

The High Times

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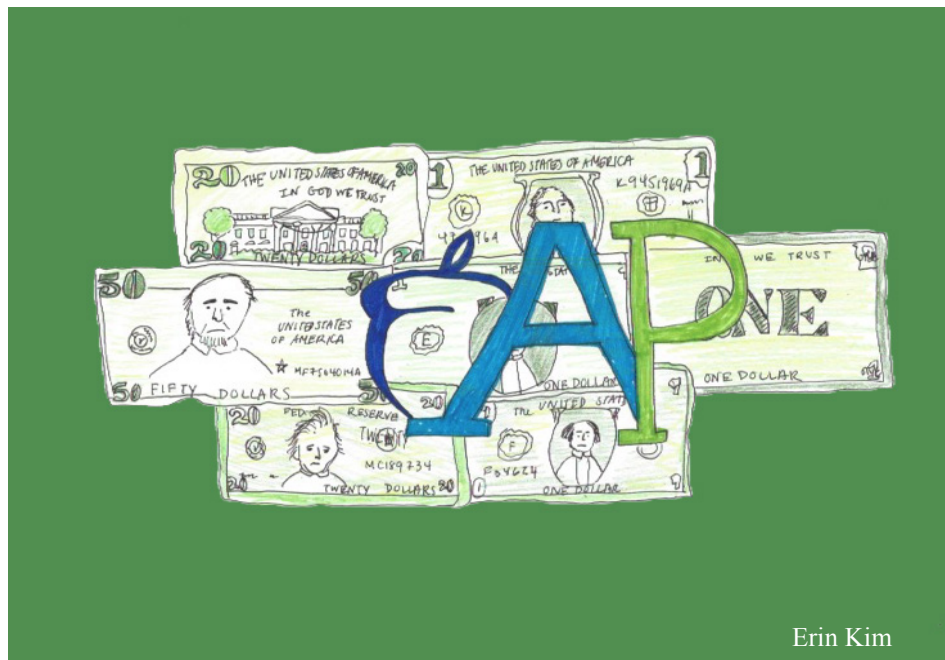
Why Do AP Tests Cost So Much?

Exam season is approaching!

James Ellinghaus
staff writer

Each May, hundreds of thousands, sometimes even millions, of high schoolers in the United States and Canada take the College Board's AP exams. After preparing diligently in their rigorous classes for months, these students are tasked with a short amount of time, ranging from 1.5 to 3 hours to show what they have learned throughout the school year. If they do exceptionally well, some of these students can submit their scores to colleges in exchange for higher course placement and credit. Enticing as this may be, the benefits of these exams come at a price, literally. With families spending hundreds of dollars a year on several tests, the question is: Are AP Tests too expensive?

The AP program dates back to the 1950s during the Cold War. It was created out of fear that American teenagers were being insufficiently prepared for their collegiate and adult lives, and in order to beat the Soviets, a superior education for the future generations was needed. The first nationwide AP exams were administered in 1956, consisting of Math, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, English Composition, Literature, Spanish, French, Latin, and German. Back then, the cost was a mere ten dollars for any number of tests. The fee



Erin Kim

has risen greatly over the past few decades, typically going up by one or two dollars a year. In 2019, the cost for just one exam is ninety four dollars in the US and one hundred and twenty four dollars in Canada. The College Board offers financial aid for students in need, which currently sits at thirty two dollars, but adjusts as the price increases.

So yes, the costs of these tests are in fact steep, but are they unreasonable? Or are they just small expedi-

ments to pay for a long term gain? Ninety four dollars seems illogical for any kind of test, especially when many high schools, like Ridgewood, mandate their students enrolled in AP courses take the exams to receive AP credit. When students take two or more AP classes a year, they are obliged to shell out hundreds of dollars to essentially boost their GPA. Also, while financial aid is available to students with low income backgrounds, the

maximum reduction is only thirty two dollars, meaning they still have to pay sixty two dollars per exam. Is this really that substantial of a discount? Not to mention, only one test is administered for each subject. Receiving a bad score is equivalent to throwing all that money down the drain.

On the other hand, AP exams are a bargain. At most universities in North America, students who score a three or above on their AP exams are eligible for credit. That ninety four dollar price tag may seem ridiculous, but in context, it is more affordable than paying hundreds of dollars for a single class (the average cost of a college credit is \$594). Additionally, students scoring threes, fours, and fives can enter higher level courses as freshman. This can open more doors to possible majors and allow them to challenge themselves academically.

Ridgewood may be a well-off town, but that doesn't mean the students are unbothered by paying the fees for AP exams. Payton Angus, a junior at RHS taking AP Psychology and AP Physics thinks that the exams are "way too expensive." Michael Rego, also a junior, is currently enrolled in AP Government & Politics and agrees with Ms. Angus' statement. Even RHS faculty think the

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Trump's National Emergency Powers

Julia Zambito
staff writer

By declaring a national emergency, the president gains access to 136 special powers and is able to set aside many of the legal limits. The decision to make the declaration is entirely up to the discretion of the president and there is no requirement that Congress ratify the decision. All the president has to do is sign an executive order and it unlocks powers such as the ability to freeze American bank accounts and shut down all electronic communications within the U.S. The list is extensive, and equally powerful-- such as President Trump's declaration of a national emergency to obtain money to build a wall on the border with Mexico.

In 1976, the National Emergencies Act was passed, formalizing the authority given to the president during a National Emergency and established limits on the duration. It also required that the president specify the powers to be invoked and to issue updates. The state of emergency expires after a year, unless renewed, and Congress must meet every six months to dis-



Evie Cullen

cuss emergency-related expenditures. If Congress wants to terminate the emergency, they have to pass a joint resolution that the president has to sign. If the president vetoes the resolution, then Congress has to have veto-proof majority in order to terminate the emergency. However, due to its difficulty, Congress has not vetoed a state of emergency in more than 30 years.

The purpose of a national emergency was to create a way to resolve an economic, military, or labor crisis more efficiently, doing away with the slow and cumbersome wait for a law to be passed or amand

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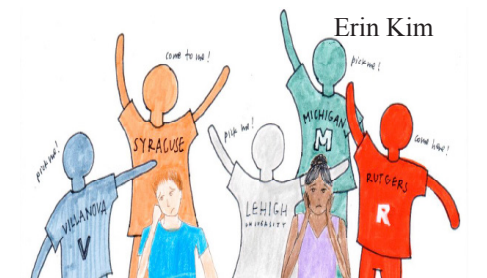
Choosing the Right College

Grace McLaughlin & Annie Probert
news editors

The hysteria following the college admissions process starts freshmen year. All of a sudden, students are told that most colleges want to see them taking the highest level of classes offered, and an unwavering A average. As a freshman, going to college seems in the distant future. But as the years tick by, students find that by the time they are juniors, their lives are fairly chaotic. Standardized test prep, and a seemingly unbearable amount of homework. During the first semester of senior year, students finalize and send their college applications. By late December, some already know what school they'll be going to. In March, regular decision applicants hear back from their schools. It feels as though all of high school as led up to this; students have all their decisions back and now have colleges to choose from until May 1st, when all schools require a deposit to be put down if you are attending.

The first step students should take is to visit schools they are seriously considering. Accepted students days run from February through April, usu-

ally offering students multiple days to come and see the college. Students can meet current students, experience real classes, eat in the dining hall, and socialize with their acceptor peers. It is important to actually visit because the school could project a completely different vibe online versus on campus. Accepted students days have information sessions that students and parents can attend, and also give high school students opportunities to ask currently enrolled undergraduates questions about the school. Accepted students days can confirm two things. One, that this school is the place that you want to spend your next four years. Two, that you would rather spend your college career *anywhere* but here.



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RHS DECA Takes States

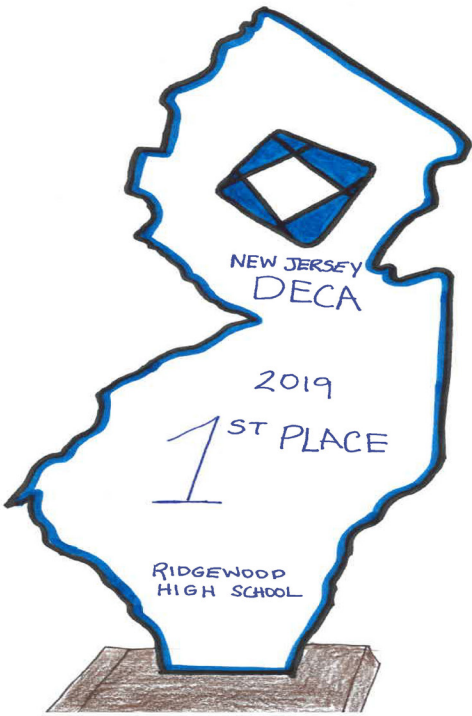
Katie Hu & Caroline Loscalzo
staff writer & news editor

