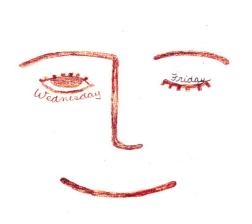
What Happened to Enrichment Wednesdays?

Say Goodbye to Your Mid-Week Sleep In



Amelia Chen

James Ellinghaus and Katie Hu staff writers

Starting this year, Ridgewood High School has changed its schedule. Students have not only been affected by the new fifty and eighty minute schedule, but also by the change in enrichment days. In an email sent out to the entire school in August, the administration addressed how enrichment days would be held on Fridays for the upcoming school year. For the past few years, these special days were typically granted one Wednesday a month, giving the students more time to sleep as they struggled to get through the second half of the week. This break of tradition has certainly rocked the population at RHS, leaving students and faculty members either satis-

fied or disappointed with the change.

Many students were left dumbfounded by this decision, and questioned its necessity. According to Mr. Basil Pizzuto, Grade Advisor and Assistant Principal at RHS, the idea to switch enrichment days from Wednesdays to Fridays came about after an administration meeting surrounding the

Kaufman Unseats Incumbent for Seat on Board of Ed

new eighty minute periods. With this overall schedule change, the only logical way to cut the time was to take thirty minutes off of each eighty minute period. However, the administration believed that it would be unfair to shorten a class' only eighty minute period for the week. Instead, since Mondays and Fridays always fall on the same day of the rotating schedule, the school concluded that the most logical place for enrichment days is on Fridays because each class will have already met on

an eighty minute period for the week. The Friday enrichment days have received mixed reviews from students and teachers alike. One student, junior Reagan Neilsen, has been able to adjust to it. "At first I didn't like it, but now I do. It's a nice start to Fridays and makes them even better. Wednesday enrichment days were nice because they were in the middle of the week but it hasn't affected me that much." Bennett Suh, a sophomore, feels differently. "I prefer them to be on Wednesdays because they act as a midweek break. I feel like Friday sleep-ins are unnecessary because the adrenaline rush just for the fact that it is Friday makes people

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The End of Spirit Weeks

Lia Vaynshteyn & Lydia Han staff writers

It is somewhat of a Ridgewood Public Schools tradition to hold competitive spirit weeks during the school year where teachers and students alike dress up and have fun. However, at the high school, things seem to be changing. The administration and student government are planning special 'spirit days' to be held throughout the school year, instead of doing a single week.

Mr. Pizzuto, the administrator in

charge of spirit events in Ridgewood High School, puts his faith in the student government; the students are the final stamp of approval on new ideas. continued on page 2



Grace McLaughlin & Annie Probert

news editors

From the colorful campaign signs strewn on residents' lawns to the myriad of Facebook posts supporting one candidate over the other, the contentious election for the lone spot on the Ridgewood Board of Education has captivated the attention of adults and students alike. Cristopher Kaufman, a former Licensed Salesperson for Azarian Realty Company, faced off against Vincent Loncto, a Board of Education veteran, for the seat Loncto had held since 2011. Kaufman defeated the incumbent on the November 6th election by roughly 1,300 votes; excluding mail-in ballots, Loncto garnered

2,564 while Kaufman received 3,889. So how does this Board of Education election affect RHS students? The Board of Ed acts as a monitor of the Ridgewood Public Schools (RPS), creating strategies to ensure the smooth running of the entire district and carrying out important duties like appointing the superintendent and managing the RPS budget. Members are elected by the Ridgewood populace and have a three-year term limit.

Issues that have been troubling the Board for the past few weeks, months, and years include the negotiation of teacher contracts, school safety, and the BOE budget. As a result of these divisive issues, voter support was split and both men had a considerable number of supporters behind them who encouraged their fellow Ridgewood residents to vote for them.

Vincent Loncto had his previous record as a Board of Ed member to run on, citing his twenty years of experience in the RPS and prestigious position as the Board President. One specific point he ran on was the fact that during his time on the board, the BOE budget stayed under the yearly spending limit set by the state. On the other hand, Kaufman relied

on hefty campaign promises to build up support and get himself elected. CRISTOPHER KAUFMAN Vincent Loncto KAUFMAN Vincent Loncto FOR BOARD OF ED

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Fall Sports Recap



RHS Visit to Japan 2018

Hannah Thompson & Caroline Gervolino staff writers

In late July of 2018, twenty-three students and two teachers got the opportunity to experience a cultural immersion when they traveled to Japan. As the group left Ridgewood High School, they were eager to begin their journey but knew little of what to expect as they flew to the other side of the world. The only thing they did know was that they were being sent to Japan on the terms of the Kakehashi Project, introduced by The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to create a cultural,

social, and political bridge between America and Japan. In order to achieve this goal, the program fully funds the travels of American students to Japan and Japanese students to America in hopes that this will strengthen the bond between the two countries. The program sends thousands of American students per year to partake in a homestay program, as well as experience the culture, government, and schools in Japan. Ridgewood High School students experienced both vibrant city life and

Ridgewood High School students experienced both vibrant city life and rural living on their once-in-a-lifetime trip. Once the students arrived in Tokyo, they realized that Tokyo was unlike most cities in the United States: it was clean, not congested, and was quite energy efficient. In fact, every hotel room required the occupant to put their hotel key in a slot to power the room, ensuring that power was not being wasted. In the city, the students saw various shrines, which are sacred buildings that hold religious value. In the District of Asakusa students found the Buddhist temple Senso-Ji, which was especially fascinating due its size, architectural style, and empowering structure. Students also discovered the value of yen as they explored the traditional markets surrounding the shrine. Many chose to purchase Kimonos to celebrate their new excitement surrounding Japanese culture. Clare McCooe, a Ridgewood High School student said, "I still wear my Kimono everyday to remember and celebrate Japan". In addition to the shrines, students were also able to see Harajuku, the pop-culture section of Tokyo. Similar to Times Square, Harajuku held some of the trendiest food crazes and most popular anime characters for the students to experience and enjoy.
Although students thoroughly en-

Although students thoroughly enjoyed their stay in Tokyo, the experiences with their homestay family were by far the most influential part of their trip. They spent three days and two nights with their homestay families. While staying with the families, students were able to taste new foods, experience new traditions and learn fun, new ways to communicate and create

bonds. The students expected their families to have a child their age and speak English, so it was quite a surprise when many only knew the word "hello". Therefore, for many students Google Translate soon became their best friend. Despite the language barrier, many students became close with their families because of the host's generous willingness to share their culture and their excitement to entertain American students. Hannah Thompson, another student who traveled to Japan said, "I still communicate with my family through Facebook and my host mom became like a real mom to me. I can't wait to be reunited with my family."

The group also spent a day at Sano High School, meeting students their age and participating in a live debate. Ridgewood students learned a lot about the differences in Japanese education, such as different summer breaks and a more structured learning environment. This was the first time many of the Japanese students were putting their English to use, and it was exciting for all. After the debate, students celebrated with refreshments and by screaming Kumpai, which means cheers.

Students left Japan with a new perspective on life in different parts of the world. In order to celebrate their new love for Japan, those who traveled are meeting to plan ways to contribute to the Kakehashi Program. As of now, they intend to share their experiences with their fellow RHS students.



RHS students in a government building in Tochigi, Japan.

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The End of Spirit Weeks

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During a recent meeting, run by Mr. Pizzuto and Mrs. Yannone, the student government decided that RHS doesn't have a student body that is enthusiastic about participating in spirit weeks. Another point brought up was that teachers often dress up during spirit weeks while many students do not. The meeting came to the conclusion that students are more likely to participate in spirit days planned for twice a month, rather than a full week two times a year.

In the middle schools, Spirit Week pits all three grades against each other with a competition component, which in recent years the high school has not done. With each grade acting as a team for the whole week, a sense of unity is built and everyone is excited to see who the winner will be. More students dressing up leads to more points for their team, and since everyone wants their own team to win, it inspires students who normally would not have participated.

In addition to the elimination of spirit weeks, both the administration and the student government decided pep-rallies were a waste of class time. In past years, pep-rallies have been held at the end of the day for one hour for students

to participate in activities or listen to their class representatives give speeches. However, recent years have shown that students would rather take a leave-early than spend the last hour of the day in Gym I.

