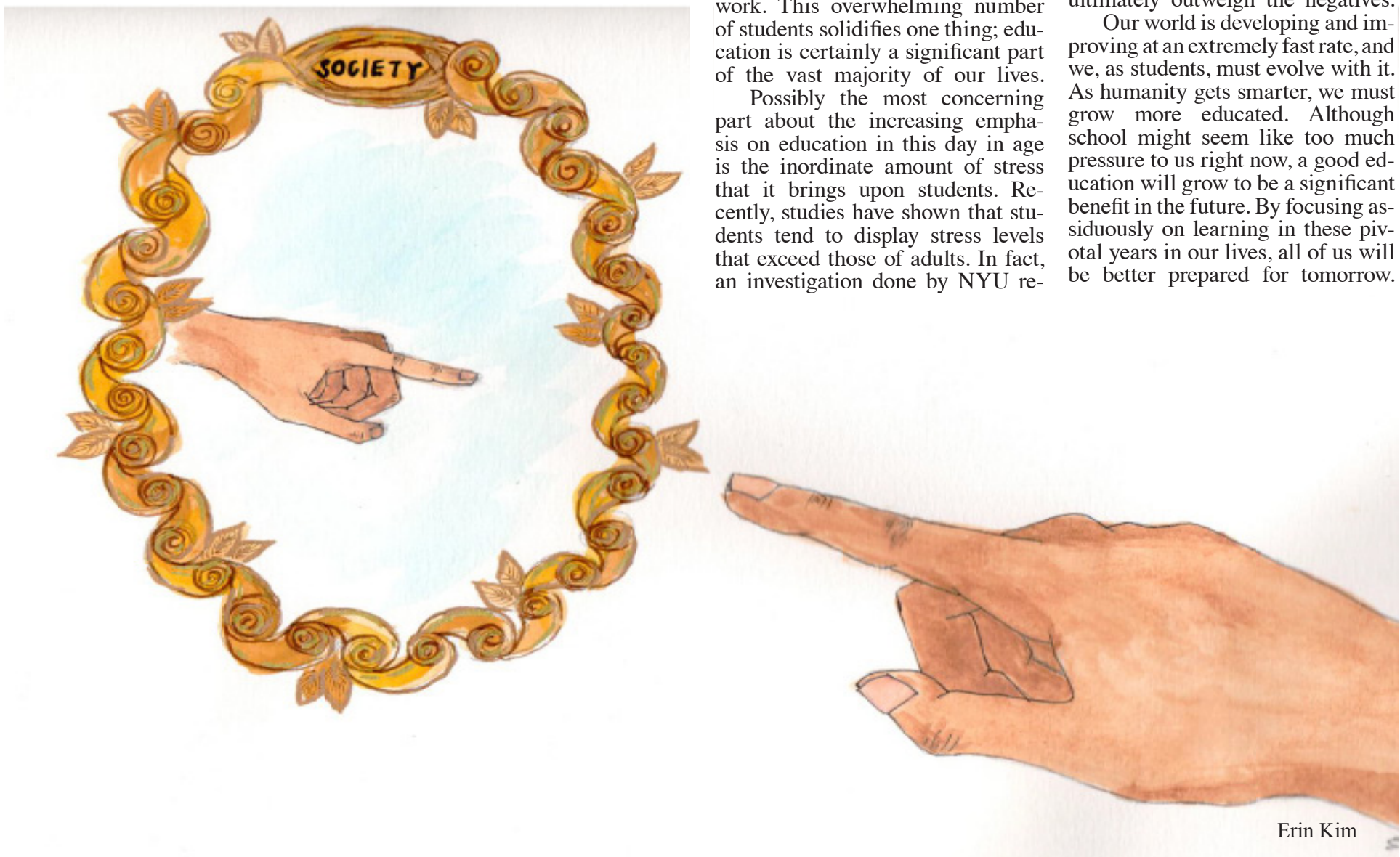
Possibly the most concerning part about the increasing emphasis on education in this day in age is the inordinate amount of stress that it brings upon students. Recently, studies have shown that students tend to display stress levels that exceed those of adults. In fact, an investigation done by NYU re-

veals that nearly 50% of all students feel extreme levels of stress on a day to day basis. This is somewhat concerning, especially considering that an overabundance of stress can have detrimental effects on our health, including (but not limited to) headaches, high blood pressure, anxiety, asthma, and even depression - conditions that high school students should not have to face.

Of course, a little bit of stress is not out of the ordinary -- it is a common part of the life of a high school student. Often times it can even act as a motivator for a number of students. Personally, I feel much more focused and am usually more productive when I am under pressure. Knowing I have a time restriction or a load of work to get done helps me concentrate on the task at hand. This same concept goes for many high schoolers.

So, even though education is definitely more prominent now than it ever was, it still isn't necessarily overemphasized. Even though overly intense education programs seem to bring up some issues among students, the positives ultimately outweigh the negatives.

Our world is developing and improving at an extremely fast rate, and we, as students, must evolve with it. As humanity gets smarter, we must grow more educated. Although school might seem like too much pressure to us right now, a good education will grow to be a significant benefit in the future. By focusing assiduously on learning in these pivotal years in our lives, all of us will be better prepared for tomorrow.



Erin Kim

Living an Eco-Friendly Life

Tegan Dadd
staff writer

On Sunday, April 22nd, the annual Earth Day will be upon us once again. This year, its organizers are focusing on ending plastic pollution from making its way into our waters. Such a day is important not only for the purpose of keeping the ecosystem clean, but also for spreading awareness of the importance of being eco-friendly. We all share the responsibility to help out our planet, and by organizing small tasks to help out, we can bring impactful, long-term change. Environmentally-friendly lifestyles have been on the rise in the past years. Some believe this way of living is time-consuming and expensive, but it doesn't have to be this way. While it is understandable that not everyone can afford to line their roofs with solar panels or spend hundreds of dollars donating to different environmentalist groups, helping the environment should be a moral pillar that everyone can stand by.

When you buy food, find stores that support fair trade, organic produce, and sustainable production. This stops the spread of pesticides and instead supports farmers who invest their time in raising healthier plants and animals. Of course, there are some things that we can't all solve: like



Anika Tsapatsaris

methane from cows contributing to 5% of global carbon dioxide emissions. In that case, eat your sirloin steak and don't let that cow go to waste.

Recycling is also a critical part of being eco-friendly, as it saves the Earth's limited resources. For most teenagers, the idea of buying the most up-to-date items has been instilled in our heads from an early age, especially with the yearly releases of new tech,

like the latest iPhone. And many teenagers are accustomed to creating other types of waste, like single-use plastic bags, bottles, and more. However, if we consume more, we waste more. Instead of going on an impulsive shopping haul, decide beforehand if you really need to buy anything. If you do need something, try a local thrift store, as this is a great way to save money and reuse goods that would otherwise

end up contaminating the Earth. If you have paper, water bottles, or other recyclable materials, collect and leave them on the curb on your designated day. Live by this mantra: that borrowing trumps buying. This can improve the issue landfills, and also help your wallet. Finally, electricity is another area where you can prevent wasting unnecessary resources. We all know that if you leave a room, you should turn off the lights. But you should also unplug cables for electronics that you are not actively using: even though they may be off, they are still draining electricity from your outlet. Sure, unplugging your phone charger only to save a couple thousandths of a kilowatt hour may not sound like much, but for millions of people using millions of devices, it truly does add up.