Last month, over 100 students from Ridgewood High School traveled to Atlantic City for DECA’s annual State Development Career Conference. The three day conference consisted of paper and role play presentations, as well as Downtown DECA. Ms. Mendez, one of the chapter’s advisors, said “I was initially panicked when so many people qualified because we had only pre-booked 45 seats for the flight to Orlando!”. RHS DECA is thriving this year as it is sending the most qualifiers in the chapter’s history to the International Development Career Confer-

ence (ICDC) in Orlando, Florida. Unlike the state conference, students are only eligible to compete in one event at ICDC, but that does not stop many Ridgewood DECA students from striving to qualify in more than one event. Day 1 of the State’s Career Development Conference (SCDC) consisted of 20 page paper presentations and opening sessions. On the second day, students competed in their role play events, 10 page papers, and finals if they qualified. One of the most notable performances was by one of the chapter presidents - Jacob Alvarado. Jacob advanced to ICDC on three different events - role play, paper, and the Virtual Business Challenge (VBC). Jacob said, “It’s amazing to see how many

students we are sending to Orlando and how much the chapter has grown in the past 3 years. It is amazing to see the results of everyone’s hard work!” Alex Ruhl, Jacob’s roleplay partner and a double ICDC qualifier, serves as the NJ DECA Northern Region Vice President and also enjoyed his last state conference. Alex described his experience as “fantastic. After a year of prepping it was great to finally see all of my team’s hard work pay off. Even with a few slip-ups while at states, our team adapted very well making states a great experience for everyone involved!” He is looking forward to his final ICDC as it his last time with his state officer action team and Ridgewood DECA. The other chapter president, Kathryn Zhou, qualified for ICDC for two

events- her paper and VBC. When asked about her experience in Atlantic City, she stated that, “despite the weather, bus delays, and three days of no sun, my last DECA States experience was my favorite. It was so much fun competing again and seeing RHS DECA members succeed- over 50 members will be attending the International Conference and Katie Hu was elected as the President of NJ DECA.” Kathryn is excited for her last and fourth ICDC, along with the rest of the chapter. As this DECA season is coming to a close, a new team of state officers will take charge. Among these leaders is Katie Hu, the current President of Outreach for Ridgewood DECA. Katie and the other state officer candidates campaigned for an entire day in Atlantic City. Each candidate had to make a speech, and then run a booth with the end goal of obtaining as many votes as possible. The positions on the NJ DECA State Officer Action team include President, Northern Region VP, Southern Region VP, Central Region VP, VP of Public Relations, VP of Media, and Secretary. While some more experienced members already understood what it truly meant to be a DECA member, the state conference provided a opportunity for others to discover similar passions. Sasha Nadel, a freshman, commented that, “the students that have already been to states were extremely welcoming and friendly”. All 50 students attending ICDC are looking forward to the week long trip to Orlando, Florida in late April. Ridgewood DECA aspires to continue their successful year on the international stage. The trip to Orlando includes two days at Disney, along with competitions and ceremonies.



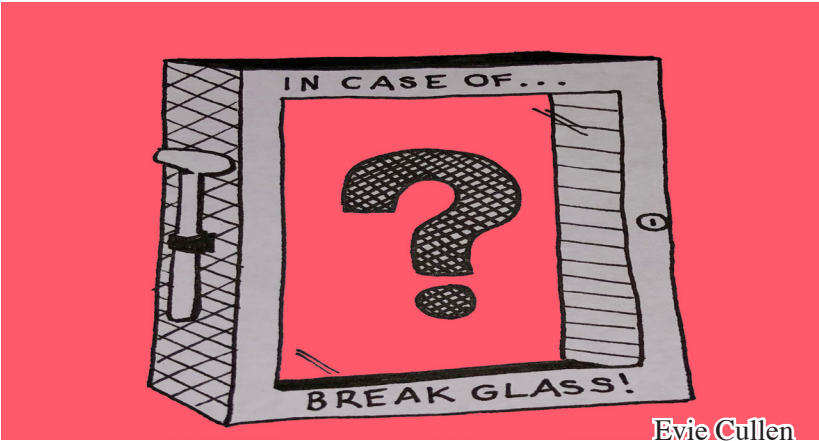
Sofia Lee

National Emergency Powers

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wait for a law to be passed or amended. However, a designation of a national emergency can be extended for years. Exactly 58 emergencies have been declared since the National Emergency Act of 1976 was signed into law, 31 of which are still in effect today. Congress has passed more than 100 different laws over the decades that outline powers given to a president during a national emergency. Congress assumed instances in which emergencies would be declared and wrote laws that would be necessary in such situations. These include control over domestic internet traffic, which could mean that the President can shut down websites, block emails and alter search results. The president can also deploy military troops domestically in order to “suppress any unlawful combinations or conspiracies that are obstructing the execution of the law.” With an emergency declaration, the president can actually freeze American bank accounts a power that is most frightening. Trump’s recent national emergency declaration came after being denied sufficient funds for his US-Mexico Border Wall. In a speech declaring the

emergency, Trump repeatedly used the word “invasion,” as he described immigrants crossing the border into the U.S. The issue in question is whether or not this is an “emergency” and if Trump should be given such powers. The National Emergency Act does not define what an emergency is and on what circumstances a president has authority to declare it. Congress’ hope was that they would not need to add a definition because they assumed the president would only use it in the interest of his country. However, Trump found what some are calling a loophole in the law, finding a way to declare a national emergency even though there is no imminent danger in America. It’s clear the National Emergencies Act is flawed because of its loopholes. In theory, a President could consolidate power by declaring a national emergency. If so, the country could turn its back on its democratic ideals and leave itself in the hands of a power-hungry ruler. It’s time for Congress and the American people to attempt to resolve the flaws that persist within the law, before the power lies in the wrong hands.



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AP Tests

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cost is too much. Ms. Kalebic, an AP Psychology teacher at RHS, thinks that the fees for AP exams are “definitely high” and should be lowered. The college admissions process is undoubtedly expensive, with no guarantee of admission. Most colleges want to see that students have taken AP courses and sat for the tests. In addition, standardized tests and therefore preparation is necessary to succeed. Taking the SAT, which is also College Board facilitated like AP exams, or the ACT multiple times is also encouraged by schools. There are also school-specific application fees that students pay through the Common Application when submitting applications. “I felt like I was just paying to get rejected,” said an anonymous senior student. Is applying to college all just a money game? Students have to pay hundreds of dollars to prepare for standardized tests, the actual test-taking fee, pay for AP examinations, and the school application fee all before actually getting accepted to college. Once in college, the majority of students will have to take out student loans in order to pay for school. Most students will agree that their hard work was worth it, but in light of the recent USC admissions scandal, the money that goes into college applications is something to think about. Regardless of complaints, AP exams will continue to get more expensive as the number of test takers rises. Applying to college gets more and more competitive each year as the number of students who will want to take and do well on AP examinations will continue to grow. Good luck to all RHS students taking one or more AP exam this school year!

College Admi\$\$\$ion\$

Caroline Loscalzo
Grace McLaughlin News Editors

By now, most people have heard of the USC admissions scandal and how dozens of parents, including actresses Lori Loughlin and Felicity Huffman, paid for their children to cheat on standardized tests for a higher score. Loughlin’s daughters, Olivia Jade and Isabella, were admitted to the University of the Southern California under the premise of recruits for the crew team (after cheating on their standardized tests). According to CNN, Loughlin and her husband, fashion designer Mossimo Giannulli, sent photographs of their daughters on rowing machines as confirmation. Neither Isabella nor Olivia Jade has participated in crew. In total, Loughlin and Giannulli allegedly spent \$500,000 to have both their daughters admitted to USC, more than the total \$280,000 total that most pay to attend the school. Unfortunately, the person responsible for orchestrating the crime has not received as much publicity as the already prominent figures. William Rick Singer, CEO of the college-prep company The Key, confessed to helping wealthy students cheat on the SAT and ACT exams to receive higher scores for money. Singer has also admitted to bribing college coaches to say that certain students should be accepted on an athletic recruitment, when in reality, they may not even play the sport at all. Both Singer and the coaches turned a blind eye to the fact

that the student was not an athlete and their profile was not real. According to prosecutors, Singer said his company, “Ok, so, who we are... what we do is we help the wealthiest families in the US get their kids into school” (CNN). But what does this mean for students who have applied to college honestly, and those who will? The entire scandal has definitely brought to light what some students suspected from the beginning. “Some of these kids getting into schools just aren’t smart enough,” says an anonymous senior, but a bunch of them just get in because their parents have the money to donate.” Those who have worked hard feel as though they are getting pushed aside for others who have cheated their way in. “This taints the entire college admissions process,” says the mother of another senior. Now, not getting into a certain college isn’t just due to grades that aren’t high enough, or too few extracurriculars. What if you’re just not rich enough? Other students at Ridgewood High School, especially athletes, are also very aware of the implications and suspicion the scandal raises. Junior Katie Hu commented, “It is very upsetting because there are other college athletes who deserve spots on their teams, and other applicants who are far more qualified academically.” This is not the first time USC athletics have been under fire; in 2004 and 2005 the football team was forced to nullify its wins due to players surrendering their amateur status. This creates a much larger discussion; to what extent do wealthy stu-

dents have an advantage in the college admissions process? Whether it is extra time or money spent on SAT and ACT prep, tutoring from a young age, or even donating astronomical amounts of money to a school with hopes of bettering your child’s chances, students coming from wealthy homes have many more resources that can help them on their path to a top university “Colleges should be institutions of learning and stepping stones to ethical careers,” stated RHS guidance counselor Laura Moore. “The fact that certain individuals used their wealth (or the benefit of wealth) in making unethical decisions is disturbing and certainly not the message we want to send our young people who are embarking on this new journey in their lives.” So what’s next for the families involved? There are obviously a myriad of legal implications. As of when this article was written, both Isabella and Olivia Jade are still enrolled at USC. Neither have commented nor posted on social media since the allegations of their parents have gone public. In fact, Olivia Jade has disabled comments on her Instagram profile to avoid backlash from other users. This admissions scandal has undoubtedly put strains on the families involved. However, it seems that the majority, most notably high school students who have or will undergo the admissions process, believe that people who cheat to give their children an edge should be brought to light and treated accordingly for their actions.