One of the conclusions drawn from the student government meeting: spirit weeks don't get more people involved. In fact, perhaps because of the somewhat judgemental atmosphere that comes with high school and 'growing up', people consciously make decisions not to participate. "If none of my friends are dressing up, then I won't want to either," explained sophomore Elizabeth McLaughlin. Many other students share the same attitude. Who would want to be the only person decked out on Color Wars day while everyone else is wearing normal clothes?

The final decision on spirit weeks and spirit days will come from RHS's student government. In just this year, there have been days that students were able to participate in karaoke in the Campus Center during lunch. The student council hopes that events like these will encourage more students to be involved and excited for scattered spirit days throughout the school year.

Enrichment Days

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They won't be tired in class compared to a Wednesday where everyone does not want to be at school." Clearly, students have varying opinions on the issue.

On the other hand, the new enrichment day schedule makes a teacher's life much easier. Ms. Truncale, one of the math teachers at RHS. is glad that enrichment days were moved to Friday. "It was harder to plan lessons for enrichment days when they were in the middle of the week. The shorter period interrupted what I was in the middle of teaching my students. On Friday's, though, I have already taught a majority of the lesson and I'm not as worried about planning." Some teachers and students agree that the change is positive, although for different reasons, but a majority of the school, especially the student population, is divided by Friday enrichment days.

It is too early to assess whether or not changing enrichment days from Wednesday to Friday was a smart move, or if the administration will change the schedule yet again. As the months go by, take some time to think about how this change has impacted you, if it has at all. Do you prefer Friday or Wednesday enrichment days, or are both acceptable?



Swathi Kella



Amelia Chen

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Gun Violence: Why does it matter and what can YOU do about it?

Caroline Loscalzo & Meadow Paliotta news editor, staff writer

As of November 13th, 2018, there have been 307 mass shootings since the year started. According to a 2017 study by the Journal of Pediatrics, gun violence is the third leading cause of death in children, only behind unintentional injuries. Violence due to guns kills more children than cancer. Innocent people- like many students here at RHS- are being senselessly gunned down in places that are supposed to be safe. There is a new sense of awareness about the topic, especially since the Parkland massacre last February. However, awareness is far from enough.

Here are the facts: According to Business Insider, gun violence is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Assault weapons kill about 13,000 people in America each year. That means that the chance of dying from gun violence is roughly 1 in

315. Therefore, the probability of dying from gun violence is 10 times higher than dying from any force of nature.

Another difference between a force of nature and guns? Guns can be regulated by law, while nature is uncontrollable. However, the government-run program known as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is legally not allowed to allocate money to advocate or promote gun control.

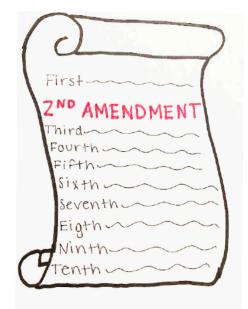
The reason gun control has not been implemented in the United States is the Second Amendment, which gives people the right to bear arms. The debate over what exactly our fundamental human rights are charges on. Do we have the right to own a gun or the right to our own security? Are those two rights intertwined?

As teens, there are restrictions to what actions can be taken to make a change, especially due to the fact that most of the children affected by gun violence are under eighteen and are not eligible to vote. However, young people's opinions regarding this matter are extremely important. Children who go to school every day are the ones who are in potential danger and it is their right to speak up. Although they cannot vote, there are many ways to get involved.

At RHS, students are given the chance to use their voices. The Students Demand Action club is a simple and easy way to get involved. The students in this club meet to discuss the gun violence epidemic and things that they can do to create change. This club is open to students of all views.

As an alternative idea, there is the option of reaching out to government officials via mail, e-mail, or even by calling them to voice concerns or thoughts.

It is imperative that people take action to help prevent future tragedies amd deaths from gun violence. This is not a partisan issue, it is a safety issue.



Grace McLaughlin

Harvard Admissions Controversy

Daniel Son staff writer

Over the past three weeks, Harvard University has been under intense fire from the Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) organization, who ultimately wanted to eliminate what they saw as the unfair race component in the University's admissions process, otherwise known as affirmative action. This lawsuit was filed in November of 2014 and was recently judged by Allison D. Burroughs.

The group criticized the Ivy's admissions process, saying it is discriminatory towards Asian Americans, while Harvard's attorney charged that the SFFA was trying to disassemble the diversity that enhances the school community. SFFA argued that Asians are being capped off by an important "personal" rating where Asian Americans score poorly, while African American applicants are awarded the highest ratings. To this, Harvard countered that academic superiority had nothing to do with the personality rating, and its lawyers defended that the two categories are completely separate and that it is by coincidence that the majority of the Asian population receives a lower grade in the personality rating than their counterparts.

The group further demanded admissions data on hundreds of thousands of applicants be released to the public, claiming that the public should be informed provided that they give more than half a billion dollars in federal funding to Harvard. Rachael Dane, a spokeswoman for Harvard, commented on the matter, saying that "Harvard College does not discriminate against applicants from any group in its admissions processes. We will continue to vigorously defend the right of Harvard, and other universities, to seek the edu-

cational benefits that come from a class that is diverse on multiple dimensions."

Harvard compiled and disclosed six years of admissions information, revealing that 40,000 applicants apply to Harvard each year while 1,600

SFFA argued that Asians are being capped off by an important "personal" rating where Asian Americans score poorly, while African American applicants are awarded the highest ratings.

students are accepted into the freshman class. In the class of 2022, it was found that Asian Americans constitute 23% of the class population, African Americans constitute about 15% and Latinos 12%. Meanwhile, the other 50% of the incoming class is white. Accordingly, Seth Waxman, a Harvard lawyer, stated that although statistical modelling shows correlation, it does not show causation.

To further defend themselves, Harvard's attorneys brought multiple students to demonstrate why diversity is a beneficial factor to the community. Students such as Thang Diep and Sally Chen expressed how Harvard brought reassurance that they could succeed even while being a minority, directly countering the claim made by SFFA.

SFFA failed to provide a testimony from a student that was rejected. In order to protect their identity, rejected students refused to testify, mostly deterred by possible harassment and other concurring issues.

Overall, the plaintiff relied heavily on statistical information that hints towards racial bias but lacks concrete evidence. However, the case is not yet over as it still needs to be resolved most likely in the U.S. Supreme Court.

Board of Education Election

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His main issues include safety in the form of reducing bullying in RPS, "transparency and accountability", and more controlled spending of Ridgewood tax dollars. Cristopher Kaufman used an old strategy by calling himself a "new voice" that would strive to accomplish his campaign promises.

It has been evident in all recent elections, local or national, that social media sites, predominantly Facebook, play a huge role in influencing the outcome. Facebook has become a news source for those who don't have the time to watch news on television or read articles in print or online. Parents who work often times won't be up to speed on national events, but Facebook provides an opportunity for them to be very involved in local activities. Most students poke fun at the Ridgewood Moms and Dads (with Free Speech) Facebook groups, but in reality angry posts and heated comment threads can make a difference.

On September 9th, 2018, a post was made about the highly debated later start times at RHS. As always, the members of the Ridgewood community chimed in with over twenty comments and debates within the comments. Scrolling through the multitude of different opinions, not only



Cristopher Kaufman, the new Board of Education representative.

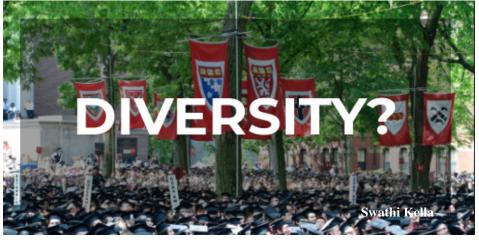
can one read the original article that the post was made in response to, but have easy access to several different viewpoints which enables them to form their own opinion on the matter. Another heated topic on the Ridgewood Moms and Dads Facebook group is that of Ridgewood High

Facebook has become a news source for those who don't have the time to watch news on television

School's lack of substitute teachers. While students may enjoy having more than one free per day, some parents seem to think the school is giving kids a vacation. This simple post sparked a comment thread of 219 comments filled with people attacking or apologizing to one another. These posts heavily influenced the outcome of the Board of Education election on November 6th. The posts that received the most attention were the ones that caused controversy and expressed discontent with the Ridgewood school system and called for change. The election proved that the parents of children in Ridgewood schools do want things to change, however, it cannot be predicted how soon changes will take place or how effective they will be.