An eco-friendly lifestyle doesn't have to be expensive or unattainable. Simple things - taking a walk instead of driving a car, bringing your own reusable bags when grocery shopping, or even taking shorter showers- all are easy ways to help the environment. We all have a responsibility to the Earth; it houses and provides us with everything we use. So let's just take a couple small steps. Then we'll be able to live on our amazing planet for much, much longer.

Arming Teachers is an Alarming Idea

Caroline Loscazo
staff writer

The events of the recent shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School have sparked a revolution. Survivors of the Parkland shooting and students from across the country rose up and stood in solidarity, demanding action from our lawmakers. A revolution, however, is not the only thing that came out of the tragedy - ideas such as arming teachers as a way to prevent future mass shootings have been seriously discussed on a congressional and presidential level. On March 9th, Florida legislators even passed two bills that will set aside millions of dollars to train teachers to carry firearms. However, this is not the answer to making our schools safe: if anything, it will only do the opposite. The answer to ending gun violence is not more guns. Period.

According to the "good guy with a gun stops the bad guy with a gun" theory, largely supported by people like the National Rifle Association's vice-president Wayne LaPierre, the solution to these mass shootings is to simply arm good guys like teachers. That way, if an intruder enters a school wielding his own gun, then the teachers can engage in a firefight and squash the intruder. Easy peasy. Except for the fact that there were "good guys" with guns during the recent Parkland shooting and even the Columbine shooting back in 1999. Security guards, who are hired exactly for the purpose of stopping intruders. In Parkland, this man was Scot Peterson. He was armed, and was right outside the building where Nicholas Cruz was killing innocent high schoolers. His job was that of protecting Parkland High School and its students. However, he did not confront Cruz at any point during the shooting. If our armed security guards, trained for the sole purpose of protecting lives, cannot do so - how will less proficiently trained armed teachers do it?

Furthermore, there was an incident at Dalton High School in Georgia, just a few weeks after the Parkland shooting, in which an armed teacher was

the shooter. Jesse Randall Davidson, a social studies teacher and play-by-play announcer for the school's football team, brought a gun to school, locked himself in the classroom, and then fired a single shot out the window after refusing to let students enter. Nobody truly understands why he did it. What we do know, however, is that he was beloved by many of his students. Many, like Tania Ramirez even tweeted support for him after the event: "He was so loving and caring filled with laughter and jokes. It hurts knowing it was him who shot the gun. I LOVE and will MISS you Mr. Davidson. Trust me I will visit you." By all accounts, Davidson's record was that of being a "good guy." But evidently not a good guy with a gun.

Mass school shootings have been a part of our lives since Columbine almost 20 years ago. Since then, students, teachers, and parents have been forced to live with the fear that their school could be next. The fear of an intruder with a gun walking in their hallways does not need to be accompanied with the fear of even more guns by way of arming teachers. There are many statistics that prove that the presence of a gun, even in the hands of a law-abiding owner, makes a gun-related incident more likely. So why are we even discussing a 'solution' that forces students and teachers to coexist with more guns, increasing the baseline risk of some casualty? Violence begets violence; and in a case of life and death for America's future generations, we cannot just throw more guns into hallways and classrooms and hope for the best.

America does need change and action. We need better background checks and waiting periods. We need to ban assault rifles and bump stocks. What we do not need is more guns - not in the hands of those wrestling with mental illness and not in the hands of our educators. You don't cure disease by actively fighting it. You cure it through prevention with vaccines. Guns in the hands of good guys is a solution that will serve nothing but increase the flamboyancy of news headlines. Let's end this idea, and



Ryan Rhew

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RHS Sit-In: An Interview

Lena Yannella
editor-in-chief

Video interview with Jihan Vaghashiya, co-organizer of the RHS Second Amendment Sit-In

As co-organizer, what is your goal for the March 14th 2nd Amendment sit-in? Can you name two or three things that you would like to accomplish with this counter-demonstration?

We wanted to prove a lot of points in this sit-in. There was a lot of confusion. The walkout portrayed not only the honoring of Parkland victims, but also the move against gun violence. Many other schools portrayed this as just in honor of the Parkland victims, so I made sure that we would honor the 17 victims of the Parkland shooting in our sit-in because there is no disrespect or any type of harm against them in any way. We share the same condolences with them. And another point we wanted to prove was that certain things that people are vouching for in gun violence, like banning guns, are something we don't find too reasonable. We just think it would just be more of a problem that we would have to fix.

How do you interpret the opening phrase of the 2nd Amendment which discusses the right for a state militia to bear arms? Do you think that everyone has an unlimited right to possess guns even if they have nothing to do with a militia?

No, I do not believe everyone has a right to unlimited arms. I do believe that there should be precautions; there should be gun checks; there should be background checks for those who want to have a gun. I believe that anyone who wants to own a gun should have to have the experience to have it. I do not believe that everyone should have the unlimited amount or should have a gun without any permission whatsoever.

What alternative measures do you suggest in order to prevent tragedies like the Sandy Hook Massacre and the Parkland shooting?

I mean, small things that I saw that have been recently occurring, like Walmart and a lot of supermarkets or big stores that sell guns or weapons have been recently upgrading their age to 21; now, you can't be 18 to buy a gun. I thought that was a fantastic move, in my opinion. I believe that if someone has restrictions on some small things like alcohol, I believe that a gun should not be handed to you until 21 if you can't have alcohol by then. So, I do believe that was a great step and I believe that there should be more coming with gun restrictions that can allow people to be able to bear arms and at the same time have a safe environment.

Are you disappointed that almost all the attendees of the sit-in were males?

No, I'm actually not really disappointed; I'm pretty proud of the guys that came out because we've been portrayed as the bad guys in this situation. We've had our posters been taken down, and our words have been fought against... So, all the guys that showed support and even the very few amount girls that came (I believe it was less than 10, I'm gonna be honest with you), I supported everyone coming out and having respect for what we were supporting because we needed every person. We were going up against a lot of people in this situation.

Can you elaborate on your posters being torn down?

We created posters. We put them in a fair distance near the posters that represented the walk-out. We made sure that there would be no way of blocking the walk-out's posters. So, we put them in ways that they would be separated. And at the end of the day, students didn't agree and one of our grade administrators didn't agree, so they were taken down. (*It was later discovered that the posters were taken down because they were not previously approved by the administration, which is a necessary step in the process of putting up flyers or posters.)

Some students have expressed concern that the school administration is taking a political stance by supporting the walkout. Do you agree?

I do believe that is true. Some of examples that the RHS administration has been with the walkout is the announcements. Just yesterday, the announcement about the athletic record, there were some strong remarks. It even shocked my gym teacher when he was starting his lecture on body mass. It was nerve wracking. I do believe that it was something that needed to be spoken, and gun violence was said multiple times during the announcement. So, it clearly showed that not only do these people in the walkout want to have justice for the Parkland victims, but they want to push against gun violence, and the administration has done a fairly great job of supporting the walkout.