School Board Budget

Caroline Loscalzo
News Editor

For the past few years the Ridgewood community has not had the opportunity to vote on the school budget. Ridgewood Residents used to vote on the budget prior to Governor Christie’s decision that if the budget didn’t increase more than 2 percent that year then the public no longer needed to vote on it. On April 16, over spring break, voting for the 2019-2020 school year budget will be open to all registered voters in Ridgewood. This vote will be held in April rather than November because the decision has to be made before the start of the next school year. Many Ridgewood Residents are unhappy with this because it requires holding a special election, which could be an inconvenience to voters. There is some discourse over whether or not the public should be voting on the budget. One resident comments that “we don’t vote on the village budget, state budget, or federal budget, so why would we vote on the school budget? I trust our elected officials to create a responsible budget.” There are over 500 school districts in New Jersey and Ridgewood is only one of two districts to still vote on the school budget. Many people believe that this vote empowers Ridgewood residents and gives them a strong voice in where their money is going. 67% of the village’s tax bill annually comes from the school board budget.

Choosing the Right College

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An important question to ask yourself that can narrow down your search greatly is what part of the country you’d like to live in. Would you rather be close to home, or are you okay with being a plane ride away? If you’ve always wanted to experience a city like Boston or Miami, choosing a school in that area is a way to branch out and experience new things. However, there is nothing wrong with wanting to stay a driving distance away from home. “I only applied to schools on the East Coast because I knew I didn’t want to take a plane to come home,” explains senior Grace McLaughlin. Geography is an important aspect of deciding on a college since there are so many great schools. A lot of school that you will apply to will most likely be somewhat similar, and location could be a tiebreaker in some cases. Make sure schools you’re considering have most of the things you want or need. It doesn’t have to be a school that’s based on just your major, such as a film school or fashion institute, unless you know that you only want to study a certain subject. But, the college you choose should also have the kind of environment, both academic and social, that you know you’ll thrive in. It helps to talk to current students at admitted students days, and even find websites online, such as Niche.com, that gives in-depth reviews of schools and what life is typically like around campus. The most important thing to keep in mind? Students ultimately end up at the school that’s right for them. No school is perfect, and there is not just one school out there for everyone. For some students, the image of a seemingly perfect school changes throughout the admission and decision process. “I thought a certain school was right for me, but I ended up not getting in,” says a senior girl, “But it worked out because now I realize that there are more schools out there, and what I saw as the ‘perfect’ school isn’t the place for me. I

wouldn’t have seen that if I had gotten in.” All colleges have their positive and negatives aspects, as does every other entity and institution. Even if on May 1st you’re doubting your decision, trust the fact that attending a prestigious

school is not what is best for every student. Just like in high school, students get out whatever they willing to put in. It’s very likely that everyone will have similar experiences and graduate with degrees within those four years.



“I believe that students should have more of a say in our education. The school board budget directly affects us as students.”

It is unclear how the budget will impact the lives of students at Ridgewood High School. However, RHS students that are 18 years or older can vote in this election. Senior Grace McLaughlin comments that “even though I am a senior and will not be directly affected by these changes, I still plan on voting because I want what is best for the Ridgewood community” If you want to make your voice heard but can’t vote, you can still express your opinions by contacting school officials When asked about the issue, junior Eddie O’Keefe stated that “I believe that students should have more of a say in our education. The school board budget directly affects us as students”.



Sofia Lee



Time for A Decision: School Trips or Family Vacations?

Alexander Melarti
staff writer

Buckle up, you're going on a ride. You're crammed in between your sibling and a mountain of luggage, trying desperately to escape the discomfort of someone's jacket, while also taking care not to stray too close to the snoring brother or sister next to you. The food bags crinkle between your legs every time you move in your seat. You have never been happier to have your headphones on so you don't have to listen to your parents talk for another 4 hours. This is the beginning of every painful family road trip.

Just think of how much more you'd be enjoying your time out of class if you were traveling with friends on a field trip! There are almost as many snacks as there are phone chargers. The journey is jam packed with jokes, stories, card games, and music everyone enjoys. The hours fly by and you find yourself checking in to your room with three other close classmates.

From there, your teachers and administrators chaperone you to the first location on the trip. You speed through the educational center to the scenic views for a perfect instagram story photo before booking it to the gift shop to beat the lines. Next stop is the preselected restaurant where you all sit down for a slightly soggy buffet dinner. The teachers let you stop at one more spot on the way back to the hotel, where you will be trapped inside your rooms for 10 hours until they release you for breakfast in the morning. You and every other student

in the building wisely elect to stay up and absorb Kanye's newly released album until 1:30. You pass out after making sure none of the others in the room comes near you with a sharpie.

It's now 6:45 and you think the door is being kicked down by the teachers. Toast is the only thing you manage to get down because the line for the waffle maker is too long. You are shoved out the door in order to cross the city for an indescribably dull museum tour. Three half interesting historic sites and two bland meals later you stumble back into your hotel room on aching feet; Vans are not suitable for site seeing. You lose rock paper scissors and are third on line for the shower only to find that the first two used up all the toiletries in the bathroom and you can't go to the front desk for more. Just try and survive yet another rant about which teachers are the worst before falling asleep late again. Rinse and repeat this process about two or three more times and you have another exhilarating, wonderfully planned, and memorable school trip in the books.

Right about now that family trip isn't looking so bad. Just imagine: you could be sleeping in as late as you please, cancelling and making plans depending on whatever mood you're in, eating the food of your choice, traveling around to different outlets with your mom and sibling, or going to an amusement park or movie with your dad. Nobody is waking you up early or rushing you from one lame exhibit to another.

As much as you like your friends, nothing beats an easy going getaway with your family.

Learn a Language! It Helps.

Daniel Son
staff writer

Hola. Bonjour. Salve. Ni Hao. Hallo.

Our world is unified through language. It is an essential part of how we communicate throughout the world. Life would not be the same without it. Imagine a world devoid of communication and expression. In Ridgewood High School, students are offered the opportunity to learn a language with various classes including Spanish, French, Latin, German, and Chinese. However, not all students seize this opportunity. With only a two year requirement in a foreign language, many students fulfill the bare minimum and move on before truly grasping the language. Does it matter? Is learning a foreign language important?

Even though English is known as the universal language, we should not neglect the languages of other countries. While traveling in Spain, it was apparent to me that the kids in Spain were a lot better at speaking English than the American students were at speaking Spanish. More focus should be placed on teaching foreign languages, and more students should be encouraged to keep foreign languages in their schedule. For many of the language classes at Ridgewood High School, advanced placement is offered as a final class in its curriculum. Classes such as Spanish, Latin,

and French give students the chance to test their abilities on the AP exam and forego the requirement in college to take a foreign language class. Not only will this save students time by reducing the burden of balancing college class requirements, but it can also help when studying for standardized tests in high school. For example, vocabulary learned in foreign language class-

es can help with defining unknown words through cognates, which are the words that have the same meaning with similar spelling between languages.

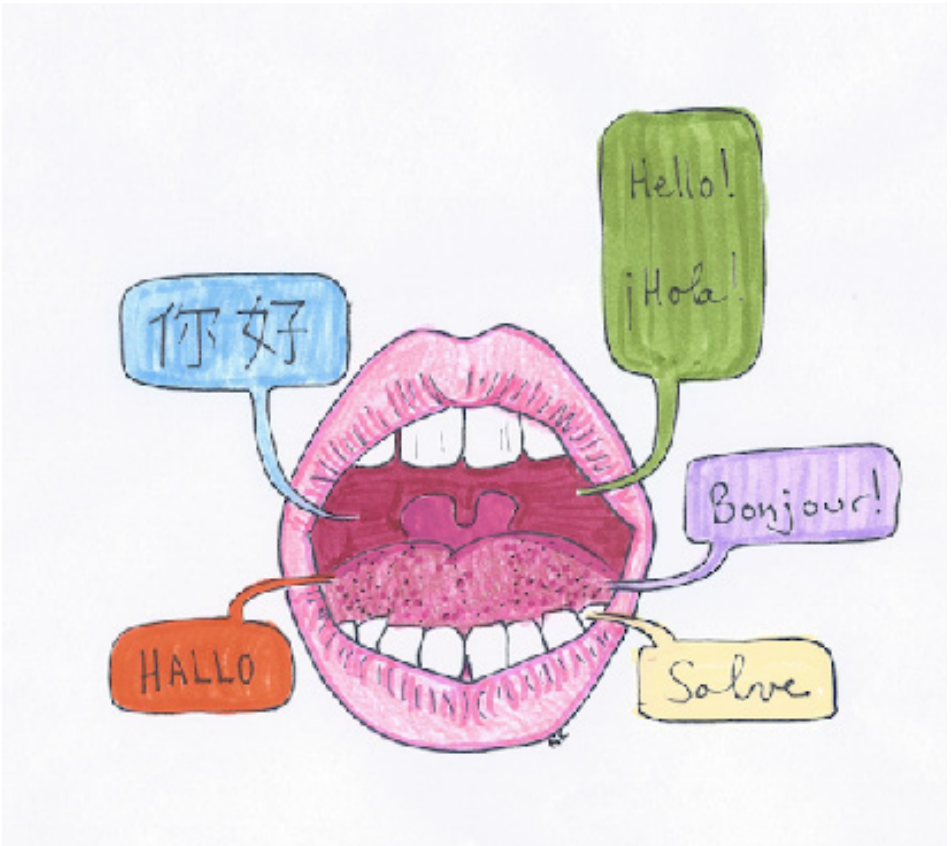
Moreover, Ridgewood High School offers the AVANT Biliteracy Exam to commend students for achieving a level of fluency with a seal given by the state. According to Mr. Ferreri, the seal will potentially be put

on transcripts in the future, which can add a significant achievement for those focused on impressing colleges.