Another one of Kaufman's main concerns has been the recent ranking of New Jersey public high schools. Compared to previous years, Ridge-wood High School did not perform well; it dropped to number thirty-six, ten places down from the 2017 ranking of the twenty-sixth best school in New Jersey, according to NJ.com and the Ridgewood Patch. A contributing factor is that 40% of Ridgewood High School students have chosen to opt out of the PARCC testing, which plays a big role in the rankings. In a recent Facebook post, Kaufman promised to work to improve the high school's ranking in coming years.

Only time will tell how opinionated Ridgewood residents will continue to use Facebook as a platform to make their voices heard in Board of Education decisions. It will be interesting to see how Kaufman's proposed reforms influence not only the Board of Education, but the community as a whole.



Opinion

The Lizard Politicians

JT Cambria and Danny Guinan staff writers

Ted Cruz. Hillary Clinton. Jeb Bush. All these names have something in common, but it's not what you think. Many people look up to America's politicians as great scholars and people of power; however they don't know the truth about America's leaders. These men and women have a major secret a secret they've been hiding under their scaly serpentine skin. Clinton, Bush, and definitely Cruz, are in fact, lizards. We understand that this may not be an easy pill to swallow, but we, at the RHS High Times, want to give our readers the hard truth. They are among us. Blood-drinking, flesh-eating, shape-shifting extraterrestrial reptilian humanoids with only one objective in their cold-blooded little heads: to enslave the human race. They are our leaders, our corporate executives, our beloved Oscar-winning actors and Grammy-winning singers. No one is safe and there's nowhere to run. However, we are here to open your eyes to the truth about these Lizard Politicians.

No one knows how or why these reptiles are here to steal our bodies, but we know that we can fight them. Being aware of their presence weakens them, talking about them debilitates them, but most importantly, you cannot let them take you. Don't shake their hands and definitely don't look into their eyes. Let's look at the facts of the situation found in the Washington Post Article: "The Hideous, Diabolical Truth about Hillary Clinton"

- 1. Oct. 26, 1947: Hillary Clinton, is born with rough green scales then slipped into a bassinet and delivered to the Rodham house, where it stores its Six Human, Relatable Memories of squeegeeing, family life and honest toil.
- 2. Growing up, Hillary finds it hard to be a lizard. However, she pushes through her struggles to create feminism.
- 3. Her classmates at Wellesley have no idea about the truth because Hillary has gotten so good at hiding them.
- 4. She does not use her Lizard powers until...
 - 5. 1980: Bill Clinton loses the

governorship. In consultation with the team of Illuminati, demons and other snakes, like Ted Cruz, who have been supervising Hillary Clinton's progress thus far, her skin is replaced with another, different one that does not wear glasses and is blonder. The people of Arkansas consider this an improvement, although they complain about her inability to bake.

6. 2013: Hillary Clinton goes MIA to meet with the counsel of snake elders to discuss the next election

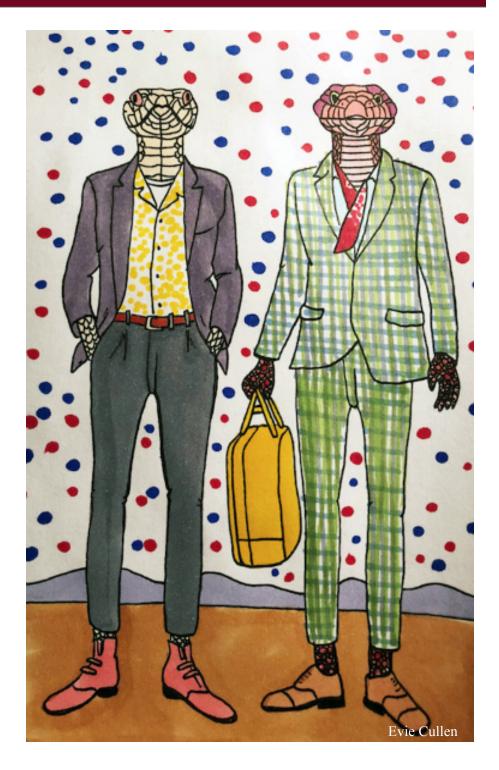
7. 2015: It's showtime. "The Big Three" of the Lizard Committee — Bush, Cruz, and Clinton — decide to unite forces to run against Donald Trump (not a lizard; read our previous Trump article to learn more). However, Ted's smile instantly makes the people recognize him as the lizard he truly is. The rest of the operation crumbles and one by one the lizard empire starts to deteriorate.

8. 2018: The lizards remain in office, but we are smarter, more aware, and ready to combat their next moves. Armed with a new defense, voting, people look to defeat the lizards.

The influence of the reptiles has spread. Who knows who will be the next culprit of their irresistible charm. We have word from an unknown source that Ted Cruz has even been in talks with RHS's own vice president Ruslan Diaz and president Sean Zuckerman! RHS, this is your time to step up and unmask these slithery demons. They are here to haunt you and here to make their lizard empire rule over the student body. To that we say: NO! We will take action against the lizard king, Sean Zuckerman, and his disciples by watching his every slithery move and making sure he does not use this power for his own scaly agenda.

We understand this news is not easy to take, but we know that this is what is best for the RHS community. Knowledge is power. Knowing that we could be taken over by reptiles gives us a chance to prepare and defend ourselves against these lizards. Watch your back RHS, because you never know the truth about someone.... even yourself!





Should Students Grade Their Teachers?

Allison Hong staff writer

Should students grade their teachers? The idea sounds simple and it is. When I asked my friends this question, the overall consensus I received showed me how beneficial this concept could be. The issue of teaching quality has had increased awareness in the past years as efforts have been made to better assess teachers. Although teachers are observed and Student Growth Objective (SGO) tests are administered, it is not enough.

Observers who come into a class for one period are unable to give an accurate judgement of a teacher's teaching ability compared to a kid who has spent months with the teacher. The people that spend hours watching and listening to teachers are oftentimes never asked for their opinion. Students are the most well-equipped to grade teachers, seeing as they spend so much time with them everyday. Using test scores to grade teachers is not an effective way to truly measure how well kids are learning. Different student backgrounds, such as socioeconomic factors, race, and political ideology, can influence someone's scores. Some could say that a student's opinion would be biased and unreliable, but if asked the right questions, results that accurately grade a teacher will show.

Surveying students is a simple method to get an evaluation of teaching skills unaffected by emotion. Specific and detailed questionnaires will give data that test scores and observations can not. Implementing surveys reveal information traditional tests do not. When teachers receive honest feedback about how they can improve, it benefits both the teacher and the student, which will give kids a better learning experience in the classroom.

People who are opposed to a survey may argue that some students might not like a teacher for no reason or fool around and not take it seriously. Although this may occur in very few cases, almost all my peers have complained about their teachers, and in those complaints, there is constructive criticism and some truth on how our teachers can get better. Surveys can also show how the class learns rather than the amount. Instead of asking, "Is your teacher nice?", ask questions such as, "Do you learn a lot every-day in class?" or "Do your classmates participate in class?" These types of questions are far more detailed and, in turn, produce more detailed answers.

The financial implications are also in support of using surveys. According to an article from The Atlantic, it would cost \$5 per student to administer a survey, but a standardized test with the analysis of the of results costs \$35 per student, and hiring someone to observe a class costs about \$97 per student.

a class costs about \$97 per student. The advantages of surveys has given reason for an increasing amount of school districts to use surveys which has more value and students finally have an outlet to express their opinions. Hopefully in the future, my fellow classmates and I will also have the opportunity to do the same.

Opinion

RHS Tradition of Tyranny: Chromebook Restrictions

Swathi Kella editor in-chief

It's 11:47 P.M.

