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Oprah for President

Is the Queen of All Media Running for Office?



Talia Rosen
news editor

As we sat back on our couches on a Sunday night in January, many of us were ready to watch the Golden Globes, procrastinating with Monday’s homework. The television clicked on and women dressed in black filled the screen, as we watched our favorite movie stars being interviewed. Soon after, Golden Globe host Seth Meyers took a step onto the stage in front of many favored celebrities, Oprah included. The beloved Oprah Winfrey, dubbed the “Queen of All Media” and the richest African-American, sat in the very front of the auditorium, tentatively listening to Meyer’s opening act. Winfrey was set to receive the Cecil B. DeMille award, bestowed to this woman for her outstanding contributions to the world of entertainment. Seth Meyers continued his act, mentioning his 2011 White House dinner gig, when Meyers joked that Donald Trump was not qualified for being president. “Some have said that night convinced him to run. So, if that’s true, I just want to say: Oprah, you will never be president! You do not have what it takes,” Meyers called out to the admired talk-show host, “Now we just wait and see.”

Later on in the evening, Reese

Witherspoon introduced the Cecil B. Demille award and Winfrey was called up to the stage to deliver a speech. Oprah captured the audience’s attention with her provocative words. “I want all the girls watching here and now to know that a new day is on the horizon!” Winfrey cried, as she encouraged women empowerment and equal rights. Her words echoed through the

“I want all the girls watching here and now to know that a new day is on the horizon!”
~Oprah Winfrey

Beverly Hilton and she expressed gratitude to all the women who had endured any abuse or assault. Winfrey made a point to say that what she “ [knows] for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have.” Can we disagree with that? Winfrey hoped one day no one would have to say “me too” again, and left with an awe-inspiring thank you. The speech got Hollywood on its feet and grabbed the attention of people across the country on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Was Oprah running in 2020? Since the night of the Golden Globes, Oprah Winfrey has not made any public statement about running for the highest political office in the nation.

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Singing for Love

James Ellinghaus
staff writer

This Valentine’s season at RHS, there is no typical candy gram. Instead, students celebrate the holiday by sending singing grams to their friends. Singing grams are offered by RHS’s acapella groups, including the Acellas and the Maroon Men. The musical groups travel from class to class throughout the day, singing songs to RHS students in all grades. Both of the acapella groups offer a variety of songs, all which are focused on love.

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Caroline Loscalzo
staff writer

For centuries, women across the world have been sexually harassed, exploited and discriminated against only because of their gender. The Time’s Up Movement is a coalition against sexual harassment in the entertainment industry, and on a much broader spectrum, across the workforce. This message of solidarity comes on the heels of the election of President Trump, who has allegedly abused 19 women throughout his life. Since then, 84 women, many of whom are in the entertainment industry, have come out against the widely popular film producer Harvey Weinstein, including Gwyneth Paltrow and Angelina Jolie. These past few months have been a time of empowerment, with brave women coming out and saying “me too” against men in power. Each of these women has her own story, and leaders such as America Ferrera, an American actress, have joined forces to raise awareness towards this injustice.

According to the official website of the Time’s Up movement, these women, and thousands of others that do not have the same platform to make their voices heard, want “all survivors of sexual harassment, everywhere, to be heard, to be believed, and to know that accountability is possible.” America Ferrera and Monica Ramirez, the President of the National Farmworker’s Women Alliance, appeared on the Today Show on January 4th, just weeks after the Today Show co-host of over 20 years, Matt Lauer, was fired due to allegations of sexual misconduct. Ferrera explained on the show that “it is no longer an option to deny what we know,” and that the clock has run out not only on sexual harassment, but also on “the behavior and culture that makes women less safe in the workplace.” The fight for justice mentioned by Ferrera reaches beyond only women, but is also a fight concerning the LGBTQ community, disabled people, and anyone else who is discriminated against in the workforce.

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The Phobia Passport: Fears Around the World

Alexander Melarti
staff writer

The Pew Research Center published a survey of 48,000 people across 44 countries. The participants were asked to choose what frightened their culture the most from a list of 5 topics: AIDS and other diseases, nuclear weapons, religious and ethnic hatred, pollution and environmental issues, or inequality. Unsurprisingly, Africans chose AIDS and other diseases as the greatest threat, as many of the world’s modern medical advancements are scarce in the more war-torn regions of the continent. Japan, Russia, Ukraine,

Turkey, and surprisingly Brazil, all believe that nuclear weapons pose the greatest risk to their countries. To be expected, all of those countries are in close proximity to other countries in possession of both nuclear weapons and nations with hostile attitudes. China is understandably concerned about pollution and its effects on the environment, as it frequently issues state of emergency warnings when its citizens cannot go outside due to smog inhalation. Southeast Asian nations such as Malaysia and Indonesia share fears of religious and ethnic hatred with India, the Middle East, and Britain. For Israelis, Hamas and Hezbollah are the threats; for

Malaysians, it is the various arms of Al Qaeda in the region. In countries such as the United States, France, Germany, and Italy, the greatest cause of anxiety and social unrest is inequality, both in terms of income and gender. While the problem of equality in Western nations should not be trivialized, we should take a moment to realize the enormity of our success. Humans have created a world of relative comfort compared to that of even one thousand years ago. Our own society’s greatest burdens lie with paid maternity leave and social programs, compared to the destitution and starvation of third world countries across the world. We all have fears. Maybe it’s a fear

of tarantulas or a fear of the darkness. But what is fear? Fear is defined as an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat. It is a universal emotion, felt by all creatures, and a key instinct for survival. Throughout the millennia, human-kind has gradually eliminated most of the dangers that have threatened to dismantle our societies; thousands of diseases have been wiped out or inoculated against. The most treacherous journeys can now be made from the comfort of a plush seat 39,000 feet in the air. We must say that very few people have to fear death by wild animal. This begs the question, what do we still have to fear? During his speech at his first inauguration, Franklin Delano Roosevelt claimed that the only thing to fear is fear itself. It was a wise assessment that clarified the power of fear to drive people to act rashly or become a hazard to others. Of course his highly rational thinking did not prove true; people are still frightened by heights, snakes, and public speaking. But those fears are individually varied. Larger groups, such as towns, religions, and nations, fear things that threaten the collective, just as Americans continued to fear the financial repercussions of the Great Depression at the time of President Roosevelt’s speech. As we jump the next time a spider crawls next to us, let us examine the larger scope of fears nations around the world face today. Whether nuclear weapons terrify the nation or pollution threatens the state of a country, different cultures around the globe confront dozens of fearful situations each time they step out of their homes.



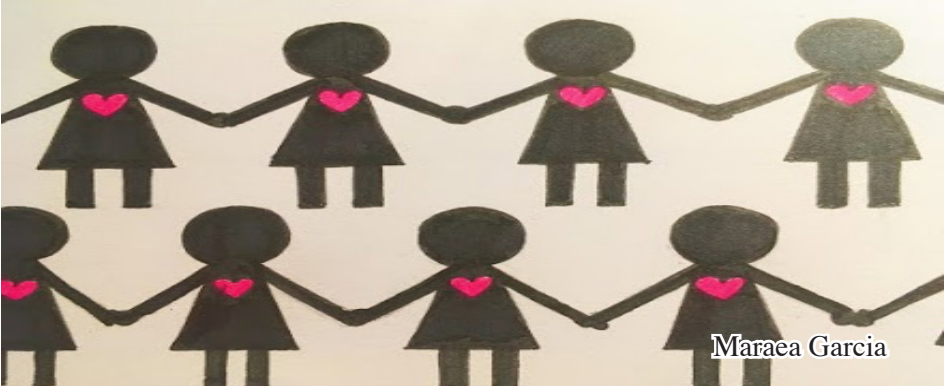
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The Time’s Up: A New Day

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Another aspect of this movement is the Time’s Up Legal Defense Fund, founded to help survivors of sexual harassment to fight their cases. Support has come through a GoFundMe page for the organization, one which we all can help support. The Golden Globes this past month was also full of empowered men and women fighting for equity. Celebrities, both men and women, wore black in solidarity for the Times Up movement, and these messages of power and hope were never more clear than in Oprah Winfrey’s Cecil B. deMille Award Acceptance Speech. She mentioned many powerful historical figures, such as Recy Taylor, who was abducted, abused and threatened by a group of white armed men in 1944. Rosa Parks was also mentioned, as she was Taylor’s attorney and then 10 years later choose not to switch her seat on a bus. Oprah’s compelling words were meant to inspire a culture in which women never have to say “me too” and come out with harassment stories of their own ever again. Her final words that “a new

day is on the horizon” captured millions of Americans, including people like you and me, sitting on their couches at home across the nation. In a recent TED Talk, Justin Baldoni, an actor most famous for his role of Rafael in Jane the Virgin, portrayed a new culture in which what it means to be “man enough” is vastly different. He asked powerful questions to his audience, specifically the men, such as, “are you brave enough to be vulnerable?” or, “are you strong enough to be sensitive?” Baldoni is excellent representation of the male community that understands the importance of standing up and saying something when you hear “locker room talk,” so that no women has to risk everything to tell her story. The Time’s Up Movement is among the many organizations that are moving towards a future in which when a man’s name is mentioned, we don’t automatically connect it to sexual harassment. The “Me Too” hashtag and other social media movements are beginning to move our nation to a more hopeful future in the world of empowerment of women and equality.