In addition, learning a foreign language helps in the long run. Taking a foreign language in high school is significantly more beneficial than rushing through a language course in college because it allows students to learn more of the language with greater experience. Learning a topic in a short period of time can be easily forgotten, but something that is kept for four years during your high school career will not be forgotten easily.

It is not just school requirements, but your future job experience that can benefited. It has been found that being fluent or being able to speak at a business-proficient level will not only help in obtaining jobs but also help in getting a higher pay. Many employers provide more benefits to those who speak an additional language because it helps with business and allows for important international connections.

So, why aren't more students sticking with foreign language? With the college application process becoming more and more competitive, students decide to pad their GPA with other academic courses rather than learn a language. But perhaps it's best to stick to your language course. Who knows? It might change your life; whether it's college or a future career, foreign languages have more benefits than you might know.



Nicole Kye

How You Can Prevent Hate: An Experience With Debate and Model UN

Alexandra Jerdee
staff writer

At the “Hate Has No Place Here” assembly, retired Prosecutor David D’Amico spoke to the RHS student body about the serious repercussions of hate. He established that ignorance is the basis of hatred, and that as students, we must educate each other to prevent the spread of ignorance. An act of ignorance can be surrounding yourself with others with the same bias as you, and D’Amico’s presentation reminded me just how prevalent this type of isolation is among high schools across America.

Here at RHS, one of the best public schools in New Jersey, the history program has done much to alleviate my ignorance on social matters. However, history classes cannot solely educate the entire student body. Too often, I hear my fellow students passionately preaching claims without the facts to back it up. It is easy for cliques to become echo chambers of ideology in which everyone conforms to the same values.

We must stop this cycle at RHS by opening up to outside opinions. My way of hearing opposing perspectives has been through Model United Nations and the debate team. Both of these programs force participants to put themselves in other people’s shoes, allowing them to question their opinions on the issues. There are many



Lia Vaynshteyn

clubs outside of these two that serve the same purpose of opening up different perspectives to each student.

I joined the RHS Debate Team freshman year, and it opened my eyes to national and worldwide issues for the first time. I was never particularly interested in the news, so I was ignorant about almost all topics we debated. Every month’s topic was a revelation; I found the world outside our community is incredibly complex. In debate, you build a case for and against a resolution, which is essentially a suggestion for a change in policy. At tournaments, a coin toss determines

the side the debaters have to defend or negate. Thus, despite my personal preferences, I need to build the best case possible for both sides of the argument. For the 30 minutes a round takes, I truly believe in my case, defending it tooth and nail with each speech and cross. I have never left a tournament without questioning my beliefs — an aspect I find extremely valuable.

Maryam Kourouma, Alex Kenney, and I started the Model UN club this year at RHS, and similar to debate, it forces delegates to truly embody the country or person who they represent. Diplomacy as seen through

MUN committees is much more of an accurate depiction of real-life debate. As early as your fellow delegates’ opening statements, a good delegate is searching for allies. The whole point of Model UN is to pass resolutions, or compromises, that are in the best interest of the world, but more importantly, your country’s agenda. The best committees are full of well-researched delegates who find commonalities with their delegates and use those connections to concede mildly. It doesn’t take “becoming the enemy” to be objective about an issue. All it takes is acknowledgement and understanding of other people’s motivations.

I am by no means a winner in either of these clubs. But that is not why I do them — they give me clarity about issues all around the world that I would have never actively sought out on my own. The new perspectives that I was exposed to in these clubs transformed me into a more informed and honestly better person. However, you do not need to join these teams to open your mind to new topics. I only wish that you ask yourself where your beliefs come from. If you do a little research or simply talk to someone outside your clique, you may just change your mind about something.

D’Amico said that none of us are inherently hateful, so let’s end the pyramid of hate right at the base.

The AirPods Epidemic

Aaron Friedman & Logan Richman
staff writers

Do you have AirPods? Do your friends? One of those answers is bound to be yes. Although they came out two years ago, this past holiday season saw RHS shaken to the core with AirPods obnoxiously sticking out of ears everywhere.

Apple’s bluetooth earbuds are set apart from the rest of the market by two attributes: their price and their manufacturer. Everyone understands Apple’s standards and the \$160 price point has led many people to feel entitled to mindlessly flex their new music devices. Also, because so many students have iPhones, they naturally gravitate towards the Apple-made AirPods which work within the ecosystem flawlessly.

These devices kind of look ridiculous, with some terming them as ‘white toothbrushes’ that are awkwardly poking out of our ears. In any case, their totally wireless and streamlined functionality outweighs the absurd look.

Though they look quite innocent at first, they are quite easy to hide from teachers. Since they are so small and involve no wires, teachers find them hard to detect.

Many students at RHS sit in class with a hand over one ear and slouched over, an obvious indication of the misdemeanor at hand. Some even put their hoods up—completely covering the ears from the sides—allowing students to listen to music in the middle of class. Since AirPods are now extremely popular in RHS, they have become quite notorious among teachers.

Cheating is definitely a real problem with these earpieces, since AirPods, by design, function as discrete,

easy-to-use, and physically small audio devices. These qualities, while a technological marvel and useful for commuters and students alike, can also be used for nefarious purposes. During a test, students can easily wear AirPods inconspicuously and play back an audio recording of them reading the notes. With that said, the use of AirPods is not a viable or widespread form of cheating. While terrible, this should not be an issue given the intense rigor of the curriculum, the watchful and involved eyes of teachers, as well as the highly publicized and strictly enforced academic integrity policy.

A popular online trope is that AirPods users are wealthy individuals (because of the steep price-tag) and pretend to spend their time in phone calls with “important associates” even if they don’t actually have the prestigious status. Throughout the halls of RHS it is comical to watch students “hustling” from class to class with a phone out, moving at a brisk pace, and acting as if they are seriously involved with five different clubs and printing important documents in the Learning Commons.

In the bustling, packed hallways of RHS, the auditory distraction that AirPods empower are definitely a potential problem. However, since students walk only at a brisk pace, rather than run, this does not provide a real cause for concern. In addition, Ridgewood High has not banned water bottle carrying in the hallway like Bergen County Academies, so this is not a cause for administrative action, scrutiny, or concern. The only time where this does cause a legitimate problem is when students listen to music while their teacher is doing their job, either openly or by concealing the AirPods under a hood or a stray hand.

Listening to music when there are important things happening in class is purely disrespectful and a downright insult to the tremendous opportunities that students at RHS are offered, as well as the work that the talented educational professionals in the building put in day in and day out.

Similar to other technologies that are brought into the classroom, such as phones or Chromebooks, students should only use AirPods when they have authorization from the teacher to respect the legitimacy of the classroom, stay focused, and take full advantage of the opportunities they are given.



Logan Richman and Aaron Friedman

Features



The Connection Between Mental Health and Vitamin Zzzz

Emily Ertle
staff writer

As adolescents, nearly all of us have had late nights. For some, these are pretty rare occurrences, while for others, getting to sleep at a decent hour is a nightly battle. A study conducted by the CDC found that 72.7 percent of high school students did not rest enough on school nights. While this is okay once in a while, research shows that strong ties exist between sleep and mental health. While the relationship between these two issues is not completely understood, scientists find it highly likely that psychological disorders and difficulty sleeping fuel each other in a vicious cycle. In fact, Harvard Medical School reports that “the overlap between sleep disorders and various psychiatric problems is so great that researchers have long suspected both types of problems may have common biological roots.” For example, 65% to 95% of adults and as much as 90% of children with major depressive disorders also experience sleep problems.

Aside from serious mental health concerns, not getting enough sleep can make for a bad day. According to Junior Priyanka Lal, “Usually, because I’m taking pretty difficult classes, I don’t get enough sleep. Then when I get to school, I become a lot more stressed than I need to be. I’ll get more lethargic throughout the day and won’t be able to focus in class.” The same goes for freshman Esha Chinchankar, who noted, “If I rest, I have a better time at school. Not getting enough sleep affects me negatively because I’ll be in a bad mood, and my day will be harder to get through.” Priyanka and Esha aren’t alone in this opinion. Most people know from experience that after a sleepless night, you may be left feeling irritable, stressed, or short-tempered. This was proven in a University of Pennsylvania study which found when subjects were limited to only 5 hours of sleep per night for one week, they reported feeling more stressed, angry, sad, and mentally exhausted. However, there are exceptions to the rule. This is true for junior Lawrence Tiangco, who noted, “Even if I have no homework or tests to study for I’m going to find a reason to stay up late. If I’m not doing work, I will play games until 4:00 am. It’s a losing battle. But I don’t feel any different whether I get four hours or seven.”