A student in AP Biology urgently clicks onto the Google Classroom page, scrolling hastily down its awful new layout to find the homework that's due in exactly 12 minutes. There's an attachment posted on the homework assignment. It's an article called, "Ionic Bonds and Tertiary Structures of Proteins." The student clicks on the link, and the unnervingly slow Chromebook eventually produces a blank, grey screen with a picture of a padlock. The student refreshes the page again and again but to no avail. Fear engulfs the student as the minutes tick onwards. The padlock persists. The page is blocked... for "pornography"?

This is a true story and just one of many. The RHS administration has taken the policing of Chromebook usage to an extreme: Huffington Post articles on sex discrimination are restricted, Quora threads are categorized as "adult content," and entire Google pages are blocked. That insufferable padlock has even claimed the Youtube channel "turkvids," which is categorized as "may be inappropriate" for the obscene crime of teaching students how to take the antiderivative of secant $^{3}(x)$. It seems that all you need to do to get an accessible website restricted is go on world-geography-games.com one



Erin Kim

too many times in the same week. Clearly, these aren't just restrictions anymore. They scream of censorship!

This all goes back to a federal law passed by Congress in 2000, the Children's Internet Protection Act, which mandates libraries and schools to filter Internet access and block material that is "obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors" on computers used by students under seventeen years of age. But is Quora really "obscene"? Is that biology student's homework article, "Ionic Bonds and Tertiary Structures of Proteins," really "pornography?" The growing problem is that

our school has greatly expanded the definitions of terms that qualify inappropriate usage and is using them to indiscriminately restrict Internet access.

And okay, you may say it's not that big of a deal. I don't really use Quora anyway. But this kind of restriction becomes a problem really fast. By denying its students proper access to Internet resources, the administration is limiting the scope of information that a student can learn. Moreover, it decides which sources students can use, a decision that should be made by individual students. If we're not trusted to be responsible consumers

of news who can make informed decisions, how will we ever learn to navigate the Internet beyond high school?

With these restrictions, this will only continue to be a town that coddles its children and leaves them blindsided in the real world. It's clear that if RHS wants to produce intelligent and knowledgeable internet consumers, it should abandon these excessive limitations.

And on one last note, this year, restricting access has also gone beyond simply blocking websites. Students can no longer use their personal accounts on their Chromebooks. This completely undermines the entire purpose of giving laptops to students in the first place, which is to provide all students with equal access to the Internet. All students need access to their personal accounts for obvious reasons (non-RHS-related work, college applications, FAFSA), and when the school deprives this access, it inconveniences many students who don't have other computers. I myself can't even access the RHS High Times Google account to write this article. This gives an advantage to those who have personal computers and a disadvantage those who rely solely on Chromebooks for school work, thus deepening-not bridging—the digital divide. If this school truly prioritizes equal access to the Internet's resources for all students, some action must be taken.

Defending Self-Defense

Matthew Peters staff writer

Self-defense gives people a sense of safety from the unpredictable world around them. By knowing how to defend ourselves, we can be protected in case we are the target of a violent crime such as an armed robbery or a home invasion. If the students at Ridgewood High School had a mandatory self-defense class, they would be prepared to defend themselves in the unlikely but possible chance of an attack.

Krav Maga is an Israeli fighting technique used by armed forces that combine "boxing, wrestling, and karate. It could be used for street fighting or to fend off robbers," Mr. Lombardo said. Craig Lombardo, a 24-year-old student of Krav Maga, said, "it is incredibly valuable to use and understand the skills I know now." While the training is mostly physical, it also teaches one to be aware of their surroundings. Mr. Lombardo feels that his training has made him prepared for anything, in turn boosting his confidence in his own abilities.

Some parents might be concerned about the perceived dangers associated with this type of training, but Mr. Lombardo also indicated that Krav Maga teaches important discipline behaviors as well. He does not believe that any of the students would get hurt while training because "everyone is respectful of each other and they are all trying to learn and help each other learn to be stronger. If you see someone struggling, you go easy on them and help them through it." As long as the stu-



dents respect one another, there should be little to no injury. If everyone at RHS is trained in a self-defense class, this will lead to a safer environment where students feel more confident. Knowing these crucial skills will help students be safe even after they graduate.

However, Colin LaForty, a freshman at RHS believes that "where we live, it will be very rare if someone had to defend themselves, but I feel it might help in the future when you're not living in Ridgewood." While it's true that the chances of violence in a town like Ridgewood are slim, self-defense is a lifelong skill that could get a student out of a potentially dangerous situation. LaForty also feels that "we should not waste a class on something we will not use for a long time, if ever.' That is why people like Mr. Lombardo take courses on self-defense after they are out of school when dangerous situations would be more likely to occur.

Being equipped with these skills will lead us to a safe and happy life. In the unlikely scenario that a student is robbed or attacked, they will know how to get themselves out of a dangerous situation. By boosting a student's self-esteem, students are less likely to be easy targets, thus decreasing their chances of getting caught in a violent scene. Typically, attackers would not go after someone who is alert, confident, and aware of their surroundings. They would rather target someone who is staring at their phone with earbuds in. As Mr. Lombardo said, it is always better to be prepared because "the world could always potentially be a dangerous place."

Features



STREAM A REVOLUTION



Anna Meringolo and Julia Zambito staff writers

How many times have you received a message from Instagram or Facebook informing you that someone has just begun a live stream? Does it annoy you, or does it excite you? Either way, it can't be ignored. Throughout 2018, the live stream industry has held a substantial presence in social media, impacting the development of various different platforms.

It's no secret that live streaming has become increasingly popular over the course of this year. One company, Twitch.tv, which primarily features video game streams, has close to ten million active daily users who are watching for an average of 106 minutes every single day. Similarly, earlier this year, SpaceX's launch of its Falcon Heavy Rocket broke streaming records when it became the second biggest Youtube live stream event, with an impressive 2.3 million viewers.

Live streaming has taken the world by storm after its first appearance 25 years ago, when several engineers decided to test out their new technology. In 1993, research and development company Xerox PARC hosted a small show in Palo Alto, California. There, a band named "Severe Tire Damage" was the first to be featured in a live stream. A year later, the Rolling Stones began to live stream their music as well. By 2016, the livestreaming industry was valued at approximately \$30 billion, and as of now, it is set to double in growth by 2021.

Several media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram are major contributors to the growth of the live stream industry. Live streams are used for a variety of purposes, whether it's for video gamers sharing their progress, companies publicizing their product launches, groups documenting rallies, or simply for social media users to recap their day and talk to others online. Viewers are getting the sense that they are sharing an intimate and real moment with the person or group that they are watching, because it is being experienced in real time. The immersive nature of live streaming has revolutionized the manner in which businesses and celebrities reach their consumers and fanbases. Streaming is one of the easiest ways to gain publicity and increase sales for a company. Likewise, many celebrities use live streaming as a way to grow and reach their fan base as well as advertise their products.

Live streaming's current popularity and unbelievable growth has been largely dependent on its easy accessibility. In 2018, fewer people paid for cable and instead converted to watching live streams and other forms of entertainment. Compared to television, watching a live stream makes it easier for viewers to multitask and switch to new and diverse platforms. Being all-inclusive, streaming generates more excitement and connection from the viewer.

Live streaming has the potential to reach millions at the click of a button. The feature has revolutionized the technological world and the way that we communicate, making it an entertainment hit in 2018.

HOLLYWOOD REPRESENT-ASIAN

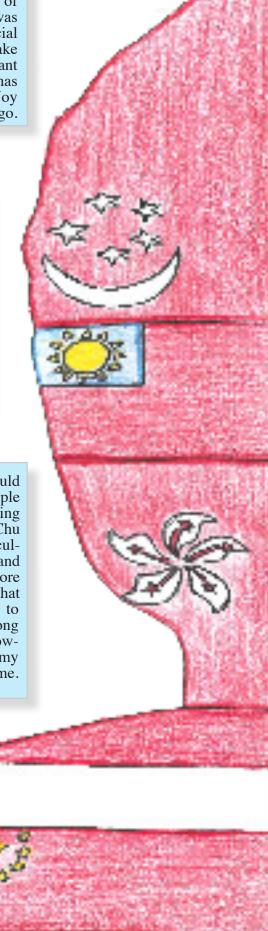
Amelia Chen graphics chief

It's been a long time coming, but the day has finally arrived where Asian Americans are being recognized for their acting. Their careers are no longer confined to short cameos in movies, only to be killed off a few moments later. No, Asian Americans are changing the racial demographic of Hollywood. They are finally breaking through the industry where Asian actors make up only 1% of lead roles. This win is prevalent in none other than the overwhelming success of Crazy Rich Asians.