Oprah for President?

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According to inside sources at CNN, many of Winfrey’s close friends have been begging her to run for months. How does Oprah feel about this massive support group behind her campaign for president in 2020? Her best friend, Gayle King, said nothing more than how Oprah felt touched by the immense support. Many people over social media believe she would win if she ran, but will she take the opportunity? Let us look back many decades ago. Shockingly, before President Trump ran for office, he jokingly commented that Oprah would be his “first choice” for vice president. What about now? Social Media is already promoting Oprah for president in 2020 and Winfrey has poked fun at the idea of running for office. It is no longer such a far-fetched idea to think of a TV talk-show host with no governing experience becoming our next president. Following the Golden Globes, even President Donald J. Trump spoke out about the possibility of Oprah Winfrey as the next president of our country. He argued, “Yeah, I’d beat Oprah,” then suddenly changing his stance, “Oprah would be a lot of fun...I don’t think she’s gonna run.” Either way, this possibility of Oprah in the White House has created a great amount of excitement. The RHS High Times emailed Oprah, but sadly, no response. As a result, Oprah Winfrey is not available for comment. Guess we’ll just have to wait and see.

Rules of the Road: Student Drivers

Annie Probert
staff writer

High school students reach many important milestones during their four years at RHS. Most notable is being able to drive; the independence and responsibility driving creates makes it one of the first steps to adulthood. Being able to pick up a friend on the way to school and stop by Hot Bagels makes for a perfect morning. Getting your license comes with its perks, we can all agree.

In order to get your license in New Jersey, you have to partake in the state's Graduated Driver License (GDL) program, a three step process that helps new drivers gain experience and build essential driving skills. The law also creates a safer overall driving environment for all New Jersey residents by preventing accidents caused by inexperienced drivers, as we have all heard about on the news. The program states that eligibility for obtaining a permit begins at age sixteen, and requires the new driver to pass a visual test as well as a written test proving their knowledge of the rules of the road. Enrollment in a Driver's Education course, which is mandatory for every sophomore stu-

dent in RHS and often taught by Mr. Knott or Mr. Kay, is also necessary.

Obtaining your learner's permit doesn't give you complete freedom just yet. Unfortunately, there are a few restrictions, including the necessity of being accompanied by a NJ-licensed driver who is over 21 years old while you are driving, and not being able to drive between 11:01 P.M. and 5 A.M. Once your 17th birthday arrives, and if you've had your permit for at least six months, you become qualified to take your road test and potentially get your license, praying you pass. To pass your road test, you must be able to successfully parallel park, perform a K-turn, operate a car in reverse, and follow to basic road rules such as stopping at appropriate signs and yielding to those who have the right-of-way.

Many licensed drivers have labeled the road test a terrifying and stressful experience, but it really only takes about five minutes or less. Passing the road test allows you to get your probationary driver's license, which lasts until you are 18 and prohibits driving with more than one person in the car and driving between 11:01 P.M. and 5 A.M. Piling five friends into a car is

against the law until you reach 18. At age 18, or after you've had your probationary license for a year, you can get a basic or full license, which concludes your participation in the GDL program.

The freedom a license gives new drivers is exhilarating, and teens, as we all know, often become more lenient with the driving rules they once practiced so strictly to pass their road test, such as stopping for three seconds at a stop sign or driving at the speed limit.

In fact, the CDC has reported that the risk of motor vehicle accidents is higher among 16-19 year olds than any other age group, and that teen drivers are approximately three times more likely to be in a fatal crash than drivers age 20 and up. Of course, driving isn't a skill that can be mastered in a short period of time; it requires lots of practice in all different types of settings and situations.

Believing you are a good driver, going slow, and being alert is the best mindset to have when you are driving to ensure your safety and the safety of others. Although you may want to speed down an empty street just for the thrill of it, be mindful of a squirrel that could scurry into the road at any second.



The RHS Valentine Machine

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For several weeks, the a capella groups have been practicing the songs, so they will be ready to perform on Valentine's Day. In previous years, the songs have ranged from 80's classics like "I Wanna Dance with Somebody" by Whitney Houston to new pop music by artists such as Rihanna.

For just a small fee, you can make someone's day or hilariously embarrass them. Singing

grams are extremely entertaining to watch, but can be a hysterical surprise for an unsuspecting friend. The staggered recipients have to awkwardly stand up as a hoard of singers surrounds them, serenading them with a song. The whole class stares in shock at their peer, whose face is now bright red.

Occasionally, one of the singers will even dance with receiver which only adds to the embarrassment.

However, singing grams are all in good nature; they are meant to

make the holiday more fun and festive, not to intentionally hurt anyone's feelings. So if you are looking to surprise one of your friends, a singing gram is the way to go.

In case you have never witnessed a singing gram at RHS before, here is what to expect: On Valentine's Day, the singers will enter the classroom of the recipient at some time during the period. They announce the name of the person they will be singing to, and if known, the person who sent them the singing gram. They will then begin their singing and dancing performance. After two to three lively minutes, they will continue onto the next classroom.

Singing grams have been very popular in past years, but are students interested in sending them this year as well? Sophomore Kobe Ellenbogen considered sending a sing-

ing gram to a friend in his class, but in the end did not think he would: "I thought about it but decided I'm not going to send one." Katie Hu, also a sophomore, says, "I think I definitely will send a singing gram to one of my friends. I'm not sure who or what song I'll pick, but I think that they are really fun. Maybe I will send a few." Mike Rego cannot wait for this upcoming Valentine's Day, and is expecting to receive a few singing grams. He told me, "I am really hoping to get at least one or two singing grams this year."

So if you really want to make someone feel special this Valentine's day, make sure to send them a singing gram. If you have any more questions about singing grams, you can always ask members of the Acabellas or Maroon Men. Happy Valentine's Day!



The Maroon Men and The Acabellas practicing for Valentine's Day



Opinion

Creating an Internal Vacation

Vanita Sharma
opinion editor

I licked the last drops of stracciatella gelato, savoring my third cup of the day. Across the mesmerizing blue lake, the Alps encompassed the horizon. I looked around for my mom and saw her lingering at a little broken wooden table full of necklaces and handmade mirrors.

We were in Varenna, Lake Como, Italy. A frail African man sat behind the table fiddling with some carving tools. Beside him was a small baby carriage with a few blonde hairs poking out from beneath a gray blanket. As I was about to turn around and continue taking pictures of my sister doodling, I looked back and noticed the racial difference between the father and baby. He stroked the baby's forehead and fumbled for a worn-out bottle of milk that lay on the bottom of the stroller. He soon started a conversation with my mom.

“Would you like to buy this spoon? Only 15 euro!”

With that simple question, he and my mom delved into an hour-long conversation ranging from making handicrafts to beliefs of various religions. Slowly the interaction between my mom and this rugged-looking man attracted my whole family to the table.

Originally from Kenya, the craftsman, named Ali, traveled from his hometown to Lake Como frequently as his wife and son lived there. Back in Kenya he had a business selling cooking gas, so selling these crafts was just a hobby. The table was set out with decorated mirrors and bowls. Ali emphasized that he just loved making these artifacts and showing them to the people in Lake Como and starting conversations with them.

Besides keeping him entertained and happy, the crafts helped him earn money to pay for the expensive plane tickets to maintain his long-distance relationship with his wife. His life was stressful with responsibility and duty towards his family, his business at home in Africa, and little money to spare.

While he told the story of his life, I noticed how enthusiastic and content he looked. I was surprised that a man with such little material wealth could have so much happiness, just by talking to people about his life experiences and making handicrafts.

When I returned home to New Jersey, I remembered the highlight of the trip: gazing over the red-roofed houses and mountains of Italy, letting my mind take in the satisfaction of having such beautiful sights in front of my eyes. I realized that if simply looking over the landscape of Italy could create happiness, anything could.

Ali found his happiness in doing what he loved and finding new tourists to tell his stories to. I didn't need to be in Italy to feel more content and happier than ever. I could easily be at my desk, looking out my own window and enjoying the summer heat and lush green trees.