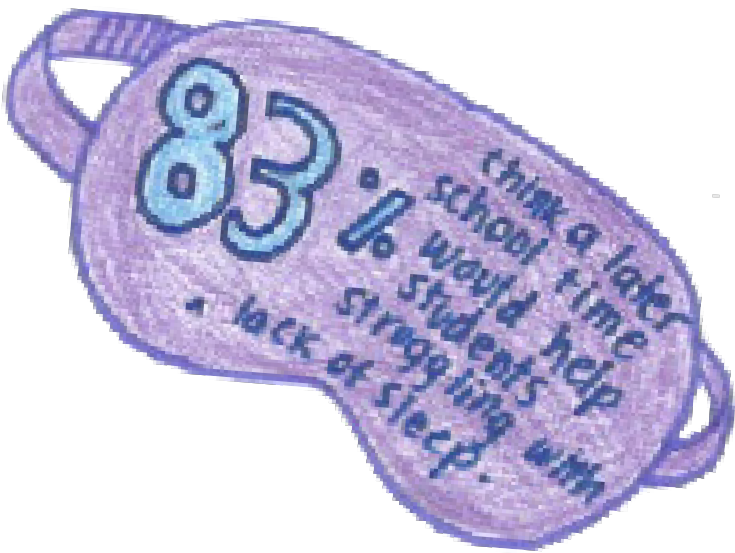
Health concerns associated with a lack of sleep have put schools under fire for start times which contradict adolescent circadian rhythms, or natural sleep patterns. Sleep-promoting hormones such as melatonin naturally begin production later in teens than in adults. This is why most high school students have so much trouble waking up in the morning. According to biology pro-

fessor Horacio de la Iglesia, “To ask a teen to be up and alert at 7:30 a.m. is like asking an adult to be active and alert at 5:30 a.m.” Research shows that sleep deprivation can lengthen circadian “dips”—the periods during which the body behaves as if in sleep mode. While teens normally experience a morning dip from 3:00 to 7:00 am, being sleep-deprived can cause dips to last until 9:00 or even 10:00 am. This makes focusing during the school day incredibly difficult. The previous night’s lack of sleep may even follow teens home, leaving many eager to take a nap instead of doing their homework, thereby creating a debilitating pattern. Researchers at Washington University found that pushing the start time at a local high school from 7:50 am to 8:45 am resulted in an average 34 minute increase in students’ sleep each night. Just this little bit of extra sleeping time raised final grades as much as 4.5 percent.

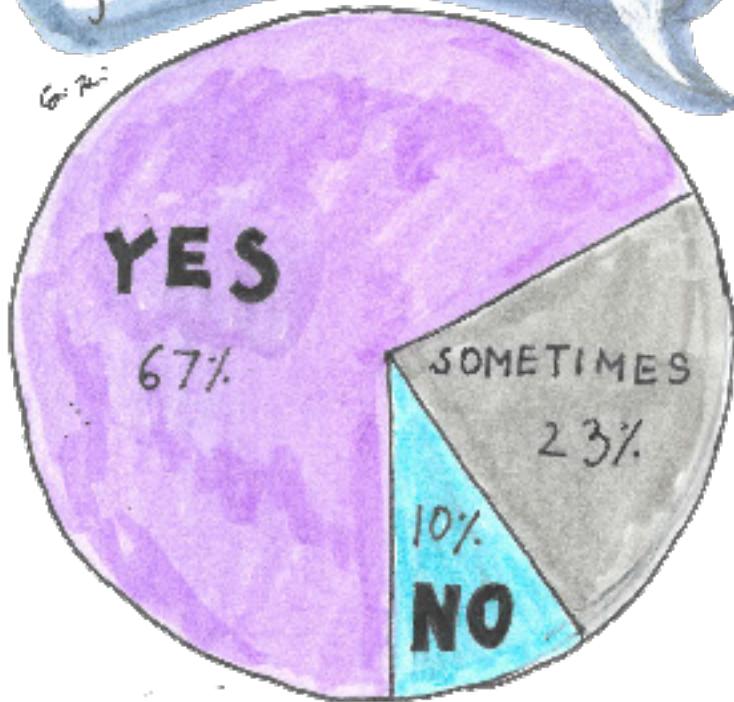
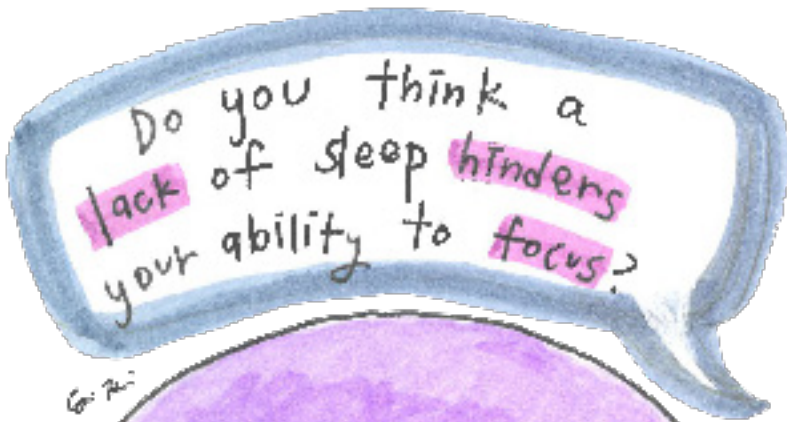
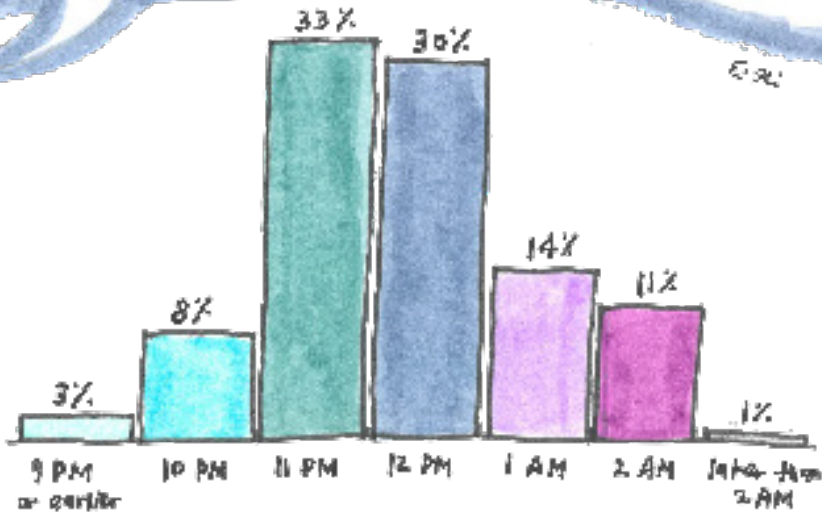
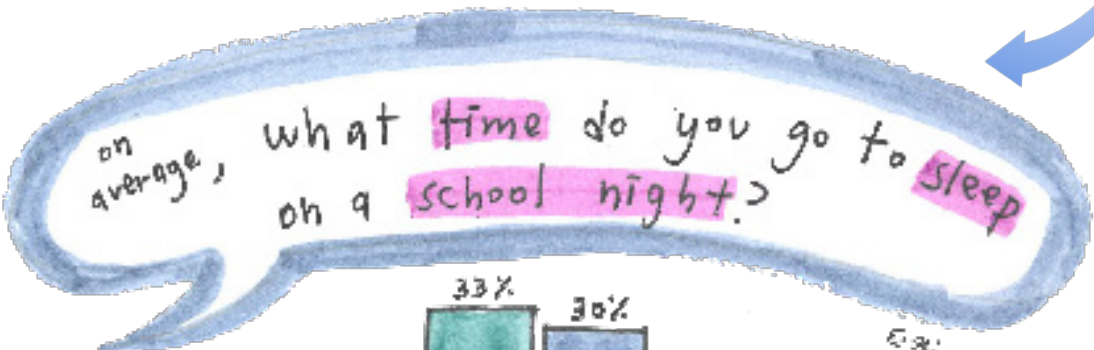
The fact is, sleep is important—and not just for your mental health. According to the Na-

tional Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, “Sleep plays a vital role in good health and well-being throughout your life. Getting enough quality sleep at the right times can help protect your mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety.” The next time you study until 2:30 am, it might also help to remember that a University of Ghent study found the scores of students who slept seven hours each night before an exam to be five percent higher than those of peers who slept six. Research proves that good sleep will extend your life, while exhaustion contributes to a growing risk of weight gain, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and memory loss. So, whether or not you are included in the 20 percent of youth ages 13 to 18 living with a mental health condition, sleep specialists recommend you get seven to nine hours of sleep a night in order to rest your body and mind. High school can be rough, so give yourself the best chance you can with a good night’s rest. Sweet dreams!





ASSUMING STUDENTS WAKE UP AT 6:45 AM, ONLY 11% OF RHS STUDENTS ARE MEETING THE MINIMUM SUGGESTED AMOUNT OF SLEEP PER NIGHT (9 HOURS).



*74 RHS STUDENTS FROM ALL FOUR GRADES WERE SURVEYED FOR THIS POLL.

Who is to Blame?