#Enough: 17 Minutes for 17 Lives

Eugene Park
staff writer

On Valentine's Day 2018, shots rang out in Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Six minutes of gunfire from perpetrator Nikolas Cruz was all it took for the Stoneman Douglas shooting to become one of the deadliest school massacres in the world. During those six minutes, 14 young students and 3 staff members lost their lives while trying to help and defend others around them. The nation reacted with shock and anger to another devastating school shooting that joined the list of at least 15 more in 2018 alone. And there were evidently a few difficult questions hanging in the minds of many citizens across the nation: what can, or should be, done to prevent such a horrific massacre from occurring again? Who will be the ones to stand up and take action? Will anyone listen? Students of Stoneman Douglas and of schools across the nation are ready to answer these questions. Evidently, they are not going to simply sit down without making an effort to raise awareness and bring about change. The March 14 National Walkout was just one way of many that Americans around the world used to inspire change in others and in the government. Besides being an opportunity to protest gun violence and advocate for tighter gun control laws, the walkout was most importantly a chance for students, faculty, parents, and other administrative leaders to honor and respect those who perished in the shooting. The steps to joining in and supporting the movement were simple: when the clock

struck 10 A.M on March 14, students, teachers, and their supporters marked one month since the shooting by walking out of school for 17 minutes with each minute dedicated to a victim. What students chose to do while the 17 minutes passed was up to them, and some planned sit-ins while others prepared rallies to vocalize their support for those affected by unwarranted gun brutality. But what might have seem like a simple yet powerful chance to speak up against senseless violence was also mired in worry over any penalties for students that participate in the walkout. Some school districts, such as those in Allentown, warned students that they would be marked tardy or absent for joining in. A school district in Waukesha, Wisconsin, even threatened students with a three-day suspension if they decided to leave the school in order to take part in the walkout. However, many other schools - including Ridgewood High School - supported the nationwide effort and several teachers are actively encouraging their students to participate and speak up for their beliefs. Plus, several prestigious colleges including Yale, Boston University, and MIT established their stance that they would not turn away any prospective applicants for being involved in the walkout or for being punished as a result. Students are ready to make a loud, echoing call for change in gun control and for the safety of Americans everywhere. It is the time for the new generation to be the voice of all Americans and those who have died by saying #ENOUGH, not only as students did on March 14, but in the coming months as the movement grows.

March for Our Lives

Emily Ertle
staff writer

In coordination with Everytown for Gun Safety, a group of survivors of the violent shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School organized a march across DC with sister marches across the US. These marches took place on Saturday, March 24th. The shooting took place a month and ten days prior, on February 14th, leaving 17 dead and even more injured. According to the mission statement of the march, “The kids and families of March For Our Lives will take to the streets of Washington, DC to demand that their lives and safety become a priority. The collective voices of the March For Our Lives movement will be heard.” The goal of this ongoing movement is to open up the conversation about guns and to show politicians with closed ears that the time to talk about this is now. Gone are the days of hopes and prayers. This movement has garnered support from public figures including Oprah Winfrey, Steven Spielberg, Kate Capshaw, and George and Amal Clooney. The primary march in Washington D.C. occurred on Pennsylvania Avenue NW, between 3rd and 12th Street at 12:00 PM. News sources approximate that 800,000 young students attended.

In order to help students looking to attend without a parent or guardian

find lodging, high school seniors Gabrielle Zwi and Michaela Heonig had created an exchange-like program, pairing up these students with others from the D.C. area willing to share their homes. So long as the student provided a signed permission slip from their parent or guardian, they could be assigned to one of the 700 hundred homes which had already agreed to take in attending middle school, high school, or college students for free. As early as two weeks before the march, about half of these homes were already filled with students from states including Florida, Tennessee, and California.

For those who couldn’t make it to the D.C. march, there were sister marches of varying scales across the nation. The biggest nearby was in Manhattan, NY at 10:00 AM. Marchers gathered on 72nd street for a rally, with speakers including parents of the victims and survivors from Stoneman Douglass. At home, a county-wide march took place from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM in front of the steps of the Bergen County Courthouse at 10 Main Street, Hackensack, NJ. Politicians including Congressman Josh Gottheimer and House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer will speak at the March. All around the world, similar marches were held, uniting the public, even outside of the United States, against the common problem of gun violence in schools.

RHS Walkout: An Interview

Violet Maxwell
features editor

The following interview was conducted with Mia Lowy, one of the leaders of the Students Demand Action Club that organized last month’s walkout.

What is the purpose behind your cause?

The purpose behind the Students Demand Action club at RHS is to let students really use their voice. Because most of us aren’t of voting age yet, we’re often ignored and our ideas are pushed aside. Even though we can’t vote yet, our ideas are really powerful and we’re very passionate about our future. The purpose of the walkout was to band together to take a stand against gun violence. Although different members of SDA or people who attended the walkout might have different ideas of how gun violence should be prevented, we agree that we should be allowed to feel safe in our schools. Besides our own homes, school is where we spend a majority of our time. We learn and grow at school, and it should be a safe environment for us to do so. If our safety is at risk, we’re not able to be the best that we can be, and that really limits us.

Do you think it will make a difference?

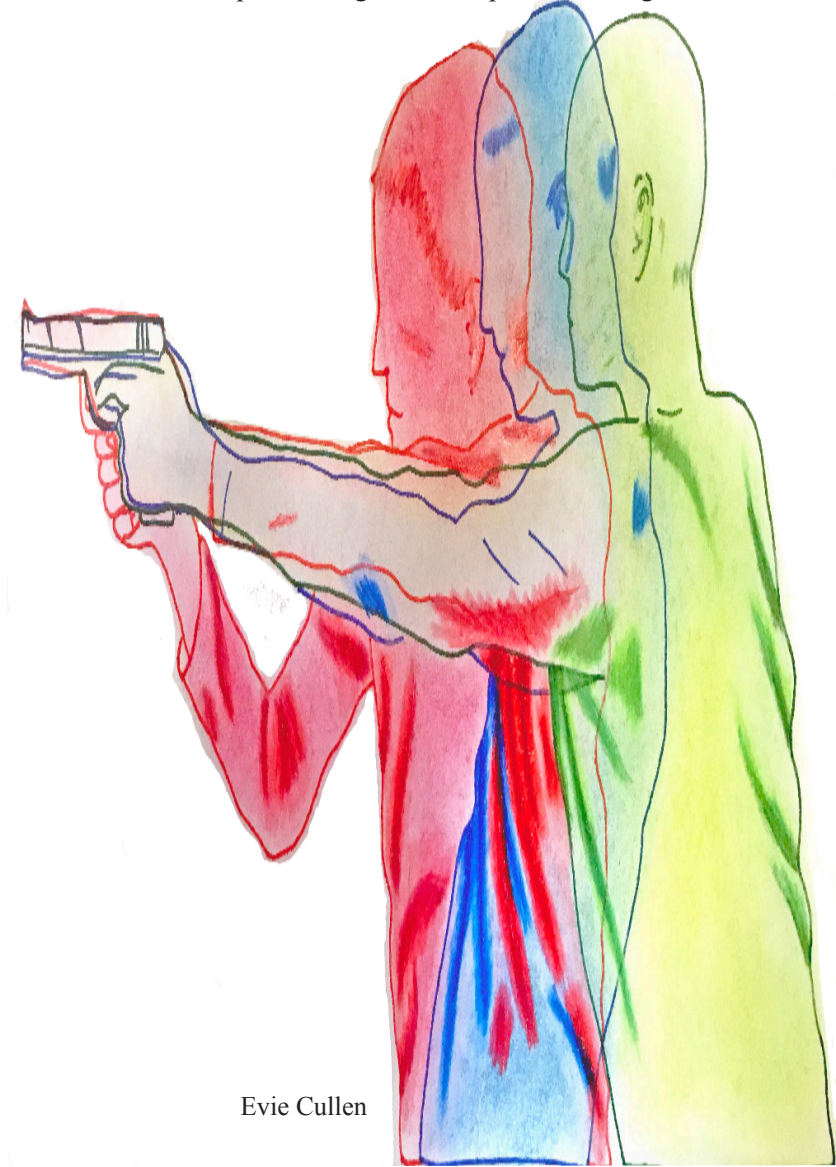
I absolutely do. I know that some people didn’t think that walking out of school for 17 minutes would not really do anything, but look at all the publicity it’s gotten. The walkout made such an impact because it’s not typical for teens in Ridgewood to really fight against anything- we’re very blessed to have great education, an incredible community, and an overall terrific town life. This walkout made people realize that issues like gun violence still occur in Ridgewood, as they do all over the US. Even if Ridgewood isn’t directly impacted by a mass shooting, every single student and teen is somehow affected by a mass shooting. Whether their cousin had left that night club ten minutes prior or they knew a victim of Parkland, gun violence is a huge issue that’s affecting the entirety of the US today. It’s important for us to work together to show that although we are young, we will not back down. We want to make sure the impact of the walkout continues, so students are currently planning a possible April 20 event.