I realized you could find happiness from the internal situations you create in your own minds. Certain events are known to bring us happiness, like having a nice family vacation somewhere beautiful or going to the beach. I wondered, if something happened and affected these external situations, would I still be

happy? Ali showed me that just creating a vision in my head of feeling happy and being satisfied could overpower any situation that ordinarily would make me feel otherwise.

I soon discovered I could also apply this concept to other emotions. I remembered weeks when I was overloaded with work during my freshman year of high school. By just believing and repeating to myself that I was stressed, I made it much easier to create superficial pressure on myself. On the other hand, when I experimented forcing myself to smile despite the stress, then, strangely, I did feel better.

If we choose to be unsatisfied with life we can easily make our life unnecessarily miserable, even if we have everything we ever wanted.

After I discovered this on our trip to Italy, I found myself striving to feel happy, regardless of the myriad things I could potentially complain or be grumpy about. I remember returning from vacation and choosing to accept the languid and humid summer days, because I realized that I am responsible for my own happiness — which should not be dependent on any plans or objects.

My encounter with Ali made me look at life with a different perspective. I found that happiness triggered by a certain event, such as visiting a beautiful country, felt different than general, everyday happiness. The former gives a temporary feeling of pleasure and satisfaction, which is completely dependent on life's events.

I believe that true happiness isn't going to Italy or meeting up with friends, which may bring you temporary pleasure, but a feeling that isn't dependent on your life situation. It comes with gratitude and acceptance, and by choosing to be happy. Our society is known to be pleasure-seeking and sometimes materialistic. It's not easy to get out of that rut and learn to appreciate the smallest of things, but Ali led me to my steps toward creating a permanent feeling of contentment.

As they say, life is like a roller coaster — it has its ups and downs—but you can choose to scream or enjoy the ride.



Bloody Palms

Joohnoo Jung
staff writer

For the past few weeks, I have watched a great deal of vampire films. Some were unbearably gruesome, like “Chan-Wook Park’s Thirst,” (2009) and others were very moving, like the Swedish romance “Let the Right One In.” (2008) But what united them all was how sympathetically the vampires were portrayed, often made more relatable than the surrounding human characters. So I asked myself - are we really so different from vampires?

I've come to the conclusion that there are no real differences to be found.

We, like they, subsist on the misfortune of others; while vampires drink the blood of innocents out of pure necessity, humans do it for the sake of convenience and pleasure. As I write this, wearing a shirt that was likely put together by a Southeast Asian child, my stomach churning with the flesh of animals raised for slaughter, can I really say that I am better than a bloodsucking monster of the night? With my fingers racing across the keyboard of an absurdly expensive MacBook, can I be so sure that I won't wake up tomorrow jaded, ungrateful for all that I have?

While we often forget that our luxuries are exploitative, vampires are not afforded that privilege - they are required to witness the consequences of their desire firsthand. They must stalk, murder, and dispose of their victim just to satisfy a hunger that will

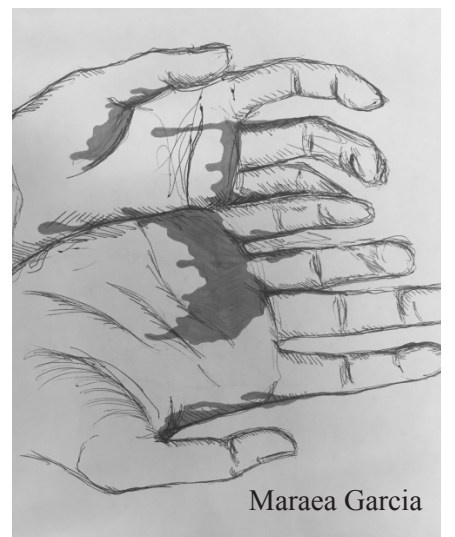
reemerge the next day. Corporations whisper soothingly to the masses, convincing us that excessive consumption is natural - hell, it might as well be our God given right. But unlike poor Nosferatu, we can avert our eyes while the weak pay for our satisfaction.

Vampires are fascinating to watch because of their dark allure, but when the aesthetic veneer is lifted, they are desperate creatures that must kill for survival, like some sexy late-stage heroin addict. You might feel disgust at seeing them slurp blood from the necks of their victims, but don't we look equally disgusting when we smoke cigarettes or wolf down chocolate bars? Vice is never pretty. In all the abundance of the modern world, our natural drives are at a constant threat of becoming carnal desires; and while many of us will end up slaves to addiction, did vampires even have a choice to begin with?

Take for instance, my fleeting attempt at vegetarianism. Like a lot of people who've tried to become vegetarian for moral purposes, I quickly caved in, reassuring myself that the 'food chain' is in place for a reason. Being ethical doesn't taste as good as lobster tail.

Having grown up with the assurance of an omnipotent, all loving and caring God, I asked why, if He is so all loving and caring, would He create a world where we must eat others to stay alive? Doesn't that contradict the very idea of love? While I have yet to find an answer, I sometimes try to understand Him. On better days, I hope against hope that God created this world so that when we choose to suppress our destructive urges and help one another, He gets a good ol' kick out of it. For what does beauty mean without an ugliness to which it can be compared?

But if I'm ever out past dark and feel a sharp pinch on the back of my neck, I'll remain calm and remind myself that I am simply being eaten, like I have done to many before me. Maybe in that acceptance, the pain will seem a little less real, and the world will become a little more real.



Anger and Media: Do We All Have a Problem

CJ Lee
opinion editor

The Age of Information has brought endless positive change to our lives, from the ability to learn about anything, to the ability to communicate with anyone in a couple of taps. However, it has also decidedly brought us a new kind of problem: an ability to react to anything in any way.

We all know that social media has evolved from just being a medium of communication and an outlet to share our lives with friends. Now, influential people ranging from celebrities to politicians use it as a tool for their platform to spread awareness of their cause be it cancer research or re-election. Millions of people rely on it to stay up to date with recent events. Yet, unlike most news corporations, the posts people upload to their social media, whether it be Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook, are not fully regulated by anything except the writer's conscience.

Sure, Instagram might be able to discern whether your video has copyrighted music in it, and Facebook might be on the constant lookout for posts that raise red flags in terms of being terroristic or dangerous. But, for the most part, people can often say whatever they want without having to worry about an editor screening their tweet.

Of course, freedom of speech is protected under the First Amendment, and unless someone has a significant following, most people will not notice a single person's words



on a controversial subject. However, what about people who do have a couple thousand followers? Most news corporations are known for being biased in a certain direction, from left to right on the political spectrum. But this line of bias becomes blurred in the world of social media, where rather than posting under the name of a known news company, you can post under a different name: your own.

It becomes far more difficult for readers to actively discern any partiality, and the result is one where, in the aftermath of a controversial event, the outcry can be disproportionately affected by a single side. Think of it like a chain reaction: once one person begins posting a response to an event, then everyone who sees it, without having seen any other reactions or any other info to the event, is more likely than not to agree with the person's stance, leading to more posts of the same bias.

This is especially worsened considering the anonymity of social media; most people do not have their Twitter handles correlated with their real names, meaning they can say whatever extreme, sensationalized message they want about an event without much fear of repercussion: allowing exaggerated and even false info to be posted that would not be seen from an otherwise credible news corporation.

Take for instance, the H&M controversy from last month - one that you most likely heard about from, well, social media. A child model wearing a sweatshirt with the words "Coolest Monkey In the Jungle" was black, contrasting with other white models wearing other sweatshirts like "Mangrove Jungle Survival Expert". The outcry was obvious; there is a definite and terrible history of how African Americans have been associated with monkeys, and in having a black model

be the only one to wear such a shirt, H&M apparently failed to realize this insensitivity. But, at the same time, the outcry was one that was extremely personal and, honestly, overdone.

There was a flurry on Twitter as the news of the sweatshirt spread, from New York Times columnist Charles Blow tweeting, "@hm, have you lost your damned minds!?" to NBA star LeBron James reposting a picture where the model was exhibited instead with a crown covering the words. Again, there is nothing wrong with responding to controversy through social media. But a few days after the controversy, H&M stores in South Africa were vandalized and ransacked by protesters from the Economic Freedom Fighters Party. A ferocious social media storm translated into real world actions, affecting H&M employees who were not involved in the design of the sweatshirt or selection of the model in any way.

It is important to use our voice to speak out against wrongs in the world - that is the only way change comes about. However, social media grants more power than we think. And when a mass of people all come together to go against injustice, it can have far reaching and unexpected effects. Freedom of speech does not mean freedom from consequences. As writer and political analyst Yousef Munayyer once wrote: "Writers and artists should be able to express themselves provocatively, but what they will provoke is impossible to know."