The movie is based off of Kevin Kwan's book written in 2013. In his novel, Kwan dives into the complex culture of Asian countries, touching upon topics such as their morals, family dynamics, and, of course, their riches. When this film was brought to life this summer, it was crucial for Asian director Jon M. Chu to make sure the film stuck to its roots. This meant having an all-Asian cast; a feat which has not been executed since Amy Tan's Joy Luck Club, which premiered 25 years ago.

Surpassing the expectation of \$18 million for the opening week, Crazy Rich Asians topped the box office in just one weekend. The film's craze caught on like a wild fire, and in the short span of nine days, it had grossed over \$50 million. It was a record breaker for its genre -- impressive ticket sales show that the movie was the most lucrative rom-com to ever be released in theaters since Amy Schumer's Train Wreck in 2015. But, numbers can only show how a film was successful, not why it was.

As an Asian-American myself, I would never have thought that I would see people who looked like me in the cinema. Growing up Asian in a Western society like Rachel Chu does in the film, I find myself playing a cultural double life. As I attend school here and take in the world around me, it becomes more difficult for me to find the connection that tethers me to my grandparents, and even to my parents. But after I saw this film, I, along with many others, found peace of mind knowing that no matter how far away I am from my roots, I will always carry the Asian part of me.



The scary thing was that this film had the potential to not make it big at all. In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter, Jon M. Chu revealed that Netflix had made an offer to turn the production into a Netflix original. The offer reportedly granted Kwan and Chu full "creative control, a guaranteed trilogy and a massive seven-figure immediate payout to the stakeholders" (FOX news).

Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. also offered to produce the film, and although Netflix had the better offer, it lacked one crucial guarantee -- proper recognition. Netflix couldn't fulfill the sole purpose of this movie, which was "getting us [Asians] on the big screen" (Jon Chu to The Hollywood Reporter). It was also reported that another entertainment corporation who was interested in generating this movie tried to replace one of the main protagonists, Rachel Chu, with a white female. Luckily, director Chu never called that company back; swapping the intended Asian female lead with a white female would certainly raise some eyebrows.

Not only do Asians portray the lead characters in the movie, but they play complex roles. Crazy Rich Asians doesn't focus on the stereotyped roles that Hollywood assigned to Asian actors. Instead, it does the exact opposite. This movie has surprised many, with each scene shattering common misconceptions about the Asian community. It was just the clarification that Asian-Americans needed to be expressed.

Crazy Rich Asians is a huge cultural phenomenon, not only because it was long overdue, but because it paints Asians in a new light that not even I, an Asian-American, can put into words.

Amelia Chen and Erin Kim



Greg Cutler staff writer

Throughout 2018, the genre of rap has continued to take over the entire music industry. Over the past few years, pop stations have transitioned to playing rap and hip-hop on a regular basis, signaling a major shift in popular music taste.

Rap has been a prevalent aspect of pop culture since its debt in the 1980's. Hip-hop pioneers like Tupac, Biggie Smalls, and NWA paved the way for the rap game to take the spotlight. Originally, hip-hop attracted vast amounts of young people who grew up in poor communities, being that most hip-hop throughout the 1990's spoke to the struggles of living in impoverished neighborhoods. The topics of crime, drugs, and violence that surfaced in many hip-hop compositions were elements that a lot of listeners could relate to, which helped the genre take off. For example, legendary lyricists such as Tupac and Eminem uncovered the struggles of everyday life in the dangerous neighborhoods of Harlem and Detroit through songs like "Dear Mama" and "Mockingbird".

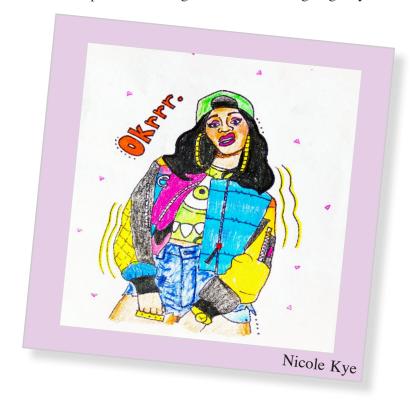
As the rap game progressed and evolved, a style often referred to as "brag rap" came to the forefront. Brag rap is when an artist raps about his money, jewelry, houses, girls, or fame. Many of the most famous hip-hop artists have songs that fall under this category: take examples like "Hypnotize" by Biggie Smalls or "The Real Slim Shady" by Eminem. Nowadays, almost all of hip-hop is brag-rap, which is one of the main factors that contributes to its immense popularity.

As rap begins to move away from its roots on the streets, wealthier, suburban kids feel as though they can relate to it more closely. As unfair as it may sound, it's the privileged people that have control over the music industry: now that affluent kids are increasingly listening to hip-hop, it has completely taken over our radios.

Additionally, the online music platform 'Soundcloud' has helped to spike rap's popularity. This platform allows for anybody to post music that they have created, and gives it the chance to be recognized by millions. Soundcloud is responsible for producing many of today's most popular rappers, such as Lil Pump, Lil Yachty, Lil Uzi Vert, Trippie Redd, 6ix9ine, Post Malone, Chance the Rapper, and fan-favorite XXXTentacion. One thing that contributes to the platform's success is the rappers' producers, who create catchy beats that can sometimes make up for lackluster lyrics.

The year of 2018 has been possibly the most notable year for the rap and hip-hop: one could argue that it should be considered the year that truly marks the height of the genre. According to Nielsen Music, 2017 was the first year that Rock was not the most popular music genre overall. Which style took Rock's recurring spot? You guessed it -- rap. Taking a look at other 2018 trends, it is also obvious that the presence of social media grew exponentially throughout the year. Social media incites creativity, promotes art, advertises television, broadcasts sports, and most importantly, publicizes music. This is yet another factor (and possibly the most important one) that has contributed to the explosion of rap music. With the help of social media, the rap community has had the ability to collaborate, grow, and develop into something really amazing.

In all, the main attraction of rap is still its capability to combine storytelling and lyrical genius with hard-hitting beats that turn songs into real bangers. Rappers like Drake, Travis Scott, Kendrick Lamar, J Cole, Big Sean, and many others are the hope of the rap game. These artists are what truly make rap so special. They are the reason that this genre has become the face of our generation's popmusic. Rap is here for good, and it isn't going anywhere.



Arts & Culture

Art to See this Winter in NYC

Lara Baskin staff writer

As winter sets in, a sure way to prevent cabin fever is by spending a snowy day wandering through an art museum. Lucky for us, museums in New York City are welcoming the colder months with an array of new exhibitions, all of which are sure to get you out of bed. Featuring topics ranging from infectious germs in the city, the relationship between art and conspiracy theories, to the inspiration behind Harry Potter, here are several eye-opening art exhibitions you shouldn't miss this winter.

Till April 28, the exhibit, "Germ City: Microbes and the Metropolis," will be held at The Museum of the City of New York. Just in time for the flu season, this exhibit takes a look at contagious diseases in NYC and how the city deals with them. Defining the city as "the crossroads of people, goods, and germs," Germ City explores the encounters between people and pathogens in an urban setting. It sheds light on New York's lengthy battle against infectious diseases, a fight involving government officials, urban planners, medical professionals, and activists. In illustrating how the flu caused the city's population to decline in 1918, the exhibit follows the story of "Typhoid Mary," the first person in the United States to carry and spread typhoid fever. Mary infected

51 people over the course of her career as a cook, killing a total of three.