Why now?

Parkland felt like the last straw for most of us. For many teens, we were still young when Sandy Hook occurred. We weren’t aware of the power that our minds can create and how our actions can create change. Now that we’re older, we’ve been able to realize that we really can make an impact and fight for what we believe in. Feeling safe in schools shouldn’t be a privilege, it should be a right. On February 15, one day after the Parkland shooting, the fire alarm at RHS went off. My classmates and I were hesitant to flee the building because of the possibility of a shooter waiting outside. We’ve gotten to the point where we don’t know whether to follow normal safety procedures. We don’t feel safe anymore. That’s why we act now- along with many other teenagers around the US, we don’t feel as if we can live our lives because we’re scared that they’ll be taken from us.

Why is this cause important?

As I said before, this issue has taken over the US. It’s in every newspaper, Instagram post, and Facebook group. Gun control is a tricky topic- people are protective of their rights, and we respect that. However, we fight for our right to feel safe, which we feel is more important than the right to own a gun. I don’t want to go to school and be worried if it’s my last time seeing my mom. I want to be able to enjoy my time in high school and grow to my fullest potential. With the way things are right now, we’re unable to do so. Something has to change. The only way to create change is to use your voice, which is what RHS students did on March 14.



Evie Cullen



Photos from Laura Dever and Sofia Lee



Maraea Garcia

Sublime Blossoms

Sophie Caswell
staff writer

At first glance, Ridgewood High School exudes competitiveness, largely in relation to academics or athletics. Morning announcements are congested with sports accomplishments and successful athletes are widely praised, often receiving college scholarships or awards. Yet under its competitive surface, the school is filled with incredibly talented artists and musicians that lack appreciation. The Carroll Art Gallery is overlooked and orchestra and band concerts seem vacant in comparison to sports events. Many young artists and their work are neglected.

Advocating for much needed art appreciation, the ARTBeat committee, led by Sophia Swanson and co-leader Jack Shigeta ('19), held their most recent event in the campus center on March 11th. Titled Sublime, the event attracted students, teachers, and families eager to view artwork, listen to live music, and watch student-made films.

ARTBeat has previously held multiple successful events, including ARTBeat 2017 and Fall Fusion. Mainly revolving around music, these events consisted of live performances by student groups. Sublime had an art based atmosphere, displaying the awe-inspiring artwork done by talented students, while also including a coffee-shop inspired musical performance by Griffin Fink ('18) and Emily Ertle ('20).

A student-made film of ARTBeat 2017 performances was projected

on one side of the room, while members of the committee held a home-made crêpe sale on the other side. The small, decorated space felt larger as people gathered to admire the creatively displayed artwork strung across the room and propped up on podiums and easels. Anticipation for springtime and warmer weather radiated due to the scattered and vibrant cherry blossom tree that grew with each paper flower made by young and aspiring artists. Sophia chimed in, "[we] wanted visitors to feel like they had contributed to the event...people were free to design their own blossom and pin it to the wall, and the end product was truly beautiful." The colorful tree stands in the Campus Center, still visible to all students. Sublime is a fitting appellation.

RHS students attended the event with family and friends, either to support the art community or just to socialize and have an entertaining and lively art-filled day. Claudia Ricatto, an RHS junior who dropped into the gallery, stated "I think that everyone can benefit from appreciating and going to art events, so we should get everyone to go to ARTBeat." With all of the competition at RHS, the arts program stands as a highly influential and under appreciated aspect of the community. Although small, the art program provides an outlet for creative students and gives people the opportunity to share their voice in a way other than words.

"The goal of ARTBeat is to create events that can showcase the talents of RHS artists and musicians... over the past two years we have created several

events run by Sophia, myself, and the rest of the ARTBeat committee. Each event takes months of planning, but the process is rewarding and it's exciting to see the results come together," said Jack Shigeta. Sophia added on, saying, "ARTBeat also aims to share the creativity within the school with the rest of our community. Student artists and musicians unfortunately have few opportunities to broadcast their hard work to a broad audience so we hope to draw a wide variety of Ridgewood residents to our events... the part of ARTBeat that I love most is the collaboration between different forms of expression, a theme which we try to emphasize with every event." Sharing this community and helping it grow is the purpose of ARTBeat, and with each new event, RHS can work its way to being a school that really appreciates the impact that art and expression can have.

Everyone on the committee is incredibly proud of the influence that has been made from their efforts. Sophia said, "Ridgewood High School is home to such a spectrum of people, and I really think that the Ridgewood ARTBeat Committee reflects that. We welcome everyone to join us at meetings, regardless of whether an individual has taken art or music classes at the high school. Our diversity is what makes us strong, and I hope that sends a positive message to the rest of the student body. With varied perspectives, a little inspiration, a strong team, and a ton of hard work, pulling off our events suddenly becomes possible."

The ARTBeat committee looks forward to its main event this year: Ridgewood ARTBeat 2018, which will be held in the Bandshell on Vet's Field on Tuesday, June 12th from 8:30 to 9:45 PM. It'll surely be sublime!



Sophie Caswell

What You Don't Know About Conspiracy Theories

Lara Baskin
staff writer

We've all heard them. Bush did 9/11, the moon landing was staged, reptiles control the world, you name it. You've got to admit that there's something strangely compelling about conspiracy theories, which is why more than half of Americans believe in at least one. But can these seemingly innocent alternative perspectives actually be harmful? Recent psychological research suggests that although some conspiracy theories may be harmless, certain social consequences of these theories deserve more serious attention.