There's More Than Two Parties

Mark Salzman
staff writer

It's the first week after your 17th birthday. You've passed your driving test and now you can take an amazing Instagram-worthy picture and brag to your younger friends. In doing so, it is also your first time dealing with the dreaded Department of Motor Vehicles - not fun stuff. To top it all off, you can now register for voting. When you get the form, four options are listed: Republican Party, Democratic Party, Undecided, and Other. For most people, there are only two obvious choices: Republican and Democratic. Such a trend alludes to a large problem in our society: The American Two-Party System.

The Two-Party System is a situation where two political parties hold the most representation in the government and have nearly absolute power. Currently, nearly every senator, congressman, and governor belongs to either the Republican or Democratic Party. Even most state-level positions are dominated by the two parties. Some could say that these parties simply have the best policies that encompass the desires of most Americans, which is why they are the primary competition in so many elections. And while it is true that the policies of each party are liked by many, it is also true that the American populace is so diverse and varied that it is impossible to stuff everyone's viewpoints into two main parties and the outliers in a few other ones. Instead, the real cause of the American Two-Party System is that of societal pressures and government policies.

Have you ever heard the phrase, "vote for the lesser of two evils"? Or "don't waste your vote on someone besides a Democrat or Republican"? How about the term "third party"? Maybe I have forgotten where democracy was supposed to be limited to two choices, but I find these statements absurd and it leads our public policies to



be skewed into arguments for control. In George Washington's Farewell Address, he states that, "However [political parties] may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion."

Free thought is fueled by options - not choices. The main parties have been able to manipulate public opinion into supporting them on one topic and then keeping their support for their entire agenda. Nothing scares a politician more than someone thinking for themselves. There has been a grand trickery of the public that voting for a "third party" (the name itself shows that there is not as much seriousness given to them) will accomplish nothing. On the contrary, it already has.

Look at the 2016 Presidential Election; specifically, the media and the polls. Unlike that of the 2012 election, there was an immense uptick in the votes put towards parties and candidates not Republican and Democratic, as well as the frequency of articles covering such "third parties". Less people are giving into the reign of the American Two-

Party System, which is good. At the same time, it means politicians need to adapt their methods: not so good.

Gerrymandering is a method in which political factions adjust the boundaries of voting districts in order to unfairly favor their party. In America, none other than the Democrats and Republicans are known for employing this method. By creating strange and curved districts, each party has been able to contort the lines in order to have a majority of voters in a section and win a few more congressional seats.

Our district - NJ District 5 - is an example of gerrymandering by the Republicans. The election of Josh Gottheimer in the most recent race was notably historic, as the Democratic Party has only held this seat for 17 years in total since the end of the Civil War: 17 out of 150 years. This nonstop battle for voting districts has been seen by both parties all over the country and the lines get contorted stranger and stranger each election cycle. To make matters worse, there is nothing requiring congressmen to step down due to the absence of term limits. This has been a highly debated topic recently as many congressmen are reaching the 40 and even 50 year mark of their power, making them career politicians. Thomas Jefferson believed that, "a little rebellion now and then is a good thing,"

but us Americans have stayed silent as politicians grow their power infinitely.

In the current political climate, it is hard to find someone who entirely supports the Democratic or Republican Party. The parties act as if they are the only rightful competitors in our modern American political environment, but the public wants change. In a survey after the 2016 Presidential Election, a majority of respondents stated that they believed the main goal of the Democratic Party was to be opposing Republicans, instead of pushing their liberal values.

Thus reflects how getting votes now means not professing one's own values, but instead downplaying the image of the other competitors. In order for us to inspire change, politicians need to see more than just low voting turnout - there needs to be larger voter turnout for 3rd party candidates that Democrats and Republicans are ignoring. As high schoolers, we are the future of America and will soon be able to vote. It is time that we research third party options. Some of you may have even voted in the gubernatorial election this past November.

Vote Libertarian, Green, Constitution, or whatever you desire. The most important thing is that you don't vote for a Democrat or Republican if you don't support what they are running for.

Features

The Evolution of Teenage Romance

Violet Maxwell
features editor

It's no secret that teenagers have come a long way from elaborate love letters and promise rings, but the difference between stories of your grandmother's "courtships" and modern day dating often go unrecognized. A massive disconnect remains between parents and teenagers about the details of a young relationship in the twenty-first century. After all, waiting by the phone has been exchanged for being "ghosted", or even more recently, "haunted" by a romantic interest who no longer contacts you but continues to like your posts on social media. Times have changed so immensely that teenagers are now coining slang for scenarios that could have never occurred ten years ago.

A survey of teenagers across America has recently unearthed data claiming that 72% of teenagers communicate with their significant others via text daily, yet only 39% speak over the phone. Surprising? Not really. Considering the ubiquity of messaging and both the convenience and mobility that it entails, it makes sense that teenagers quickly abandoned phone calls once a better alternative sprang forward. This sharply contrasts stories that your aunt may tell you over Thanksgiving dinner about the litany of hours she spent clinging to the receiver while

speaking to her high school sweetheart. Before rolling your eyes and snapchatting your friend, consider the technological equivalent of this during her time-- passing notes in the hallway lacks the same immediate gratification that millennials are so accustomed to.

That being said, there are ways in which previous generations could've perhaps used a lesson or two on delaying gratification. Think about how old your grandparents were when they got engaged in comparison to how old your parents were. In 1956, the average woman was married at 20 years old. This disparity is increasingly evident with each passing generation and is reflected in how teenagers tend to approach their love lives. At 17, students are no longer trying to lock down a potential spouse or start planning for a family as was common in decades gone by. Nowadays, longer life spans mean more time to settle down, causing the search for commitment to be far less urgent.

This lack of urgency and increased focus by teens on educational goals and career development has led to less dating overall among high school students. In a report by Child Trends, research shows that "between 1991 and 2013, the percentage of twelfth-graders who went on more than one date per week declined from 34 to 16 percent." Although this could also be attributed to a decrease in social for-

malities as a whole in favor of more ambiguous relationships, there is a clear correlation between these trends and a decline among typical domestic households among young Americans.

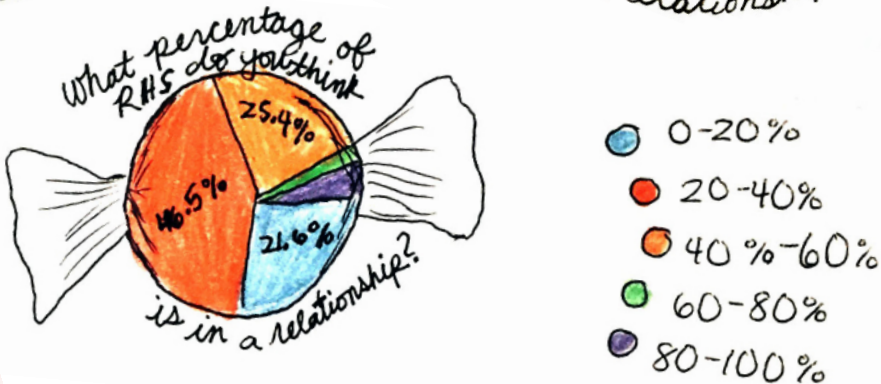
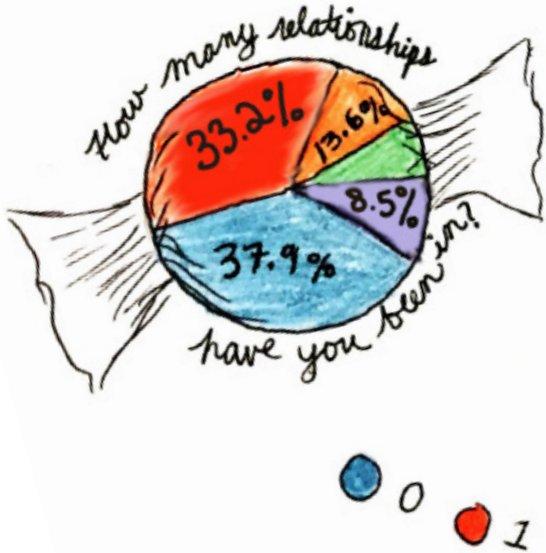
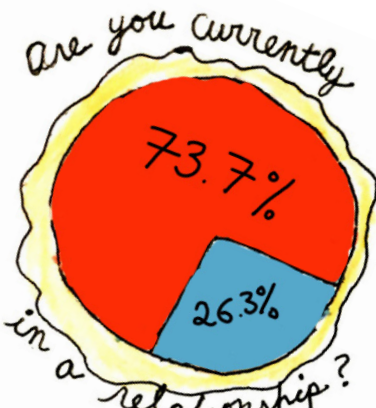
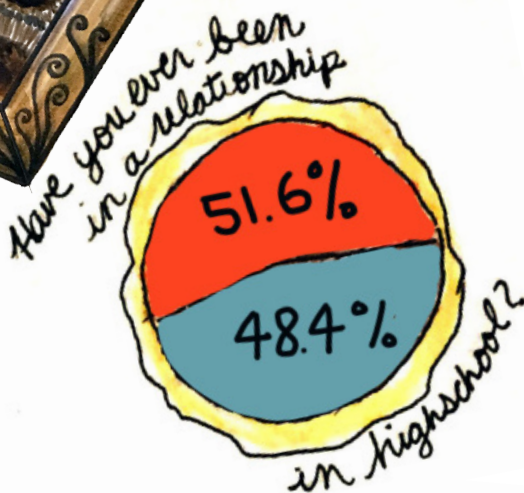
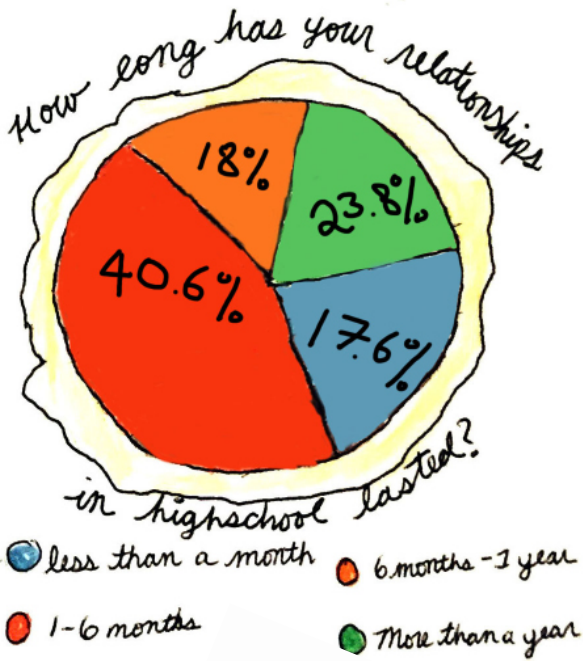
This Valentine's Day, consider the cultural context surrounding the holiday. Rather than thoughtlessly indulging in the endless vortex of chocolates and roses, consider the pressure felt by your high school predecessors in their endeavor to secure their own Valen-