Anna Meringolo
staff writer

You roll over in your bed and hit the snooze on your alarm. It is the same old routine of going to bed late and waking up early. By the end of the school day you are exhausted and cannot wait until you get to go to sleep that night. However, once again you face another late night of homework and assignments that have piled up. As a school we have to ask ourselves, who is to blame for the lack of sleep many students face? Countless doctors and educated professionals have advocated for high school to start at a later time. An early start time goes against the biological clocks for adolescents, and it perpetuates an unhealthy sleep cycle. A student who wakes up at 6:30 AM is fighting their natural clock and will feel groggy in the afternoon due to elevated melatonin levels when they first wake up. Later start times have also been tested and proven to improve school life for students. In Minneapolis, seven high schools experimented and moved their start time from 7:25 AM to 8:30 AM. Studies have shown that the students got three or more extra hours of sleep per week thanks to the later start time. In addition, enrollment and attendance rates among

students went up, as well as levels of alertness. Meanwhile, starting early results in a high number of tardies and significantly lower grades. Although there is compelling evidence supporting a later start time for high school, many district heads and parents are still reluctant to altering the schedule. The American Academy of Pediatrics are calling on school boards to change the start time of high school for the betterment of the students and their experience in high school. The Academy released a policy in 2014 that “insufficient sleep in adolescents [is] an important public health issue that significantly affects the health and safety, as well as the academic success, of our nation’s middle and high school students.” The association firmly establishes that school should start no earlier than 8:30 AM in order to give students a plentiful amount of time to fully wake up. However, even though the American Academy of Pediatrics emphasized the importance of sufficient sleep for students in 2014, there has yet to be any significant change coming from school districts. Giving students enough time to be able to learn to their full extent and have proficiency in

their performance in school is vital for success. It is necessary for teens to get at least nine hours of sleep per night. However, due to the current school system, less than half of American students get the required nine hours of sleep, and 58% of 15 to 17 year olds regularly sleep less than seven hours a night. This lack of sleep will ultimately be detrimental to the mental development of students. If school administrations were to enact a later start time, overall quality of life for students would be drastically improved. No change can be done unless district heads throughout the country recognize the faults in their own systems. Although students can spread awareness of the national sleep deprivation problem among teenagers, district heads are responsible for the health of their high school students. The vicious cycle of lack of sleep will have long term effects on the academic success of teenagers in 2019. As students it is important to take action on issues that are directly affecting you and your performance in school. With sleep deprivation on the rise amongst teenagers, we as students must ask, “Who is to blame?”

A Multicultural Easter: Celebrations Around the World

Jacob Baskin
staff writer

Although Easter is a very important holiday, it still manages to get overshadowed by other events. However, in other parts of the globe, extraordinary activities are held to remember this occasion. Some of these activities include “Pot Throwing” in Greece and trick-or-treating with colorful costumes in Sweden. The activities that occur in these different countries portray the significant influence that Easter has globally. Here are some of the most unique Easter traditions from around the world:

Bulgaria: Instead of hiding their eggs, Bulgarians have “egg fights,” which are pretty self-explanatory: they throw eggs at each other. The goal is for their egg not to break upon impact when thrown. The winner of the challenge is deemed the most successful family member in the coming year.

Seville, Spain: One of the biggest Easter celebrations in the world takes place here, where people from 52 different religious brotherhoods commence in a giant Easter parade. Thousands watch the processions of marching bands with candlelit parades, all holding baroque statues which tell the Easter story. This parade is highly-acclaimed due to the unity among all the different cultures that come together for the same cause.

Hungary: In Hungary, a popular tradition known as “sprinkling” is observed on Easter Monday. This practice consists of young boys playfully sprinkling perfume, cologne, or water on young girls, since people used to believe that water had a healing and fertility-inducing effect.

Finland: In this Scandanvian coun-

try, children dress up like witches and go begging for chocolate eggs around their neighborhoods. They wear extravagant makeup and scarves around their heads, and some carry bunches of willow twigs decorated with feathers.

Haux, France: In the small village of Haux, a giant omelette consisting of almost 5,000 eggs is made annually and presented in the town’s square for anyone to partake in. The story behind this is that one day, Napoleon and his crew stopped in the village and ate omelettes in the town square. Napoleon enjoyed his omelette so much that he insisted for the townspeople to create a new, giant one and feast on it the next day.

Sydney, Australia: In some spots of the world, Easter is not only about bunnies and eggs; in Sydney, farmers are celebrated by presenting their crops and livestock in the Sydney Royal Easter Show. People come from all over to experience and enjoy the rural aspect of Easter. The show spans for two weeks and also features the Sydney Royal Rodeo.

Florence, Italy: In iconic Florence, a giant decorated wagon is presented and dragged through the cobblestone streets by white oxen. The wagon eventually stops when it reaches the cathedral Piazza del Duomo. The Archbishop then sends a dove-shaped rocket into the cart, where it explodes entirely on the spot, igniting an exquisite fireworks display.

By looking at the abundance of Easter activities occurring around the world, we can get to understand the many effects of Easter and how important it should be to us. Although Americans follow other religious holidays more closely, Easter should be celebrated equally since its story is just as significant.



Amelia Chen

City of Angels

Talia Rosen
opinion editor

New Players’ shows never disappoint, and *City of Angels* was no different. As a musical set in 1940s Hollywood, the story follows a well-known author by the name of Stine who attempts to adapt his writing to a screenplay. The cleverly written musical switches back and forth between Stine’s fictional world and his real life, each with its own struggles. The majority of the main characters play two roles — one in the real world and another in the mind of Stine, centered around the novel version of himself known as Stone.

From the incredibly skilled orchestra to the small sound effects, it was not just the acting and singing that blew me away. With the sounds of the radio and voice overs, the entire plot was seamless from beginning to end. As Stine, played by the talented Sean Zuckerman, would edit and rewrite a scene of the screenplay, the actors flawlessly read their lines backwards to mimic a rewind type scenario. Along with these entertaining quirks of the show, the set was gorgeously done to bring to life Hollywood in the 1940s. The industrial-looking walls and the use of the entrances and exits added to the intense switch between reality and fantasy. There were no awkward pauses between scenes because the transitions were smooth and didn’t allow for any confusion in the audience. There was an obvious switch between one setting and another.

One of my favorite aspects of *City of Angels*, if not my favorite, was the extraordinary attention to detail with respect to the costumes. In Stine’s reality all the characters were dressed in colorful clothing, from bright yellow suits to polka dot scarves. Yet, if you looked carefully you would have noticed that the life of Stone, played by JT Cambria, all the attire was black and white to mimic the colorless world of

TV in the 1940s. In the duet between Stine and Stone, Zuckerman and Cambria perfectly mirrored each other, one in a bright suit and the other in a dull gray suit. Their singing, as always, captured the audience and brought us closer into the life of a struggling writer who only wants his voice to be heard.

I am always amazed at the level of talent at our school. Mia Lowy’s singing as Gabby/Bobbi was stunning and left me waiting for more even when the song was finished. The entire cast truly brought to life the story of Stine, and with each movement and facial reaction, there was no break of character. Shaena Brusey’s exquisite solo as Oolie/Donna left the audience cheering and clapping until she was off the stage. She didn’t simply sing, but she allowed us to see into the eyes of the character, to understand the pain of never being a first choice. Brendan Sheehan’s performance as Buddy/Irwin was the most comical of the bunch, and his acting as the tough Hollywood producer was spectacular and left everyone enjoying his presence on stage.

Although it was one of the longer musicals I have seen, I never even thought about the time. I was captivated by the plot, especially Abbie Anderson’s phenomenal performance as Alaura/Carla, along with Olivia Zorrilla as Mallory/Avril and Jason Zuckerman as Jimmy Powers. Each character was well-thought out and mirrored their own counterpart in Stine’s novel impeccably.

City of Angels was no “high school” musical— it was a performance that shined and brought the audience to their feet. Whether this was your first or your one hundredth time seeing a New Players show, it was sure to touch your heart and bring a smile to your face. And if you’ve never gotten the chance to see one of their productions, next time one rolls around, be sure to stop by and check out the incredible talent we have at RHS.



Erin Kim

Arts & Culture

Is Art a Classist Hobby?

Amelia Chen
graphics chief

Money may not buy you happiness, but it can buy you comfort. Comfort in knowing that you’ll always have something to eat, something to look forward, something to appreciate. It is no surprise that wealthy and low-income households have different priorities. Not everyone can experience summers in French Riviera sailing around in a yacht, yet anybody can appreciate art.

One of the biggest misconceptions of art is that ownership is the only way to show your appreciation. According to a study, 2017 was the year that wealthy folks have spent more money on art than investment grade wine in the years since 2010. But according to the study from The National Center for Arts Research at USM, since 2014, art organizations have received federal funding to serve economically diverse areas in the hopes to lessen the class divide in the art world. The report also states that the NEA (National Endowment of Arts) is focusing on art programs and or shows for “residents below the poverty line and those with household incomes exceeding \$200,000 a year”. This means that art is starting to encompass a broader socioeconomic range, not just for wealthy 1%.

The best aspect of art is that it is everywhere. You don’t have to go Christie’s, the MET or the Guggenheim (though most admissions cost very little) to look at art. Even taking just a step outside onto the streets of Man-

hattan and it is more than likely that a street artist has left you something to look at. From the East Village Walls with a “tribute mural of Michael Jackson called Black or White” on 11th and First Ave to Keith Haring’s ‘Crack is Wack’ Mural by Harlem River Drive, a masterpiece doesn’t have to be framed. There’s always an element of surprise when you walk around and notice something that you have never seen before. Another beautiful quality about murals in the city is that they’re ever changing. Within 2 months, a fresh coat of paint and a new artist is up on display. Though it is sad to see amazing artwork to go, it serves as a reminder that just like us, art changes over time.