It's been proven that mere exposure to a conspiracy theory can make a person less pro-social and less likely to agree with factual scientific findings. For instance, studies have shown that people who read anti-government conspiracy theories are less likely to vote than those who read information disproving conspiracy theories. Similarly, people who read about climate change being a hoax express less interest in reducing their carbon footprint than those who read anti-conspiracy material or no material on climate change. Anti-vaccine conspiracy theories can discourage people from vaccinating their children against diseases, which is hazardous for obvious reasons. By making people feel powerless, conspiracy theories can significantly decrease social engagement and participation in society.

The list of repercussions does not end there. Conspiracy propaganda can have societal consequences as well, including aggression, right-wing extremism, racist attitudes against minority groups, and even political violence.

A number of personality traits and qualities have been identified as being common among conspiracy theorists, which include, but are not limited to, cynicism, paranoia, distrust, and anxiety. Certain demographic factors also play a role in the types of people who fall susceptible to conspiracy theories. Those with lower levels of education tend to believe conspiracy theories more than the well-educated, since they are used to thinking critically. Also, those at the extremes of their political orientation are more likely to endorse conspiracy theories, which has been especially prevalent in current politics.

What leads someone to believe in conspiracy theories? Studies show that a number of forces are responsible. According to a study by Applied Cognitive Psychology, conspiracy theorists tend to have one thing in common: they feel a lack of control over their lives. This makes sense, considering conspiracy theories often emerge during times of fear and uncertainty: following terrorist strikes, high-profile deaths, financial crises, and natural disasters. Jan-Willem van Prooijen, associate professor in social and organizational psychology at VU University Amsterdam, explains that if people feel they don't have control over a situation, they'll try to make sense of it in an alternative way. "The sense-making leads them to connect dots that aren't necessarily connected in reality," van Prooijen says.

In addition, "proportionality bias" has also been identified as a factor. Proportionality bias is our innate tendency to assume that big events can only have big causes. This is why many people feel uncomfortable about President John F. Kennedy falling victim to a lone gunman, and preferred to believe that he was the

victim of a large-scale conspiracy. Some level of skepticism is healthy for individuals to an extent, since people can't be expected to agree with everything they are told. One can even go as far as to say that some conspiracies

are capable of compromising people's stances on important topics like climate change and vaccination, and highlighting people's prejudices and impulses, which can lead to some dark ways of thinking.



Erin Kim

Are Drag Queens Becoming Mainstream?

Olivia Gondris
staff writer

Vibrant makeup, exaggerated features, large wigs, and creative costumes put together the image of an often misunderstood performance art: drag. With events such as lip sync performances and pageants increasing, we have reached the peak of drag culture. Though they are usually associated with gay society, and in particular, gay men, drag queens can be found across all sexualities worldwide. The drag

queens we see in the media are in the entertainment industry, however, in reality, a drag queen is formed as an amplified expression of one’s personality, not necessarily an ‘alter ego.’ Drag culture has been around since ancient times. Traditions and cultures of early civilizations such as the Incas, the Native Americans, and the Egyptians, all practiced the act of cross dressing. In Japanese Kabuki theatre, male actors fought for the female roles as the most highly regarded and difficult positions to be cast in. Religious plays also casted males for female roles, as wom-

en were excluded from participating in the plays as actresses. Even though it is very important to distinguish between these theatrical roots and development of drag culture, it is not inaccurate to say that inspiration for drag was drawn from a variety of cultures. Drag queens - or what was then referred to as ‘female impersonation’ - can be traced back to the early 1800’s. In the 1900’s the concept of ‘drag’ became heavily associated with the LGBT community, and therefore was mostly hidden from media and society. However, this secret did nothing to reduce the

community’s membership. Even now, drag culture continues to expand in hidden gay clubs, bars, and show culture. Over the years, drag culture has gained significant acceptance, especially towards the 80’s and 90’s, where major cities saw ‘drag booms,’ not only in LGBT clubs, but also across the city. 2009 marked a turning point for drag queens in pop culture and media as Rupaul’s *Drag Race* first aired on VH-1. Nine seasons, two all-star seasons and more than 100 drag queens later, Rupaul’s drag empire is reaching heights no one could have ever imagined. In 2016, Rupaul himself declared that drag culture “will never be mainstream. It’s the antithesis of mainstream. And listen, what you’re witnessing with drag is the most mainstream it will get. But it will never be mainstream, because it is completely opposed to fitting in.” Yet, just a few months after this interview he won an Emmy for Outstanding Host for Reality, and was nominated again last year for Outstanding Reality Competition Program. In May 2017, the 3rd Annual DragCon had more than 40,000 attendees, which is triple the number from the previous year. Presently, drag queens are embracing the art and using their individual personalities to achieve assorted careers such as comedians and actors. On top of this, there is an increase in sales for drag merchandise. Drag culture has become more popular than ever before, and not just within the community of drag queens. It has become a global phenomenon and permanently marked its place in today’s pop culture.



Anika Tsapatsaris

Hollywood in Technicolor

Janus Kwong
staff writer

Black Panther, directed by Ryan Coogler with an almost all-black cast, topped \$1 billion in the global box office with numbers still rising. The Oscar-winning Pixar animation, Coco, revolved around Mexican characters and was voiced entirely by Latino actors. Jordan Peele, director of Get Out, became the first black director to win an Original Screenplay Award at the 2018 Oscars. There is an increasing amount of change in the movie industry. Cultural appropriation and representation in media has allowed many daring individuals to give minorities a voice through the big screen. With a slow rise in popularity for Americans with Latino, Asian, Hispanic, and African origins, movies have become a notable medium for individuals to let their name and race be heard. These figures on screen have started to make a huge cultural impact on the way young minds view the world and the way people have started to change it. Many long-time movie fans of all genres have started out as children admiring characters from a cartoon or show on TV. Looking to heroes, idols, and superstars, children adore characters similar to themselves, delving into the dreams that they, too, can be like the models on screen. Watching actors of their own race and color is an inspiration for many. Proper use of equal diversity in films imitating the real world promotes accurate realism that allows its audience to fully relate to the fictional

world. The next generation can learn and be aware of the world’s diversity at a young age and learn to respect it. In a way, appropriate representation in movies can form an impact on the world and its future generations. Diversity in film also affects the perception of races and other minorities in the real world. An inclusive community recognizes each and every individual for their differences and values those distinctions. Representa-

tion means portraying each group for its variation of perspectives, ideas, and experiences. The importance of multicultural representation in the world can be stimulated and brought to awareness by incorporating actors and actresses of distinct backgrounds in popular movies and films. Films expand our limited view of reality. By bringing people of all colors and race to the screen for millions to see, our perspectives on reality and those

deemed “different” can be broadened. This year is one for celebration with high hopes in the film industry, but the fight is never over. We need more roles to play, movies to direct, and scripts to write. More importantly, we need a louder voice to be heard. Gender and racial equality has not yet been fully achieved, but there has been significant improvement. By taking things one step at a time, the goals towards equality gradually approaches.