tine. All things considered, lamenting over your single status or stressing over the perfect gift for your significant other is nothing compared to the romantic struggles of times gone by.

The nineties was more than just another decade of moderate change that only served as a lead into the 21st century. The introduction of new American culture along with the passing of unique fads made the decade all the more memorable.



Maraea Garcia



Graphics: Anika Tsapatsaria and Amelia Chen
Info collected from a survey of 404 RHS students.

Valentine's Day Around the World

Amelia Chen
graphics editor

February 14th. For some, it might seem like another day, but for couples, it's a day filled with tokens of affection and romantic gestures. Chocolates, flowers, and champagne are abundant. Whether one sees Valentine's day as a time dedicated to celebrating love or an excuse to buy tons of sweets, one cannot deny its tradition and impact around the world.

Valentine's Day traces back to Ancient Rome, but on that February 14th, no hands were held and certainly no lips were locked. Two men with the name of Valentine were both killed on the same day but different years. The Catholic church commemorated their martyrdom by naming the 14th of February "St. Valentines Day." Over time, the memorial became a celebration as Romans would mingle and drink. It was an evolution. From the death of

two men to the love of two people, Valentine's Day was born. Little did the Ancient Romans know that centuries later, this day would stretch across the world and bring loved ones together in countries all over the world.

In the Philippines, Valentine's Day is celebrated by expressing wedding vows, resulting in mass marriages. In fact, during the Valentine's Day week in 2015, over 700 couples were engaged or married in Rosario, a municipality in the Philippines. Some celebrations for lower class couples are paid for by the government because of the sheer number of marriages. The holiday holds more significance than other countries because the Philippines forbids divorce, so this day marks not only love and festivities but also a life-long commitment.

Although they don't traditionally have elaborate weddings on Valentine's Day, Denmark has its own

unique and intimate way of celebrating. Instead of the classic red roses that Americans use, the Danish hand out white flowers called snowdrops. Attached to the flower would be a gækkebrev, an anonymous letter from one lover to another. The gækkebrev is meticulously cut and includes a riddle or satirical poem. These letters are known to keep the romance and spark alive between a couple.

One of the most popular delights couples buy for each other is chocolate. As a top supplier of chocolate, Ghana's Valentine's Day revolves around the treat. It was only a matter of time before February 14th was coined as National Chocolate Day in such a chocolate-loving country. Every year, tons of tourists travel to Ghana yearning for a taste from the number one chocolate exporter. Ghanaians and celebrate Valentine's Day in a more Americanized way, with gift

exchanges, red attire, and chocolate.

Some may say that being single on the day that celebrates romance is excruciating. But what if February 14th is about being single rather than being part of a couple? Estonia covers that. Valentine's Day in Estonia is really called Sõbrapäev, which translates to Friend's Day. This holiday honors platonic relationships, family connections, and companionship by the exchanging of gifts, ensuring that no one gets left out.

Having all that, it is apparent that Valentine's Day is beyond just delectables, alcohol, and romantic relationships. Different parts of the world hold different traditions and neither one is more special than the other. From exchanging chocolate to getting married, they emphasize friendship and love. They recognize the same idea, that this day is not about the grand gestures and letter writing, but rather, about spending time with the ones dearest to one's heart.



Is Valentine's Day Just Corporate Madness?

Michelle Yuan
staff writer

It's that time of year again when couples rush out to spend entire paychecks on candy, flowers, and life-sized teddy bears and when single people spend the night wallowing in lonely misery. If you're one of those single people, fear not: you're probably saving a ton of money. Americans spent a whopping \$18.2 billion on Valentine's day in 2017, amounting to \$136.57 per capita for just one day! It would be bad enough if the toxic pressure to prove one's love by spending as much money on a romantic partner as possible was all there was at play, but Valentine's day has a secret dark side: it's the quintessential Hallmark holiday - a day that pretty much solely exists for commercial exploitation. Sure, it's the "holiday of love" and a nice opportunity to celebrate your loved ones, but the economics behind Valentine's day is far from romantic. Studies have shown major retailers inflate the prices of common V-day gifts such as chocolate boxes and cards in the weeks before to increase revenue. In 2015 Valentine's Day gift prices increased 1.3% above standard market inflation. This isn't a new practice. The name "Hallmark holiday" itself refers to Hallmark's involvement in popularizing and commercializing the

holiday in the United States for corporate gain. Through clever advertising, mass production and the advent of leisure spending, Hallmark, Hershey, and dozens of other multimillion dollar companies have gained authority on love and how best to quantify it - by spending, spending, spending.

If you think the retail reality of Valentine's day is sad, the psychological toll taken on those in relationships might be worse. The expectation set by society for grandiose gestures of affection on the 14th of February may do more harm to a relationship than good. People, especially men, tend to spend much more than is realistic or affordable on Valentine's gifts, clocking in at about \$80 more on average than their female counterparts. Additionally, the items that fill drugstore aisles this time of the year rarely have any practical use; products like stuffed animals and champagne are no more than fleeting luxuries.



Erin Kim

At least occasions like Christmas and birthdays have the option of buying gifts that have a practical purpose, but then again, a blender or socks are hardly the epitome of romance. Some might claim that these pressures are just products of insecurity and anxiety that have little bearing on the relationship itself, and while their argument may have merit, a troubling 53% of women responded in a survey that

they would end their relationship if they didn't receive a Valentine's gift.

The holiday may be romantic, but it's not worth a breakup. Flowers and chocolate won't ameliorate a broken heart. So if you're feeling suffocated by PDA and sickly sweet romance this Valentine's day, take comfort in the thought that you, at least, are not at the mercy of Hallmark and co. schemes to bleed your bank account dry.

The End of Chocolate?



Grace McLaughlin
staff writer

How would you react if your favorite dessert and snack was not accessible anywhere in the world? Americans consume 2.8 billion pounds of chocolate each year. That’s approximately eleven pounds per person. Unfortunately, chocolate lovers might have to start saving up their rations of chocolate to last them a lifetime. Experts claim that by 2030 to 2050, the world could run out of chocolate.

Cocoa beans, the essential ingredient in chocolate, are grown on cacao trees. In order for these trees to flourish, the surrounding environment must be warm and humid. Currently, the two countries that produce the most cocoa beans are Ivory Coast and Ghana, West Africa. However, due to the growing impact of global climate change, West Africa is expected to suffer rising temperatures and droughts that will decrease the total number of cocoa beans produced. In an ideal world, cocoa farmers would simply have to move their crops to higher grounds, but there is an insufficient amount of space to move to, and many upland regions and areas are protected for wildlife.