Equally unsettling, the exhibit "Everything is Connected: Art and Conspiracy" will be held at the Met Breuer until January 6th. The exhibit showcases the work of thirty artists and divides them into two categories: those in agreement with the general public's perspective of events and those who are more skeptical conspiracy theorists. Their works include paintings, sculptures, photographs, and videos from 1969 to 2016, all of which highlight uncomfortable truths about society, regardless of which side they support. Many of the pieces express a weakened trust in institutions and encourage viewers to reconsider their own beliefs on what they believe took place in history versus what truly occurred.

On a lighter note, the New-York Historical Society is welcoming the holiday season with "Harry Potter: A History of Magic," which is open until January 27th. The exhibit celebrates the 20th anniversary of the debut of the Harry Potter series in the U.S. and includes authentic drafts and drawings by J.K. Rowling herself. The exhibit dives even deeper into Rowling's creative process, presenting an assortment of works that inspired the author: drawings and documents by historically significant figures such as Leonardo Da Vinci and Nicholas Flamel.

Winter is a time for slowing down and paying more attention to the finer things in life, especially art. There is nothing better to spend wintery days with than the works of brilliant artists, which can be found in abundance at exhibits just a

train ride away from Ridgewood. This winter, make the most of the holiday season and take advantage of the numerous museums NYC has to offer.



5 Go-To Holiday Movies

Jacob Baskin staff writer

The sparkling fireplace illuminates the living room as you sink your feet into the coziest socks you own. Snow sprinkles outside your window as your pet snuggles against your shoulder. You can feel the mystical holiday energy surge around you- a warm feeling that everyone has felt at least once in their lifetime. However, there is a sizable issue at hand: you have no idea what holiday movie to watch. Don't panic- we have you covered. Here are 5 holiday classics that are essential in achieving the most magical December possible.

1. Miracle On Thirty-Fourth Street This ultimate classic can move even the most dispassionate people to tears. The story follows a woman named Doris Walker, a realist who does not care for holiday rituals, especially after her divorce with her ex-husband. She raises her daughter to be equally disinterested in the holiday season. While managing the Macy's Department Store, Doris is in desperate need of a replacement Santa after facing conflict with previous actors. She finds a spirited man named Kris Kringle, who believes that he is the real Santa Claus. Doris and many others question Kringle's mental health and force him to undergo a mental examination performed by the store therapist, Granville Sawyer. Kringle continues to defend his controversial identity, sparking an intense fight with Sawyer. Kringle is then charged with fraud, but not before befriending Doris's young daughter, Susan. During the trial, Doris's close friend defends Kris, making very strong arguments in his defense. With Kris's sincerity and the lawyer's intellect, both Doris and Susan seem to find genuine faith for the first time in their lives. This movie intensely plays with the viewers' emotions through its repeated ups and downs. With a family, this can serve as a bonding movie, leaving you feeling safe and warm. 2. Elf

If you have not seen this movie

yet, be sure to watch it as soon as you finish reading. Elf tells the story of Buddy (Will Ferrell), the son of a man named Walter Hobbs. As a baby, Buddy sneaks into Santa's gift bag and ends up at the North Pole. Santa and his Elves decide to keep him and raise him like an elf. As Buddy gets older, he soon discovers he is a human and differs from his elf community. He is told by Santa that he has a real father, Hobbs, who is on the "Naughty List" this year. Buddy is shocked but determined to find his real father in New York. He says goodbye to many of his familiar sights-, including a snowman and the unofficial hero of the show, Mr. Narwhal- before setting off on a quest to find Hobbs. But when Buddy finally meets his father, their reunion does not go as he hoped it would. Walter Hobbs is notorious for being very rude and inconsiderate to others. Hobbs first believes Buddy was 'sent' to him by someone as a joke but gets panicstricken when the "elf" claims that he is related to him. Hobbs desperately convinces Buddy to get a DNA test, but the results confirm Hobb's worst fears and he reluctantly has to allow Buddy to join his wife Emily and his son Michael at home. While Buddy has difficulty fitting into society, he also is

group of close friends or your family. 3. Polar Express

Animated movies can truly seem magical, especially around this time of

attracted to Jovie, a woman he believes

is an elf due the costume she wears

while working at Gimbels. Ultimately,

this movie has everything- holiday en-

ergy, family bonding, and most of all-

comedy! Who could forget the scene

when Buddy barges into the woman's

dressing room while secretly singing along to "Baby it's Cold Outside"?

"Elf" is great to watch with either a

year. In this film, a boy who questions the actuality of Santa Claus aboards a train called the Polar Express. The train is heading to the magnificent and occult land of the North Pole, Santa's workshop in particular. What he does not know at the time is that he is about to experience a sensational journey which acts on all your five senses, including taste- hot chocolate! This uplifting classic portrays how believing can make things that seem unimaginable come to life right in front of your eyes.

4. Home Alone

Two burglars trying to break into your house is horrifying enough, but especially if you are an eight-year-old home alone! The story is told through the eyes of Kevin, a child who was accidentally left at home during a family vacation. Kevin soon learns that he is not alone; however, two thieves are committed to stealing valuables kept in the house. As a young kid, this type of movie was terrifying for me, but watching it now is very entertaining, especially seeing his ingenious thinking process. The mastermind makes a myriad of cardboard statues that resemble people to trick the burglars into thinking that it is a full house. When the burglars enter the house, Kevin pours marbles down the stairs while they are climbing them- you can imagine how that goes! All in all, this movie is jam-packed with excitement and holiday spirit.

5. Eight Crazy Nights

This movie comes to show how the best movies during the holidays are not always Christmas-related. In Adam Sandler's animated musical "Eight Crazy Nights," Davey Stone, a 33 year-old party animal/alcoholic, gets in trouble with the law after frequently breaking it. Because of the holiday spirit, the judge gives Davey one more chance to prove himself by spending Hanukkah performing community service as an assistant referee for a youth basketball league. His other option is to go to jail.

When Davey thinks that he's been let off the hook easily, he meets Whitey Duvall, a good-hearted referee with an elf-like appearance. The battle between the two foil personalities makes them wonder if Davey going to jail would have been the better decision. This animation is fun and comical; the unique Hanukkah background distinguishes it from other holiday movies.

With this handy list of go-to movies, you will never have to worry about finding a good holiday movie. These movies can be used for family bonding or at a late-night get-together with friends. All these movies are available on Netflix and most other streaming services. So grab a fuzzy blanket, a remote, and some holiday cheer!



Erin Kim

Holiday Marketing: Is it working?

Violet Maxwell arts & culture editor

You wake up in the morning, glance at the calendar. November 1st. Why did you save that inevitable mall trip until today? Ready for a morning awash with artificially perfumed mall kiosks and department store after department store convincing you that, yes, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year, you step out into the cool autumn day.

On the way to the mall, you feel parched. Is it the hankering for a Pumpkin Spice Latte? No, no, that can't be it-it's November 1st after all. You drive to your local Starbucks and order something seasonally appropriate. A peppermint mocha? A snickerdoodle hot chocolate? Of course, it comes sleeved in a holiday cup, covered in mistletoe.

Between the warm latte cradled in your mittened hands and the vision of Garden State Plaza in your mind, it feels like no time at all has passed until you find yourself standing in Macy's. Bombarded by vibrant, red bows and glittering displays boasting limited edition holiday products, you suddenly feel overwhelmed by it all.

You aren't the only one. Holiday marketing campaigns are inescapable. What some see as a creative opportunity to spin a fresh new look for a tired, poorly-selling product, others see as the capitalization of a season that should revolve solely on its religious merits. Regardless of where one finds themself on this spectrum, being inundated with product placements and special holiday bargains is inevitable. This can seem harmless, only until you check Twitter as December looms in the distance.

and see that Starbucks' 2015 hotly anticipated holiday cup design had been branded by some as anti-Christian for its lack of explicitly Christmas-oriented imagery. 2017's cup was attacked for "spreading a gay agenda" according to some conservative news outlets, for featuring a pair of holding hands that were decidedly not gendered.