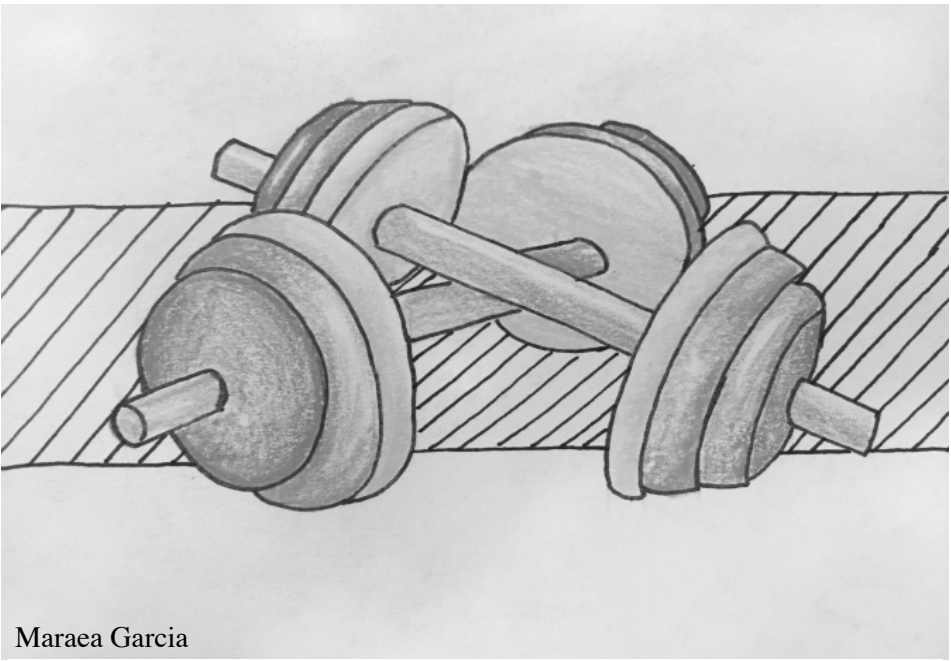
Amelia Chen

Female Only Lift Days

Jackie Schmidt and Jules Einemer
staff writers

Many teenage girls at RHS struggle with the intimidation of the Wellness Center. By just walking in on a given Monday, Wednesday, or Friday - the days on which the gym is open for use by all - you can see why. Guys clearly dominate the setting. The Wellness Center on these open lift days is almost exclusively male, which can make walking in to this fraternity as a female feel somewhat unwelcoming. Also, working out in a room with the majority sex being male can place undesired attention and pressure on girls. On average, females tend to have about two-thirds of the amount of muscle mass that males do. It is possible that some girls are embarrassed of their lack of strength in comparison to many other students they would be working out with. Or maybe girls just want to be able to workout with their friends without the eyes of the male majority on them. In order to open up the gym to females and accommodate these issues, there seems to be only one clear solution.

Within the past few years, Ridgewood High School decided to dedicate the weight room after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays to girls only. The decision to



Maraea Garcia

do this had the intentions to make sure each student felt comfortable and accepted, even while working out. On another hand, this could be seen as a sexist movement that girls and guys should not work out together. Some students find the female only lift days as unnecessary because the gym is technically open to all students, regardless of gender, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Also, the female only lift days might seem to incorporate a level of misogyny and condescension. Males are often thought as more athletic and strong when compared

to females. Because of this stereotype, deciding which days girls can workout without guys seems to say that girls are incapable of enduring the intensity of the male dominated lift days. However, regardless of the potential elements and intentions of the new lift days, the number of girls that work out after school as a result has increased dramatically.

We interviewed a physical education teacher and personal trainer at RHS, Frank Giannantonio. We asked him his opinion on having dedicated days for females to work out. He stated that he understands

that it may seem sexist that girls and boys at Ridgewood High School are not working out together; however, there has been an increase in the amount of girls coming to the weight room on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He noted that before having the dedicated days, not a single girl worked out at the RHS weight room. Recently on the specific days, the room is packed with females. We also interviewed three girls who use the weight room. We asked them questions including how often they worked out and whether or not they preferred having days where only girls worked out. Each student answered similarly by mentioning how they only come to the Ridgewood weight room on Tuesdays and Thursdays because there is no pressure of working out in front of guys.

After hearing the students perspective, having the exclusive days in the weight room is clearly beneficial to students who want to stay healthy. It is important to recognize that fitness is a personal journey that is necessary to pursue in order to maintain an active, fit life. If most female students were depriving themselves of a sufficient workout because they felt uncomfortable around guys, it is necessary to have these female-only days despite the controversial gender segregation.

Club Sports

Lexi Liu
sports writer

As a teen, participating in elite teams for specific sports used to be more thought of as a way to make athletes ready for their high school team. However, many now perceive their high school program as a way to prepare for club teams, and the more exposure to college coaches and recruiters that come with it. Athlete's and their families face the difficult decision of which team they find to be more essential. Both provide individuals with important experiences that strengthen different aspects of their particular sport, but as club

sports run sessions year round that overlap with high school practices, it can be difficult to balance both.

But is becoming the best player now more important, rather than having simply having fun? Members of clubs, that focus on creating the top teams with the most elite and competitive athletes, often feel motivated to prioritize such programs. Most programs run a pay to play system, meaning that if individuals miss practices, they receive consequences such as less playing time, resulting in less attention from recruiters, or even being kicked off the team. Especially because parents expect a large pay off from investing so much money,

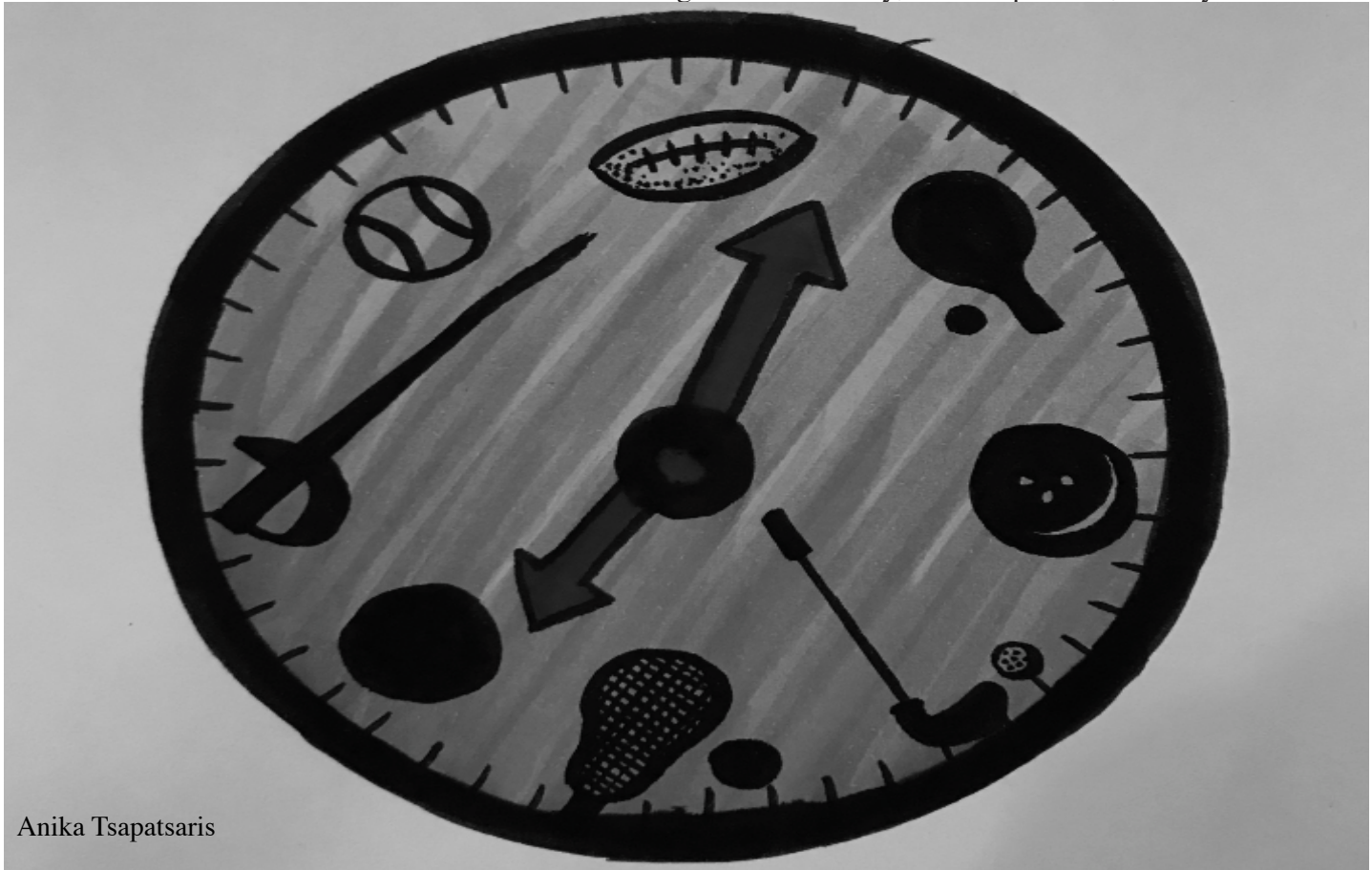
it is often difficult to step away.