Another issue arises in who the cocoa farmers actually are; according to expert Doug Hawkins of Hardman Agribusiness (a capital markets advisory service firm), cocoa farmers are often from poor families who cannot afford pesticides and fertilizers for their crops. Hawkins claims a chocolate deficit of 100,000 tons per year is in the foreseeable future. Since 2012, the price of cocoa beans

has increased by almost 67% because there has been less of the beans themselves, and major chocolate-producing companies, like Barry Callebaut in Switzerland have had to raise prices, much to the dismay of consumers.

To help aid the chocolate shortage problem, scientists are working on genetically-modified hybrid cacao trees that can ideally survive in a warmer and dryer climate while still producing high-quality cocoa for the rest of us to eat. It comes as somewhat of a relief to know that even the scientists of today’s world fear a shortage of cocoa as much as the average consumer does, and that people of the highest intelligence are working to solve the problem. However, it is moderately saddening to think that instead of worrying about the rapidly changing climate and how to address and attempt to aid it, the majority of the people involved in trying to help cocoa stay on the market are most likely looking to gain profit from it; for example, one of the so-called experts on the situation is the managing director of a capital markets advisory business, who could turn a profit from fixing this issue, not a climate-change specialist, whom one may assume would be leading this issue.

To put all this into perspective, Hershey’s Chocolate is the largest chocolate producer in America. At any given time, they have 90 million pounds of cocoa beans in their storage silos. It takes about 12 cocoa beans to make one chocolate bar. The average cacao tree makes 30 cocoa beans a year.

So, with genetic modification, you may not have to hoard enough chocolate to last you into the next five decades- but at what cost to the global environment?

Anticipation for Asian Fest

Kathleen Kye
arts and culture editor

Celebrating Ridgewood High School’s annual Asian Festival, students are hard at work, perfecting their performances for the upcoming festival in March. Gathering every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, the students share the campus center, the dance studio, and the Freshman Focus room to allot time and space for each group to practice their performance.

Recently, due to construction to fix the hot water pipe leak, the dance studio and the C-section of the campus center were unavailable for the performers. Despite the complications, the country leaders and the performance leaders have been respectful in communicating with each other and generous when sharing the practice areas. On account of everybody’s cooperation, the set back was not consequential, permitting practices to resume to their normal times and locations.

Asian Festival honors traditions from China, India, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. There are multiple students who tackle more than one performance, which can result in schedule conflicts. However, each performer is dedicated and responsible for making up any missed information. The leaders are always available to guide the performers not only in their act, but also for any advice regarding the performer’s agenda.

Every country participating in this festival has various performances planned out for the audience. Over the years, one of the most popular performances has been the Korean fan dance, also known as Buchaechum. The glistening fabric as performers twirl

on stage is impossible to miss and always a spectacle that leaves the crowd stunned. While wearing the traditional hanbok, the dancers use large fans with peony flowers painted on them. Developed during the Joseon Dynasty as a court performance, the dance use the fans to represent blossoming flowers, the smooth movements of butterflies, birds, and natural waves. With its combination of stunning movement and color, the Korean fan dance immediately captivates the audience.

Another favorite event of the audience is Tinikling, the national dance of the Philippines. The dance imitates the graceful movements of the tinikling birds as they avoid the bamboo traps set by rice farmers. In this performance, the role of a dancer and clapper is assigned to a performer. Throughout the dance, two people keep beat by clapping the bamboo poles, while the dancers’ nimble feet jump in and out to the rhythm using various steps. When asked which role is the most important throughout the dance, the performance leader responded that Tinikling is “a teamwork of both clappers and dancers.” Without one, the other would not be able to function.

As the performance day comes nearer, practices will become even more intense. On the week of March 5th, practice will be held everyday until the show on March 9th and 10th. Among the performers, this week is known as “Hell Week” due to the fierce practices. During this time, the performers are on stage going through the routines to make sure the timing is perfectly in sync with the music and the performers know their positions.

In addition to the regular performances, “Hell Week” is when the rehearsal for the cultural fashion show



takes place. In this event, a number of participants portrays the traditional outfits of each country. For instance, there is the traditional *qipao* from China, the *sari* from India, the *kimono* from Japan, the *hanbok* from Korea, and the *barong tagalog* from the Philippines. During this time, the position of the models are organized and the timing for each model is secured. As always, the shimmering fabric and brilliant colors mark the end of the performance and the closing of the festival until next year.

The annual Asian Festival is certainly a proud tradition of Ridgewood

High School. Not only does it allow students to show off their remarkable talents, it educates and entertains those students and otherwise that are not as knowledgeable on such topics. The performances are all unique to their cultures, and by showing these traditions to the rest of the student body, the participants can display their mastery of whatever skill they’re performing, from the Korean fan dance to Tinikling. Asian Festival is always a highlight event of the Ridgewood High School year, and everyone is waiting eagerly to watch these splendid performances.

Is the Women’s March Still Relevant?

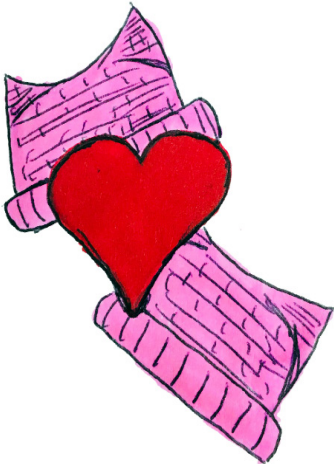
Evie Cullen
arts and culture editor

On January 20th, exactly a year since Donald Trump assumed the office of president, anti-Trump demonstrators took to the streets to protest the policies and attitudes shown by the Trump White House over the course of the past year. With signs and chants, they proudly marched across the United States of America. These protesters most likely left the demonstration,

satisfied that they were not alone in their discontent with the current state of the issue of women’s rights in the United States. However, was this satisfaction short-lived? Is it warranted? The Women’s March of 2017 was the largest demonstration in American history. 700,000 people marched in Washington, D.C. alone. It was impossible to go through the day without seeing a picture of a classmate or friend with his or her sign on Instagram or seeing an article about the magnitude of such an event posted on a website. Even

so, Trump has maintained his position as the President of the United States. Despite ensuring that every girl would feel both empowered and free to achieve their dreams under his administration, Trump has gone out of his way to make life even more difficult for American women. Ever since he assumed office, he has made it harder for women to get birth control, has halted efforts to fix the pay gap, and has disbanded the White House Council on Women and Girls. In the end, Donald Trump has not made America great again for half of the country. This year, the Women’s March established a theme: Power to the Polls. As 2018 is a noteworthy election year, the organizers found it imperative that they focus not only on the injustices that all women, especially women of color and women of the LGBT community, face, but also on the hope of the present situation. The current administration has shown no mercy while eliminating opportunities for women across the country. The people hold the power in a democracy like ours and with their vote, they themselves have the ability to make America safe for women. With that in mind, it is easy to see the intended effects of this year’s Women’s March. Last year’s protest was formed to comfort women in a time of uncertainty, this year’s march is an effort to empower women in a time of fear. This demonstration is to encourage citizens to rise up against those who have remained indifferent to their struggles. To not remain si-

lent, to reclaim their time, and to stand up for all that do not have a voice. We will see later this year if these rallying cries have been heard and received by the country. That being said, it is hard to ignore the emotional and cultural impact such a movement has had on modern United States of America. As a female student in this country, I am filled with pride and courage to see my friends, teachers, and total strangers standing up for me. That is where I believe the power in this movement is: how every girl can identify with the struggles and obstacles presented to every female in the United States. In my eyes, women are winning. So, in a word: yes, the Women’s March is still relevant. I look forward to see women and men proclaiming the power and courage of every single girl not only in the United States, but also around the world next January.



Kathleen Kye

#MeToo Around the World

Lara Baskin
staff writer

Ever since #MeToo went viral in the wake of sexual harassment allegations against Harvey Weinstein, more than 2.3 million women have tweeted the hashtag from eighty-five different countries. The movement is sweeping the world by storm, taking numerous different forms and breaking racial, economic, and gender boundaries like never before. In Italy, hundreds of women are rallying behind a version of #MeToo called #QuellaVoltaChe, which translates to “That Time When.” Meanwhile, French women are outing their harassers under #BalanceTonPorc, which translates to “Snitch Out Your Pig.” In Spain, “#YoTambién” is trending, and a direct translation of #MeToo into Arabic is popular in the Middle East and Africa. About thirty-five percent of women worldwide—roughly 1.3 billion women—have suffered physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives. Even more, one out of every six American women will fall victim to either attempted or completed rape in her lifetime. After remaining silent for years, many of these victims are taking the opportunity to finally speak out and share their stories. With a common goal of putting an end to the violence, they are exposing their oppressors via social media and encouraging others to do the same. Women’s rights activists cannot stress the importance of the movement enough. As Indian tech writer and novelist, Pankaj Mishra, posted on Twitter, “India’s #Weinstein moment happened last year. Just that we choose to bury our heads in sand. Heard of a man named Mahesh Murthy? #metoo.”