Pieces should be shared or on display-- not necessarily owned. I mean isn’t that what appreciation is? The recognition or admiration of the good qualities of something or someone? As someone who is part of a family that is very much involved in the world of art collecting and unemployed 16-year-old, I am able to speak to both sides of this issue. While it is nice to see a classic Renoir in my grandfather’s living room, I much rather go explore the city side streets that excite color and emotion.

Perhaps the enjoyment of art comes not with the tangibility of a physical piece, or the overwhelming presence of a painting on the wall, but with the freedom of both time and disposable income that leads to a trip to the museum. Especially considering the controversy surrounding public art’s funding, it’s worth considering the privilege that goes into art appreciation in the United States.



Amelia Chen

2019 Oscars Coverage

Janus Kwong
features editor

There are several times in a year when families all over the country gather around the big screen, anticipating at the edge of their seats, either for the holiday special, Super Bowl Sunday, the New Year’s countdown, or the FIFA World Cup. However, on February 24, the spotlight was all on the Oscars.

Yet this year’s 91st Academy Awards has been a wild ride. As the first Oscars held without a host since 1989 and a seemingly impossible change to a three-hour runtime, many thought the 2019 Oscars was done for. Leading up to the ceremony, the Academy announced several big upcoming changes to the Awards including the addition of a new category for Best Popular Picture, a new three-hour time, and an earlier date. This was evidently met with backlash and major disapproval

amongst the public. ‘Why change the Oscars?’ is the question everyone asked. Well, the answer is because the 2018 Oscars ceremony recorded its lowest viewership in history. Yet the Academy Board seemed to be making a bigger mess out of it than it already was.

And then, Kevin Hart was announced as the Oscars’ host. The American comedian and actor was to succeed Jimmy Kimmel, who had hosted the Oscars the previous two years, until the public found that Hart had tweeted several homophobic comments several years earlier. Again, there was discontent with the news. In a few days, the comedian stepped down and resigned as a host, even appearing on The Ellen Show with Ellen, who voiced her support for the actor. In the end though, the 91st Academy Awards was to proceed without a host.

More issues with categories, timing, and presentations commenced until it wasn’t long when

everyone was sure the Oscars were doomed. Yet when February 24 came and the TVs turned on, it went better than everyone had expected.

Famous actresses, actors, directors, and producers came together in Hollywood for the big event as Americans all watched through their screens. Movies such as The Favourite, Roma, Vice, and A Star is Born were nominated for many categories. The surviving members of Queen, with the addition of Adam Lambert, performed on stage. The first superhero movie from Marvel, Black Panther, was also nominated for Best Picture, a film that had already won great praise and two Golden Globes nominations. Moreover, five of the eight nominees for Best Picture included significant plot roles revolving around queer relationships and issues, and every category included an LGBTQ movie. Rami Malek won Best Actor in Bohemian Rhapsody and even fell off stage right after his acceptance speech.

Thankfully, he was fine afterwards and was not in much serious danger.

The Oscars may have been quite a hassle this year, but in the end, it might even seem that it ended better than anticipated. It is important, despite all the scandals, critiques, and backlash, to recognize the Oscars for what it represents rather than what it seems on the screen. As more movies are released between 2019 and 2020, we would best believe movies of exceptional artistic and technical merit be recognized in the best possible manner. The public must remember that by keeping up with the Oscars and supporting it, we are encouraging the appreciation of such films not only for their box office numbers but also for its authentic value. Award shows have long been viewed as the backbone to American cinema. More so than being about beautiful actors adorned in designer clothing, the Oscar Academy Awards should hope to endorse a modern, 21st century



Evie Cullen

Drawing the Line Between JV and Varsity

Emily Sue
staff writer

Ridgewood High School students are exposed to a myriad of sports teams that vary in talent and experience. Unlike many high schools in New Jersey and even Bergen County, RHS offers Freshman, Junior Varsity, and Varsity teams to divide athletes based on their skills and performance. Given the different nature and atmosphere of each team, many students wonder where the line is drawn between the experience that each provides. It may seem obvious that varsity athletes almost always exhibit the talent, skills, and determination needed to effectively compete in game-time scenarios, but the answer is not always that simple. Many argue that any athlete can be shaped into an

ideal varsity athlete. Others believe that some coaches place students on teams to merely “complete the roster” based on grade level. The lack of clarity leaves many people with questions pertaining to what they can do to meet the varsity standards and how a simple factor such as age can be a large factor. Many coaches at RHS believe that the junior varsity level is a “middle ground” between freshman and varsity, and some view it as a developmental period for athletes who simply did not make the varsity cut. Across the board, many JV teams at RHS consist of sophomores with some freshman and juniors filling the remaining spots. This uneven ratio causes many sophomores to feel that they will automatically be placed on JV regardless of their skill level. While this may not be entirely true, the stigma around being placed



Ridgewood Crew’s Winter Practice

on a JV team heavily influences the mindset athletes have towards tryouts. The distinction between JV and varsity is also apparent due to the level of recognition each team receives in terms of their image and fans. Varsity appears to be more popular than JV since the higher skill level may make games more enjoyable to watch, and the varsity season is longer so there are more games to attend. Esme Morcom, a junior who recorded the stats for the RHS wrestling team stated that “The JV matches were less intense, and the setting was more laid back so athletes felt less pressure from the team and crowd. When the varsity match would start, the mood drastically changed and it felt like a totally different environment” since the varsity level is associated with stronger skills. Nonetheless, many athletes at the JV level believe they deserve the same recognition as varsity players. Sophomore Emily Rau, who has played on the junior varsity soccer, basketball, and lacrosse teams shared that “it all depends on who was previ-

ously on varsity because if the team is mostly made up of seniors that leaves only a few spots for other people. This is why teams constantly differ and most sports have different grades on different teams; it’s all dependant on the previous year’s teams.” This is an additional factor in the process of making teams and determine who deserved to be placed on varsity instead of JV. Despite many opinions and beliefs about the requirements for junior varsity and varsity, it may come down to level of commitment and enthusiasm. In fact, grade level and age have a minimal effect on skill level and talent which is why we see younger players often starting at a higher level. Regardless, any athlete trying out for a sports team should disregard previous mindsets about their fate. Any athlete has the potential to achieve greatness, and they can be greatly benefited if they express such an ambition to their coaches. The line between JV and varsity may be uncertain, but it should be clear that every athlete has the ability to decide their future path.



Ridgewood track runners Luca Richman (Right) and Frank Orlando (Left)

Reflecting on the 2018-2019 Skiing Season

Cole Sherman & Jane McKinley
staff writers

As the book closes on the 2018-2019 winter sports season, it is safe to say that Ridgewood athletes on every level enjoyed many successes. However, one of the unsung stories of the winter was the success of the Ridgewood High School Alpine Ski Team. The girls team enjoyed a perfect season, finishing the regular season races with a record of 20-0, and capping it off with the slalom, giant slalom, and state titles. The boys team finished the regular season with a record of 21-5 and ended up finishing fourth at the state championship races. Individually, Ridgewood athletes flourished as well, with 10 skiers receiving All-League honors, an additional 4 receiving All-State honors and an invitation to the Eastern Regional High School Championships in Attitash, New Hampshire. However, the Ridgewood racers started the season with a chip on their shoulders. In the three seasons since the formation of the team during the 2016-17 season, the girls team has won two state championships, last year being the outlier after finishing second to a strong Wayne Valley team. 3-time individual state champion and captain Kaitlin Devir did not hesitate when she spoke about the team’s motivation leading up to the season: “Oh yeah, there was no doubt in my mind that I wanted to take that trophy back. I felt as if we were supposed to be the frontrunners last year, but obviously, things didn’t end up going our way. Especially with this season being my last, I wanted to make sure that we ended up on top.” Devir’s goals and determination came to fruition after a perfect regular season heading into the state championships.

“I felt good, the team felt good, and we just went out there and did what we’d been doing all season,” Devir said. The state championships began on February 27th with the giant slalom race. The girls came in first with a time of 6:25.89, a full 13 seconds in front of second place Wayne Valley. The team was led by junior Jane McKinley, who came in 1st overall, followed by senior captain Kaitlin Devir in 2nd, freshman Sarah Marcovici in 16th, and junior Mollie Goetze finishing in 17th. On the boys side, the team finished 5th overall with a time of 6:20.92, but only 14 seconds away from first. The boys were led by junior Cole Sherman who finished 10th overall, followed by junior Eddie O’Keefe who finished 11th, junior PJ McKenna in 24th, and freshman Andrew Gioia in 34th. The second day of the state championship occurred the following day with the slalom state championships. Unlike the giant slalom, the slalom races are much more technical and have a much larger margin for error, so it was imperative that both teams skied a clean race. Both teams did just that, with the girls team coming in first with a time of 4:58.73, and the boys coming in fourth with a time of 4:57.34. The girls team was led by Devir, who came in 1st, followed by McKinley in 7th, Goetze in 9th, and Marcovici in 11th. The boys team was led by Sherman, who came in 6th, followed by Gioia in 13th, O’Keefe in 23rd, and freshman Oliver Merrick in 34th. The first place finishes in both races for the girls clinched the state championship, while the combined time for the boys was good enough for 4th overall. Despite this, the season was not quite over yet. The following day was the individual state Race of Champions, and Ridgewood had 10 racers given All-League honors and an invite to the

race: Kaitlin Devir, Jane McKinley, junior Sophia Bergantino, junior Sarah Pilson, Mollie Goetze, junior Vanessa D’Angelo, Cole Sherman, Eddie O’Keefe, and PJ McKenna. The Ridgewood racers fared well in this race as well, with Devir and McKinley finishing 1st and 3rd respectively, and Sherman and O’Keefe finishing 11th and 13th respectively. Also at this race was the announcement of the All-State teams, and Ridgewood had 4 racers given spots on these teams. Both Devir and McKinley were given First Team honors, as Sherman and O’Keefe received Second Team and Third Team honors, respectively. All 4 were also invited to represent the New Jersey State Ski Team as they traveled to Attitash New Hampshire for the Eastern Regional High School Championships. Devir looked to defend her title in the giant slalom

but ended up in 3rd to Vermont’s Lena Sauter and Michigan’s Kaylee Richardson. McKinley finished in 29th, and O’Keefe and Sherman finished in 92nd and 95th respectively. In the slalom, Devir finished 11th, followed by McKinley in 79th. On the boys’ side, Sherman finished in 76th, and O’Keefe finished in 83rd. Now that the season is over, though, the racers wasted no time looking forward to the next. Eddie O’Keefe expressed his excitement to improve on the results the next year, saying “The best part about this is that we get one last opportunity to prove ourselves next season. Our team has been on the rise, and I think that if we trust the process, the results will come.” However, until the snow starts to fall again, both teams will have to continue trusting the process until it’s time to strap on the skis once more.