Club teams' dominance impacts high school teams year round; as missed practices may be for sports differing from that of their specific club team, individuals not only have to decide which team they will work with more, but also the sport they want to put more effort towards. Thus, as athletes become less involved in our high school's athletic program by focusing on one sport over others, it is inevitable that individuals will have to disappoint teammates and coaches. Furthermore, coaches may feel pressure if they are expected to be fair towards those who always attend practice, but they feel inclined

to give special treatment to others to increase chances of winning.

Additionally, the initial threat of club teams, which almost all athletes realize too late, is that the race to identify talent at a young age is actually discouraging. Many have completely quit a sport because they were overwhelmed by the high pressure at a premature age. As an athlete who completely committed to the competitive nature of a lacrosse club team at the age of ten, I was much less enthusiastic and engaged by the time I reached high school, and ended up deciding to only play for the club team, rather than for Ridgewood High School as well.

High school not only allows teens to play in front of friends and families, but also reinforces important leadership skills as players have the opportunity to mature as they move from the freshman team to the varsity team. Although some believe that sacrificing one's high school experience for a future that is not secure is unreasonable, many thrive under club team programs that focus on reaching the next level accompanied by the potential for a greater future. Allie Doyle, an athlete on the Varsity Lacrosse team and member of STEPS Elite, has said that practices have conflicted with each other, but that STEPS practices are not always mandatory when in season for school. Her experience has been highlighted by how she has "has gotten the opportunity to play with some of the best girls around our area which has definitely improved her (my) game." Overall, deciding where priorities lie differs from athlete to athlete as goals and even sports are not the same.



Anika Tsapatsaris

Boys Baseball Looking to Repeat

Dan Boucher
staff writer

March is officially upon us and with the ushering in of the new month comes the start to the high school baseball season. Ridgewood’s baseball team has, for the most part, always been a relatively successful program; however, in recent years, the program has experienced substantial success. Two years ago the team placed second in the North I Group IV championship and last year took home the title. With a target on their back, Ridgewood looks to repeat in 2018.

However, past success does not define a team with each coming year; it is what the team can prove this year that will define them. With a plethora of players departing the team after their senior year last year, the school’s baseball team must fill the vacancies left by their former teammates. Junior center fielder David Kleiman received questions on the matter. When asked how the loss of so many key players would affect this years team, he was not worried, he explained that, “although the core group of players who brought success to the team over the last two years are gone, the players who look to replace them have extensive varsity experience and won’t skip a beat,



Andrew Olson

leading to a seamless transition.”

As the tryouts for the baseball team wind down, the team prepares for their annual trip down the Florida. This trip serves as a chance for the team to not only escape the snow and play a few games before the season starts in April, but also to build the overall team relationship. Kleiman reiterates this when stating that, “baseball requires a strong team relationship in order to be successful and the Florida trip is a great way to accomplish this.”

Taking a step back from the varsity team, the freshman baseball team received a new coach this season as Ridgewood High School’s very own Doug Aday earned the position. Freshman year for any sport is an exciting time for the freshman to represent their school for the first time and showcase their talents. After losing in

the championship last season, the freshman team looks to improve upon their successors’ success.

The junior varsity team coached by RHS math teacher Adam Scevola is also looking to rebound after falling short in the Tri-Conference J.V. Baseball Invitational last year. The new sophomore and returning junior players will look to bring Coach Scevola his first Tri-Conference championship and the school’s first since 2007 when Dr. McNamee, another RHS math teacher, coached the team.

Students can support all three of Ridgewood’s baseball teams all season long as the Varsity team plays their home games at Vets field and the freshman and junior varsity teams call Somerville their home turf. The schedule for these games can be found on the high school’s website.

Co-Ed Sports

Claire Sullivan
staff writer

Mo’ne Davis took the world by storm in 2014, becoming the first female to pitch a shutout and earn in a win in the Little League World Series. Her fastball topped 71 mph, which is equal to 93 mph off a Major League mound. Ever since then, the topic of women participating in male-dominated sports has been increasingly more popular.

This raises an interesting question: if female athletes are allowed to play a male sport, does the opposite situation apply as well?

Due to biological reasons, males are physically stronger than females because of their higher testosterone levels. Some may argue that this could cause unfairness in female-dominated sport or safety issues in a male-dominated sport.

“Having a girl who is most likely going to be smaller on a guys sports team is not the best. Not because there not as good but because it could be really dangerous,” freshmen Allison Hong states. “But it depends on the sport because I know that girls have been kickers on football teams. I think it’s a case by case situation.”

“Co-ed sports teams are good for non-contact sports like track or golf. But for contact sports, I feel that the genders should be separate,” adds hockey and lacrosse player Tyler Kopff.

On the contrary, some recognize that people should play with whoever they need to in order to get better.

“There are girls that are better than boys and boys that are better than girls,” volleyball player Kate Zuckerman explains. “I don’t see why we can not have the best possible teams even if it means co-ed. I don’t think gender is what should determine the team, talent should.”

“If they want to be on the same team, then they should be allowed to,” soccer player Oliver Wilkins says.

“Although people against it might argue that it’s ‘distracting,’ it could actually motivate and I really don’t think it’s that much of an issue,” crew team member Aaron Friedman includes.

Since any true, fully co-ed league has ceased to exist in this area, so many students are still unsure on the topic.

“There is value in sports teams by gender because of the bond you create with those people,” soccer player Caroline Loscalzo remarks. “However, I can see the benefit for people that are unsure of their gender identity or simply want to compete with those of the opposite gender.”