Mahesh Murthy is a successful Indian marketer and investor, yet earlier this year a sexual harassment case was registered against him due to complaints from various women. In the Czech Republic, women’s rights activist Andreea Molocea noted, “What’s happening now is fantastic, and it’s for the first time in our history as women that we can speak the same language of sorrow and despair and of subordination.” In Sweden, the king himself highlighted the campaign’s

positive effect, stating, “It’s probably good that you look under old rocks. In the end something good will probably come of this.” In India, Bani Rachel Bali noted, “I haven’t seen a campaign that started in one corner of the world and replicated all across, so to see something like this... I felt the presence of a sisterhood.” This is just to name a number of the countless people who praise the movement, specifically for the act’s ability to unify women worldwide. The #MeToo act confirms just how

many untold stories there are, and it presents the importance of continuing to foster an environment in which sexual violence victims can speak out without fearing criticism or judgment by others in society. The movement reveals the enormity of sexual assault, which is an issue that has remained under the radar for far too long. At last, a previously taboo topic is brought out from the dark, allowing men and women to address and argue the harsh realities of our society today.

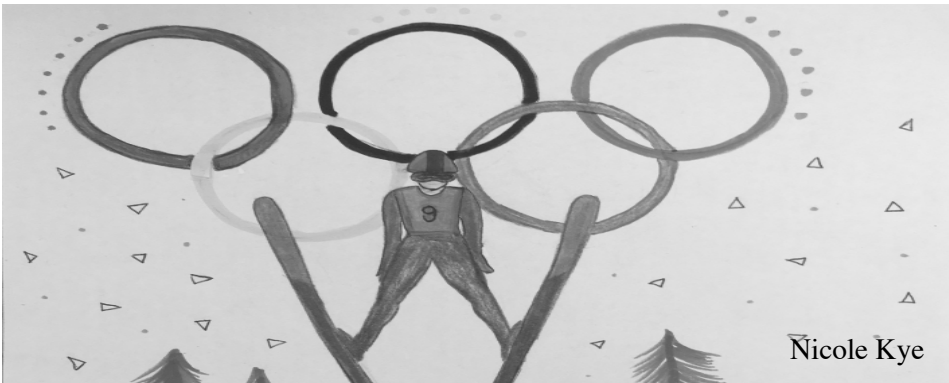


The 23rd Winter Olympics in Korea

Lexi Liu
staff writer

The 2018 Winter Olympics has the potential for a lasting legacy of unprecedented achievements and athletic performances. The 23rd Winter Olympics is also the second Olympic games held in South Korea, in the city of Pyeongchang. It is scheduled to last 14 days, starting with the opening ceremony on February 9th and ending with the closing ceremony on February 25th. The Games will be held at thirteen different venues and includes seven sports; biathlon, bobsledding, curling, ice hockey, luge, skating and skiing. There will be fifteen varied disciplines across these sports, with four new events added by the international Olympic committee since the last Olympic games: big air snowboarding for men and women, freestyle skiing, mass start speed skating for men and women, and mixed doubles curling. Each athlete will be competing for one of 102 medals, which feature three dimensional designs and an ornate texture.

The time difference between the US and South Korea is fourteen hours, but for the first time, the United States will have complete access to 2,400 hours of live coverage. Broadcast on television, online, On Demand, and on the NBC app, viewers will no longer be subject to spoilers and will not be forced to watch delayed



recordings. Instead, they will enjoy a more natural and collective experience. NBC has also announced plans to livestream over 50 hours of 360 degree video footage of all the events, in addition to the opening and closing ceremony, throughout the United States. This advanced technology will provide Olympic fans with the ability to witness many aspects previously unavailable, and it will deliver a more engaging feel to those at home.

The games have also been somewhat mired in controversy. First, the committee has managed to overcome financial discrepancies such as construction delays, logistical conflicts, and a lack of support from sponsors. However, in the months leading up to the games, they have been drastically short of the \$2.4 billion budget needed to operate the games. They are also short of the anticipated amount of tickets purchased, but the sales are expected to increase in the weeks leading up to the games. Another contro-

versy stems from the Russian athletes who will be competing under the title, Olympic Athlete from Russia. Due to the fact that some Russian athletes used performance enhancing drugs in the 2014 Winter Olympics, individuals will be allowed to compete but will not be recognized at the 2018 Winter Games as athletes from Russia. Because Russia has won the most medals in the last winter Olympics, a large impact on the competition has been predicted. Germany is expected to benefit the most, while Korea is projected to record its best performance. Most recently, there has been unprecedented cohesion between North and South Korea, as the two opposing countries will be marching in the Olympics under the same flag depicting a unified Korean peninsula and a joint Olympic team. While the attempt to relieve military tensions has been recognized, concerns have been raised that this effort is just for show. Although North Korea's motivation to partici-

pate is unclear, the unity between the countries is welcomed by the world.

Many Olympic athletes are claiming they are "losing their winters" due to the inconsistent and erratic weather patterns making it difficult for them to train safely year-round. Temperatures have posed such a threat that the number of potential host destinations for future Winter Olympics has been diminishing. Pyeongchang is reportedly much drier in relation to the snowfall standard; a portion of the snow will be man-made, although this is not expected to be problematic since the low temperatures should facilitate the task of creating and maintaining the snow. In spite of that, Pyeongchang is a strategic location; its elevation makes it a popular destination for winter activities. Even more so, it is recognized as one of the coldest places on earth despite recent changes in the climate. In fact, the Pyeongchang organizers have raised concerns that it may be too cold; the predicted temperature of 6°F on the first night may discourage a large number of people from attending the opening ceremony.

As the host city of the 2018 Winter Olympics, Pyeongchang is prepared to confront any issues while showcasing their culture and society to the world. Their awareness of the challenges of hosting in the future has resulted in Pyeongchang's determination to create a lasting legacy to remind all of the true essence and excitement of the Winter Olympics while it is still possible.

Injuries from a Sideline Perspective

Eddie O'Keefe
sports editor

It all happens in an instant. A couple of seconds precipitating a bad hit, fall, or step can define months of healing that result from a serious injury. All of a sudden the dynamic of your life completely changes. Weeks are no longer defined by practices, games, and races, but by appointments, physical therapy, and potentially a surgery. Injured athletes are often left picking up the pieces of shattered visions of what their season could have been.

I myself have suffered all of the woes of being injured and would like to think that I have learned from my experiences. During my freshman year, I broke my leg and was sidelined from the ski team for the entire season. I needed two surgeries, a month in a wheelchair, and many months in PT and crutches. All the while, the ski team had an amazing season, with the girls team winning first in the state. I was amazed and proud of how the team performed, but was saddened by the fact that I could not share fully in their achievements.

By the time ski season rolled around again this year, I was excited to be able to participate on the team, fueled by my desire to make up for lost time. During the first practice of the year I fell, broke my thumb, and tore a ligament. I needed surgery would put me out of all sports for at least 8 weeks, missing the entire ski season once again. I was shocked.

Having been sidelined twice by injuries, I identify with all athletes who have been in similar situations. An injury is the one of the toughest things for anyone to go through, but the pain is

especially acute when it renders you unable to do something you enjoy.

Physically, the recovery process gets harder before it gets easier. Pain gets progressively worse after the injury or a surgery for a couple days, then things start to quickly improve. As the injury begins to heal, you gain more mobility and might remove a cast or stop using crutches. These moments can feel like getting set back to square one because pain can return, and you have to learn how to deal with your new situation all over again. In actuality, the pain and the difficulties that come with something like discontinuing the use of crutches are just bumps along the road.

The biggest challenge that comes with an injury is the mental impact it takes on athletes. I think about the thought process that comes with an injury as a three step process similar to the "5 Stages of Grief." Right after an injury, people often replay the moments leading up to the accident in their heads and ask themselves "What if I didn't go for that ball?" or "What if I just took it easy?" Although it's difficult to not blame yourself or someone else for causing the injury, such thinking is not conducive to healing. The best thing for someone who is injured to do is to focus on things one day at a time and look at the bright side of the situation. If you only look at the long road ahead, and you don't find any light in the situation, you'll drive yourself mad.

The second part of the thought process comes with watching the team from the sideline. It can be difficult to stay committed to the team when you can't participate. Watching other people continue their season can be bittersweet



because, as much as someone wants their team to succeed, injured athletes sometimes can feel like they are being left behind. The only way to deter this nagging sense of resentment is to participate to the best of your ability. Cheering on your teammates and helping out allows for you to share in the team's success more. This participation allows injured athletes to take part in the win, so that sense of sadness is not present.