That said, many ad campaigns that arise for the holidays seem to truly grasp at the essence of the season. After the terrifying hoards of people that swarm to Macy's for their "Thanksgiving One Day Sale" and then back again for Black Friday, they soften their approach notably for Christmas advertisements. In 2016, Macy's coined the #DearSanta campaign aimed to revitalize children's belief in Santa-they would donate to Make A Wish Foundation for each letter dropped off in a Macy's department store. The approach was wildly successful. Who doesn't love perpetuating childhood naivete while simultaneously getting all of your shopping done?

But even still, some may roll their eyes at the cloyingly sentimental attempts made by major department stores. These pragmatists may feel more at home among a company like Ghiradelli, who devote their website to holiday gift-guides and discounted packages fit to sit under a tree (or by a menorah.) It begs the question; as a consumer, do you want a company that levels with you and leans fully into the materialism of the holiday season, or would you prefer to forego that for the notion that there is still nobility left in Christmas? It's worth considering



Amelia Chen

Christmas, As Seen Through Art

Logan Richman staff writer

The holiday spirit takes the US by storm every year, starting the second families finish the last serving of their Thanksgiving dinner. The time holds a special place in people's hearts.

Christmas specifically has been largely depicted through art for hundreds of years, with paintings going back to pre-Renaissance. These early paintings are focused entirely on the religious side to the holiday, which when compared to more recent paintings that resemble how many celebrate the holiday today, have a completely different sentiment and meaning.

In terms of music, holiday songs have developed a distinct "sound" over the years recognized by many. A lot of modern holiday music started off as hymns or folk songs from religions; traditional Jewish and Christian songs have carried through into more modern songs that have the same sound and evoke a certain feeling of the holidays, that have now become evolving in the US since the 1800s, ingrained itself in American society sound" developed in the early 1900s.

A countless number of American films have been made about the holidays, mainly capturing the way the US

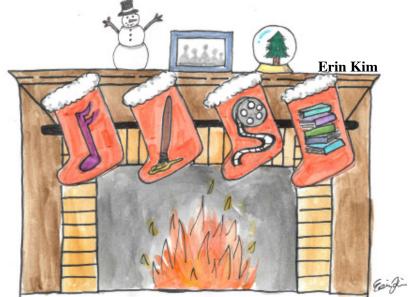
celebrates Christmas. These movies bring in huge numbers at the box office (to date, Home Alone has an estimated \$285 million revenue), and in general reflect the feeling of the holidays as a time where everyone is happy, cozy, and all of American society is excited to be in the holiday spirit. The way the holidays are reflected in literature mirrors that of movies, with a lot of the same underlying themes and similar feelings evoked. Famous works such as A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens spread more serious and meaningful messages to their audiences while still maintaining the holiday aspect. People all over the country love the holiday time of year, and for the past hundred years in the US, artists' expression of the holidays has reflected a time of happiness, community, love, respect, and fun, that has become a staple of this time of year. Many people feel a certain way when they hear a holiday song, or go outside in the snow and see decorations on stores, read books, see movies, or even look at art—that all strengthens this spirit. The way the holidays are mainstream. Holiday music has been reflected in art and how that art has and now that iconic "holiday music has shaped the way US citizens regard, enjoy, and feel about the holidays to this day. Next time you think about the holidays, consider the art component to your holiday celebrations.

The Secrets Behind Christmas Music

Cate Harkins staff writer

For many, Christmas music is the best part of the holiday season. The same classic songs are blasted every year, on the radio, in shopping malls, and in classic movies. Songs such as "Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer", "Frosty the Snowman", and "Let it Snow" will instantly put you in the holiday spirit. The music is sure to be stuck in your head long after the decorations have been taken down. The music we hear every year at Christmas has become a melting pot of old Christmas carols mainly centered around the celebration of the birth of Jesus, to anthems promoting the business side of the holidays. Traditional carols are still widely known: songs and hymns such as "Joy to the World", "Silent Night" and "Angels We Have Heard on High". During WWII, music began to become more influenced by jazz and rock and roll, and songs such as I'll be Home for Christmas expressed the sentimental tone of losing loved ones in the war. In this regard, holiday music reflects the priorities of society at large at any given time. Many of these songs have also remained staples in rotation of many holiday stations and playlists. There is one song, however, that stands out amongst them and that is Mariah Carey's 1994 hit song, "All I Want for Christmas is You". Besides the sleigh bells and Christmas driven lyrics, there is something deeper that makes this classic song feel like Christmas. Mariah Carey's song is heavily based off of Phil Spector's album A Christmas Gift for You. "All I Want for Christmas is You" is stylistically similar to a song on Spector's album titled "Baby Please Come Home". It also is rhythmically similar to the classic White Christmas, sung by Irving Berlin. But with further inspection, and by looking at the notes that make up both the melody (the main voice) and the accompaniment in the songs, there is one chord that stands out. Popular music is typically composed of the same four chords, however both "White Christmas" and "All I Want for Christmas is You" have a unique, D minor 7th chord with a flat 5th added. This peculiar chord brings the song to its roots in jazz and ties the two songs together. The commonality of this chord is an interesting component of the holiday jingle that typically flies under the radar.

The next time you turn on the radio during Christmas and immediately feel overcome by the joy of the holidays, remember your new knowledge of the deeper history to that catchy song. Before belting your heart out, recall the interconnectedness of holiday culture. Then you are free to consider what is truly important. After all, culture does not exist in any vacuum. Where exists one element of culture, a long stream of influences can always be tracked down, especially during the Christmas season. That in mind, embrace the cheesy Christmas music playing in your car and sing along. Long live the queen of all pop and holiday music, Mariah Carey!



Sports and Wellness

Reminiscing Fall Sports

Aaron Friedman staff writer

Ridgewood High School has an impressive track record when it comes to athletics, and sports are deeply ingrained in RHS student life. As RHS boasts the biggest student population in Bergen County with almost 1,800 students enrolled in the 2018-2019 school year, establishing relationships with people outside of one's own friend group can prove to be difficult. As a result, sports are a great way to not only develop deeper relationships with existing friends, but to also meet and connect with new people during the time spent together each day.

Fall sports are a large factor in setting the tone for the school-wide social culture for the rest of the year, all while setting a potential standard for the remaining seasons: if RHS does well in the fall athletics program, it can serve as a sign of athletic accomplishments to come in the winter and spring athletics seasons. In addition, accomplishments in fall sports can renew and increase school pride for the months to come. This is especially important with Friday night home football games, a school wide social event that not only involves the players themselves but also the marching band, the cheer squad, the student government members that sell concessions, and all types of students wishing to have a good time. A solid student turnout where individuals from all different social circles and grades are welcomed heightens unity across the diverse student body for the rest of the year to come.

frame of reference, it is especially important to consider the active presence of RHS athletics in the past few months.

To put such concepts in a current Over the past decades, The Ridgewood High School Maroons have established a widespread tradition of excellence, and this fall was no exception:



RHS Students participating in various sports

The Boys Varsity Soccer team was a team in the spotlight, winning the Big North Freedom Division and taking home the first title in 17 years while the Girls Varsity Soccer team became Co-Division Champions.

Girls Varsity Volleyball has proven to be successful by winning their division and moving onto the Group IV semifinals.

The Football team has been crowned the NJSFC Liberty Red Division Champions and they have moved onto the final game at Metlife Stadium. Country teams were crowned the Division and County champions in the 2018 season. Boys Cross Country won their 9th consecutive Sectional Title and 25th overall in program history while Girls Cross Country captured the 2018 North IA Sectional Title in impressive fashion by placing all 7 runners in the top 15 finishers.

Girls Tennis members have also become the Sectional Champions making it the fourth sectional victory in the past five years.

The Girls Gymnastics team had a junior place third overall, qualifying her for the State Meet of Champions.

Ridgewood Crew has had a successful fall season, winning multiple medals among various boats thus setting the spirit for more victories to come.

Ridgewood Maroons set the stride for the entire school - inside and outside of an academic environment - upholding the legendary student life and pride. With the winter season upon us, a hope for similar success in the coming events, meets, competitions, and games are among the entire RHS community, athletes and non-athletes alike.