Softball player Kaylin Marshall brings up an interesting point in saying, “Boys and girls are simply on different maturity levels in high school. For example, girls have their own inside jokes and boys might instead joke around in a more physical way. Also, it is easier to bond with teams of your own gender because you can have sleep overs, hang out without parents worrying, get ready for practice in the locker room together, and all these random little things that you wouldn’t be able to do with a co-ed team. However, I do see the importance of having friends that are boys, and having friends that are girls. While I think it’s important to have co-ed friends, I don’t think that sports teams are the way to it just because of all the social things that come with being on a team.”

Do We Need Participation Trophies?

Davis Weil
staff writer

Although it is very much at the forefront of conversations involving younger children, participation trophies often become a forgotten entity once kids reach the age where it is seen as all right for people to lose. In the competition-driven society that we live in today, participation trophies are a very polarizing subject, albeit in a rather modest way. These awards are typically given out to younger children in an effort to avoid hurt feelings and self-esteem issues, however, there are a few questions that need to be asked about these trophies.

The first question is: Should participation trophies exist? The answer to that differs from one person’s opinion to the next. I, however, feel as if there is still a little value inside of these seemingly meaningless trophies. Especially in the eyes of a preschool student or early elementary school student, a participation trophy can be a valuable source of self-confidence and an early discovery of self-worth, something that has become very important in modern society.

As we persist to give out participation trophies, the next question arises: When do we stop handing them out? More experienced members of society have the role of integrating young children into society, making them aware of how society functions and giving them valuable life skills and knowledge. The truth is, however, society today is becoming increasingly more competitive and cutthroat, with college recruiting, internships, job interviews, and even private

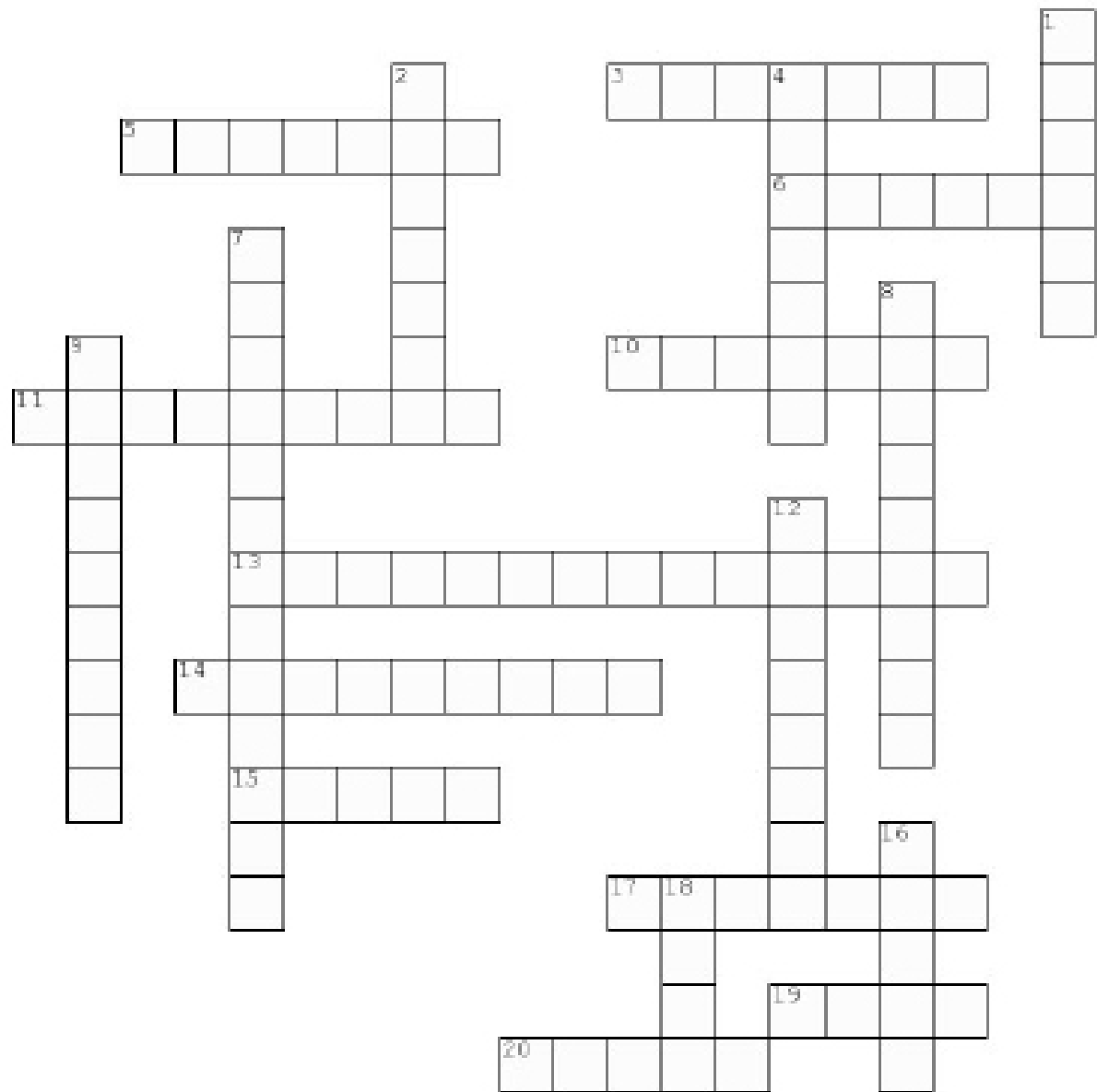


grammar school recruiting starting earlier and earlier. With this uptick in competition and the desire to get ahead of others by all means, we may be doing the youth a disservice by handing out participation trophies.

The fact of the matter is, for every child, there will be points in their lives when they will not win, and not win any trophy or award, so conditioning children from a young

age that a reward will come from not winning is very counterproductive, and it just means that the introduction into the competitive nature of the real world will be that much more shocking for the youth. After all, the goal of the older members of society is to prepare the younger people to enter the real world, and giving out participation trophies may very well just do the opposite.

April Fools, High Times RULES!



- Across:
- Down:
3. "We're going to _____!!!"

5. He can sing, he likes Chinese food and cheese, and he may or may not eat lunch in the English office!

6. I'm in the caf... I'm late for class... but I need that snack... what do I buy?

10. Angry man who does lunch duty in the Campus Center

11. A little birdie told me, "Let's join the _____ club!"

13. This is inspirational hotline: Smile, and don't let anybody...

14. According to some, the socialist propaganda publication of RHS (page 2)

15. The most English English teacher at the school

17. RHS student running for village council (page 1)

19. Last year they were "EPIC!", this year they are "STRONG!"
1. Teacher that owns the funeral home in town

2. Cool GA

4. What is the ~hip~ name for the RHS library?

7. Monday after prom

8. The Meat-Lovers Club is hungry; which club do they EAT? (page 3)

9. Will RHS ever have another _____?

12. I wake up... I'm in Rome... it's 254 AD... what RHS academic team do I call?

16. Spence... not _____!!! (page 1)

18. According to Ridgewood High School legend, what resides on the roof of the school?

1. Second letter of 9 down

2. First letter of 18 down

3. Ninth letter of 13 across

4. Second letter of 2 down

5. Seventh letter of 8 down

6. Third letter of 6 across

7. Eighth letter of 11 across

8. Second letter of 15 across

9. Fifth letter of 5 across

10. Ninth letter of 9 down