Senior Kaitlin Devir Racing in the Winter of 2019

RHS Golf

An Athletic Farewell

Kevin Collier & Sophie Howard
staff writers

On March 1st, the Ridgewood Boys and Girls Golf Team started their 2019 season. However, with the similar start of popular spring sports such as Lacrosse and Track & Field, the Golf Team seems to fly under the radar. Nonetheless, after an outstanding season for the 2018 golf team, this year’s players hope to continue to improve and succeed in the season to come. With RBG (Ridgewood Boys Golf) having a 7-4-2 record in the North Jersey Section 1, Group 4 and RGG (Ridgewood Girls Golf) having a 12-5 record, the Ridgewood Boys and Girls Golf team is ecstatic about the upcoming months.

After practicing and perfecting their skills during the off-season practices at a local indoor golf simulator, the players are eager for the season to unfold. When asked about the teams prospects for the year, junior Ryan Chmiel stated, “we think we can make it to the states matches with our strong players from last year and good players this year. Our goal is to make it all the way to the finals.”

On the girls side, junior Isabel Friedman shared the following: “we have new freshman with a lot of potential and upperclassman with tons of talent.” She is hopeful that as the season continues, she will “create stronger bonds with teammates” as well as “improve [her] swing and

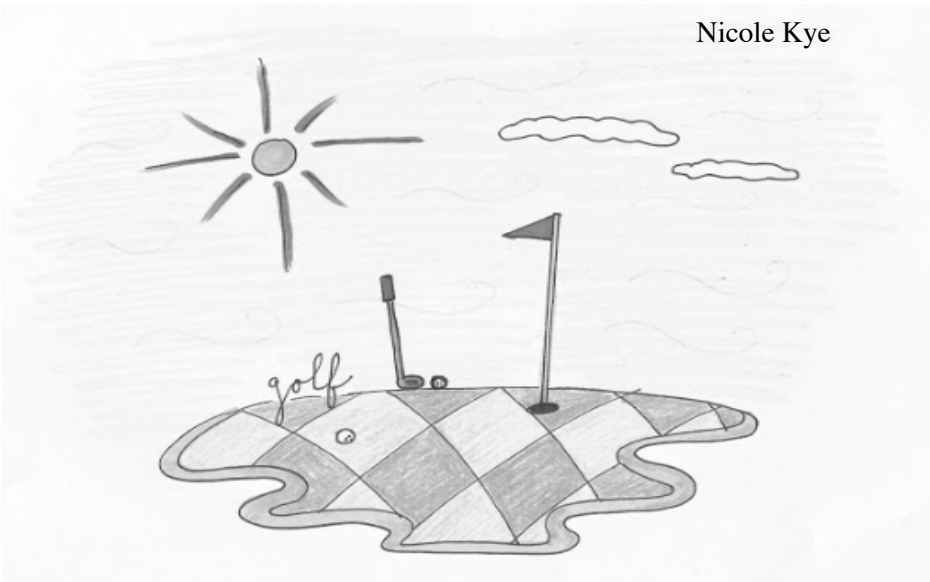
get more playing time.” Mindful of these goals, Ryan Chmiel, Isabel Friedman, and the rest of the junior golfers are motivated to succeed.

With the varsity boys’ first match on April 2nd against Hackensack High School, and the varsity girls’ on April 1st against Ramapo High School, their talent and skill will be put to the test. Even though the team is extremely optimistic, Caleb Walsh, a new member to the team, stated that, “There are no seniors so it will be challenging to play against other teams with more experience.”

The Golf Program is not only successful as a competitive team, but it also helps students develop as both athletes and people. Ex-Golfer Jackie Schmitt asserted that “the team helped me grow not only as a player, but as a person too. There was such a great dynamic!”

Many varsity players graduated last year, raising questions about the new team chemistry. Varsity member, current junior Nathan Kim stated that, “We have a solid new group of incoming freshmen and I think that we will do quite well this year despite losing many seniors.”

Perfecting their game, creating strong team bonds, and competing well are universal goals for the 2019 season. With the annual golf trip in Maryland coming up, the Boys and Girls Golf Team cannot wait to get on the course. As junior Jordan Rarich says, “In golf, practice does not make perfect; perfect practice makes perfect.”



Nicole Kye



Taylor Donovan

Claire Sullivan
staff writer

The rigor of playing sports at a high school as competitive as RHS is a factor in every athlete’s experience. For seniors, it is common for many to quit their sport after their junior year.

A popular reason for them to quit their sports is the opportunities and activities that senior year has to offer. The first semester of senior year is beyond stressful as students rush to submit their college applications, making it hard to balance academics with fall and winter sports.

Seniors also have many activities they can partake in throughout the school year. Things like the fashion show and prom, which occur in the spring, are fun activities that many students look forward to. In their final semester of high school, a lot of seniors prefer to focus on creating fun memories with their peers rather than take part in the rigor of playing a high school sport.

Additionally, a student’s athletic career in college may impact their decision to quit a particular sport. If a student is not planning on continuing a sport at a collegiate level, whether that be varsity, club, or intermural, it may be hard to find the motivation to continue playing in their final high school year. Many RHS athletes have been playing their sports since a young age; however, by the time senior year approaches, many students are tired of their sport and decide it is not worth the time. This is also related to the fact that many admit that

they used a particular sport to boost their extracurriculars on a college application, but as that process comes to its end, they see little need to continue.

Similarly, the level at which students have played during their high school career can influence their choice to quit. If an athlete has been on varsity in the years prior, it is practically guaranteed that their further effort will give him or her a starting spot on the roster in their senior year. However, if senior year will be the senior’s first year on varsity, the transition from a junior varsity to varsity team can be difficult. The competition is inevitably tougher and new players might continue to struggle to get playing time. Since senior year offers so many new activities, many athletes value these special opportunities over returning to a sport that they do not feel extremely passionate about.

Another driving factor to quitting sports senior year is senioritis. This colloquial term is used to describe a lack of motivation in the final semester for high school seniors. As aforementioned, varsity sports are very rigorous and require lots of dedication. Many seniors prefer to spend their final high school semester relaxing as opposed to passing hours a week on the practice field.

Senior year is a time full of chances and opportunities. Seniors should think about whether or not they are willing to miss out on some of those activities because of their conflicting sports schedule. In the end, it is an individual decision, and each student should choose what best benefits them personally and brings them the most fulfillment as their high-school experience nears its end.

Could you be the RHS Athlete of the Month?

Matthew Peters
staff writer

RHS dominates on the athletic fields due to its many outstanding players. Every day of the school year, hundreds of kids improve their skills at practices for one of the various sports RHS has to offer, thus increasing his or her team’s chance at a championship. Some are naturally good at a certain sport, and others work extremely hard to get to the same place. Jack Pfund, a senior who plays Varsity Football thinks that an athlete of the month award “could be cool” and agrees that effort deserve recognition. Team sports have their star players and he believes they should be rewarded for their contributions. These players could potentially be named “Athlete of the Month” and would be acknowledged by the school.

Ridgewood athletes work hard to represent the school on and off the field and their talents are worth being recognized. If an “Athlete of the Month” became an award given monthly, one individual could be selected by coaches and the athletic director as a way to commend an extraordinary player who has grown or changed the team in a positive way. This could be given to an athlete who made the game winning



Emma McCarthy

shot in a basketball game, or the walk-off home run in a baseball game. Such a honor would create another goal for RHS athletes to achieve and serve as another milestone in their athletic career.

The expression, “There is no I in team,” would promote a different viewpoint regarding a team’s success: one person cannot decide the team’s path. Each individual works hard to maintain their spot in the lineup so some believe RHS should emphasize a single team rather than a single player. Chris Canone, a freshman who plays on the Varsity Ice Hockey team, believes that having an athlete of the month award would “not be good because [he] feels that RHS Hockey is a team and that one player’s success is the team’s success”. He stresses that RHS is one and should win as one and lose as one. For example, a quarterback would not make such great throws if his offensive line was not protecting him.

Even though such an honor would not celebrate the whole team, it would not take away from the group’s accomplishments. Instead, it would identify those who had a major role in the success of the team and highlight the players who made a difference. RHS students will always go onto the field, ice, water, and court as one.

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