Ridgewood Volleyball - Reflecting And Looking Ahead

Claire Sullivan staff writer

On October 23rd, the Ridgewood High School Varsity Volleyball team added their name to the record books, winning the Big North Freedom League Championship. This win tied both their section and overall record with Old Tappan, making them co-champions.

The final game took place at Ridgewood High School between Ridgewood and Old Tappan. Ridgewood won two sets to one, winning the third set 25-23. If Ridgewood had lost, Old Tappan would have been the sole champion, but Ridgewood's win allowed them to gain the title.

"It was really thrilling," junior Morgan Dunican explains. "We had lost to Old Tappan before but we knew we could beat them. At one point in the last set, we were down by eight points, but even that didn't stop us from coming out victorious."

The team has eight seniors, leaving only three definite returning players for next year. However, this gave Ridgewood an advantage for this year, due to the experience that these players have. The team also has two juniors and a freshman, both with vast club experience.

"I've learned a lot about the game [from the seniors], and overall we have had a lot of fun," Dunican tells. "I'm going to be sad next year when they all leave."

Ridgewood finished the season with a section record of 11-1. Overall they only lost two games: one to Immaculate Heart Academy and one to Old Tappan, ranked #1 and #2 in the state.

Ridgewood entered the state tournament ranked #6. However, their

success after the cut-off date could them out of contention for the final. have made them a viable contender for one of the top three seeds as they won eighteen out of their last nineteen games. The team hoped to carry that momentum into the state tournament.

In the past, Ridgewood has won States in 1986, 1987, and 1996. At this year's tournament, the team made it to the semifinal match against Southern. They started out the match very strong, leading the first set 25-21. However, the team was sadly defeated in the second and third sets, knocking

Although winning the league championship is already impressive feat in itself, the team has shown that they have what it takes to be elite. Their comeback in the league championship game not only showed skill, but also passion and grit. Also, their strong players that helped them make it to the state semifinal show how talented the team is. These attributes helped the team as a whole as they finished up their season.

"I think this whole season has

made me a better player because when you work with such talented girls, your own game improves" Dunican details.

As the team looks to next season, things are likely to be very different. A state championship is very much possibility in the future, but the team will be forced to rebuild themselves after losing eight seniors.

"Next year is going to be interesting," Dunican says. "The team is going to need to be built from scratch. Although it will definitely be a process, I am looking forward to the season!'



RHS Girls Volleyball Team

Sports

Raising School Spirit Through Athletic Events

Jackie Schmidt and Jules Einemer staff writers

Ridgewood High School prides itself on the excellent attendance of its football games. The bleachers are always filled with students from each grade cheering loudly for the team. The turnout this year has been especially substantial which many attribute to the large participation in the themes. While school pride appears to be high, football is the only sport that attracts a large student crowd. Those attending games for sports such as soccer, lacrosse, hockey and many others typically consist of parents and only a few student supporters. A large factor contributing to football's popularity could be credited to home varsity football games being on Friday nights. It is the perfect place for individuals to spend time with friends in an environment that is thrilling and pumping with adrenaline. In fact, many students schedule their Friday's around the games. In comparison, students have commitments that prevent them from watching other sports games on school nights including academic work. In addition, games differ between days of the week making it hard to keep track of.

In order to increase the amount of student support each sports team gets, a larger effort is needed. When asking friends and classmates why they do not attend other sports games, the majority of them responded that they are never aware of when they are. An easy way to remind students about the upcoming games could include announcements every time there is a home sports game. For sports teams whose home field is not at RHS the high school could provide buses to and from the events. Another way to increase student atten-



dance could be done by designating the home games of a specific sport to Friday and Saturday in other parts of the year. As seen at football games, many students are willing to spend their free nights cheering on their classmates. A different way to draw attention towards upcoming games could be done by having athletes ask their friends to wear their jersey's or part of their uniform to school on the day of and to the game. By creating a type of obligation that is

exciting, the individuals asked and their friends who accompany them will look forward to it with high anticipation. Finally, pep rally's should be held in a way that truly increases school spirit. Before a big home game, the school could organize an assembly to ensure that the students know about the game, which would also get the athletes fired up for their big game. In the end, when a sports team has a large crowd, they are more likely to play better. Sports

teams can help support each other.

Overall, football receives the most student attendance compared to any other sport at RHS, mainly because their home games are on Friday. None-

theless, each grade can build the reputation of other sporting events by encouraging peers to go. After all, teens do not like to miss out on taking part in the fun. No matter what, this starts with individual's and ends with the excitement for the particular athletic team.

Reflecting on the 2018 Cross Country Season

Donovan Joseph staff writer

Last summer, my parents made me sign up for the RHS Cross Country team. I dreaded it as if it were a punishment. I saw how hard runners worked during their practices and how exhausting the season seemed. Knowing that the daily exercise would be good for my health, I followed through with the commitment and am now thankful that I did so. Last year's season was a lot of fun and this year was even better.

Even if you do not enjoy running, cross country can still be a spectacular experience. Members meet many great people, have tone of fun, and feel good about the work they put in. To emphasize the success of this year's cross country season, I asked several runners to reflect on their experience.

Junior Nick Santangelo stated that his time as a RHS cross country member has been valuable in providing him "personal athletic growth." Junior runner Brendan Donahue claimed that "the season was a very fun and a beneficial experience for [me] as well as [my] peers. While running 4-5 miles a day is not commonly associated with optimism, running helped me with my school work, getting in shape, and overall feeling better daily." One of the best junior runners on the cross country team, Mason Zamboldi, asserted that "as a team, the season is going very well. We won the county championship for the second year in a row. However, personally I think I could have done better."

While this year's team has been successful in competition, this has not been without obstacles. Varsity runner Will Baginski discussed some setbacks

in the BMOC competition: "the team won, but my race was a little rough. Ryan and Taylor got tripped hard in the beginning but bounced back and ran well." Despite the struggles that the team faced, Ridgewood's boys varsity, girls varsity, and freshman team all won the BMOC meet and sectionals later on in the season. Senior runner Jeremy Savarese stated that "I was proud of my times and the last meet was very successful. I am proud of the team, proud of myself, and especially proud of Coach Ryan."

Senior runner Paul Baginski, who was injured for most of the season, stated that his "season was up and down. I did run a personal best at the end of the season but I missed a month of the season due to tendonitis, which prevented me from having better races." Paul's brother, Tim, thought that the "season went fairly well, but it wasn't perfect. However, I worked hard and had a good time with my teammates."

Senior runners expressed their disappointment for their RHS cross country careers to be over. Savarese stated:



The RHS Girls Varsity Cross Country Team pose with their coaches at the State Meet of Champions on November 17.

"my life won't be the same without cross country. It has been a huge part of my life. I met my family here. I'm going to miss it a ton in college." Recognized as one of the most passionate cross country members, Tim Baginski said that "next year I'll definitely miss cross country and being out running with my friends everyday." Fahey shared that he is "going to miss everyone on the team a lot." Wilson Crimmins, an ex-Ridgewood cross country member and current resident in Ohio, said that "I still run cross country at my high school, yet it is not the same. I miss all the kids on the Ridgewood team".

For many runners, practices are a grueling experience. They push runners to train their hardest everyday with minimal breaks. After practice, however, runners enjoy a sense of accomplishment from pushing themselves. Despite the strenuity, cross country runners actually miss it when it is over and constantly recall the countless positive memories. Studies have shown that running is a valuable endeavor in all aspects: it is beneficial to managing school work. Looking back on the past few months, all runners seemed to have positive experiences. Whether they improved their physical health or had a great social experience, everyone got something out of the season. To those interested in being apart of a winning team, Will Baginski is optimistic about the upcoming years: "the future is bright and I am proud of how hard everyone on the team has worked." Overall, members are currently reminiscing the fond times they have shared and look forward to next year, all while encouraging fellow peers to join and take part in such a valuable experience as well.







Logan Paul Suicide Forest Incident







Eagles Superbowl Victory

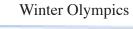




February



March for Our Lives



Black Panther







Zuckerberg Senate Hearing





Class of 2018 Graduation



June

Xxxtentacion Death



July

RHS New Schedule



September



Midterm Elections

Kavanaugh Hearing

Stan Lee's Death