Finally, trying to push yourself too hard, too early, can have adverse of effects on your physical health. This confuses many athletes. Teammates, coaches, and parents of players who are hurt sometimes try to supersede the authority and advice of the doctor, claiming that the doctor is being too cautious. With good intentions, these people may push athletes, or the athlete may push him/herself, to participate before they are completely healed. The most devastating impact of this would be to get injured again, but more seriously. For example, an

injury like a concussion that can not be seen from the outside and has often been delegitimized would be a likely situation in which an athlete might be pressured to participate. The result of this is if an athlete who is still concussed gets another concussion, they can develop Second Impact Syndrome. S.I.S. can have an impact on the brain that is many times more devastating than a single concussion. This truth of an exponentially negative effect coming from repeated injuries is true across the board. You need to listen to your doctor and not others if you want to heal properly. The doctor knows the injury and what the long term implications are if the injury is not healed. Also, you have to fight your own desire to get back onto the field, knowing that if you do, the injury could be many times worse. This mental head game is a hard one to win, but it is far better to endure the comments about your "unnecessary" lack of participation than it is to have permanent damage to your body.

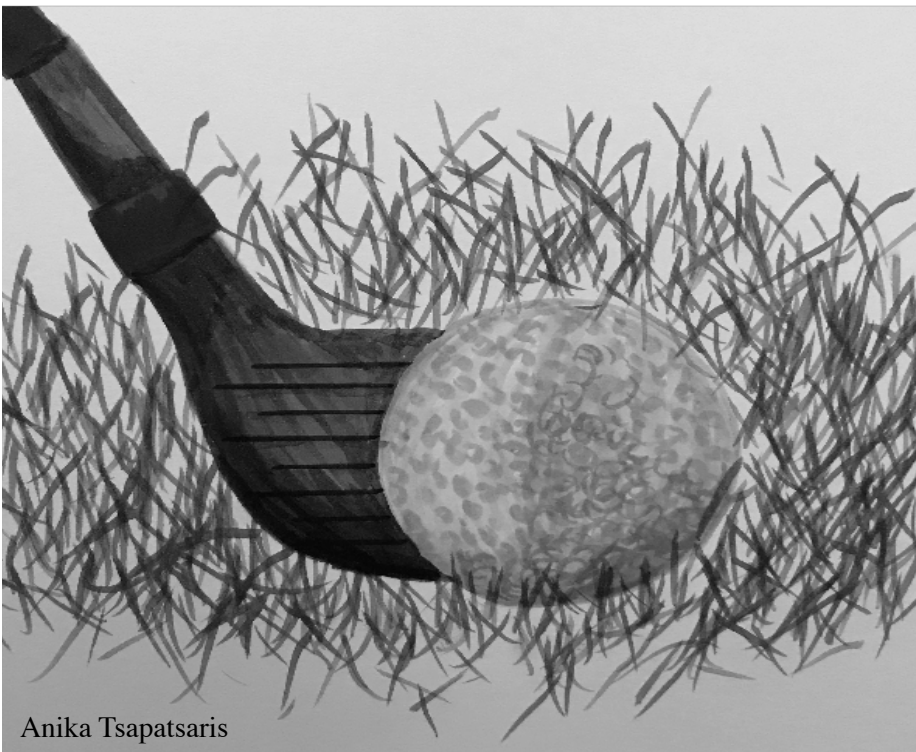
Ridgewood Boys Golf Prepares for the Season

Davis Weil
staff writer

When the snow clears off the ground in March, although it took the snow until about April 20th to finally disappear in North Jersey last season, it is officially time for spring sports to take off. Lacrosse and baseball are certainly the more prominent spring sports at Ridgewood High School as it pertains to spectators, with track and field being the most popular sport in terms of number of athletes participating. With all of the other distractions, the RHS Boys Golf Team appears to fly under the radar.

Last season was certainly a success for RBG. Winning the North 1 Group 4 sectional tournament at Fox Hollow Country Club last year and going to the New Jersey State Tournament of Champions for the first time in eleven years was a big step for the program. However, three staples from the team last year have all graduated, forcing the team to lean on a newer group of players such as seniors Calvin Wang, Evan Pillow, Davis Weil, Finn Treppedi, and Sophomore Jordan Rarich. Other underclassmen will look to step up and gain valuable experience playing in matches.

This season looks bright for the team, and one would argue that it



Anika Tsapatsaris

has to do in part with a certain level of confidence in some of the players, especially the seniors. It also has to do with the upbeat and joking demeanor of each of the players. When asked about the team’s prospects this year, senior Evan Pillow said, “we just won’t not win.” Senior Finn Treppedi added, “we are basically the 1992 Olympic basketball team: Power,” with Calvin Wang noting, “we are never not not the best players on the course.”

Jokes aside, the team is serious about performing this season, and it is showing up in off-season preparation. The team is holding weekly practice sessions at an indoor facility on Route 17 that has golf simulators. In March, the team will embark on their annual golfing trip to Ocean City, Maryland, with the Ridgewood Girls Golf team to further their preparations for what will surely be an exciting season to come.

The NFL Playoffs in Review

Matt Gluckow
staff writer

At the start of the NFL playoffs, eight teams look to advance to the Superbowl. The first round, or the Wildcard, features four games, two from each conference. These conferences are called the AFC and NFC. In these conferences there are four divisions, one from the North, West, South, and East. The Wildcard games are played between a division winner and the next two best teams that did not win their division. The two best teams that win their division from each conference do not have to participate in the Wildcard round. This is referred to as a first-round-bye, which is highly sought after during the regular season.

This year, the Wildcard teams from the AFC were the Bills and Titans. The two teams that won their divisions in the AFC but did not get a bye were the Jaguars and Chiefs. The Buffalo Bills played against the Jacksonville Jaguars, and the Jaguars won in a close 10-3 game. The Tennessee Titans faced off against the Kansas City Chiefs. The Titans won in a comeback fashion, 22-21. The two Wildcard teams from the NFC were the Panthers and Falcons. They faced off against the Rams and the Saints, respectively. The Carolina Panthers played the New Orleans Saints, and the Saints won 31-26. The Atlanta Falcons played the Los Angeles Rams, and the Falcons upset the Rams 26-13. In the AFC, the Patriots and Steelers had byes, while in the NFC the Eagles and Vikings had byes.

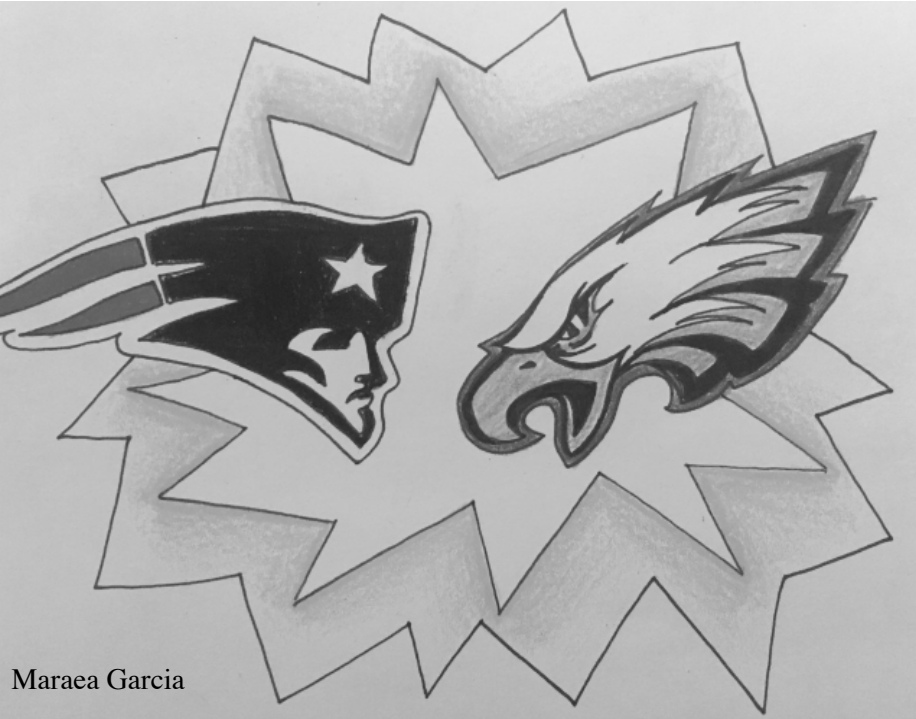
In the second round, or the

divisional round, the AFC featured the Jacksonville Jaguars against the Pittsburgh Steelers, and the New England Patriots against the Tennessee Titans. The Jaguars upset the Steelers in an exciting and high scoring game that ended 45-42. The Patriots expectably took care of business and beat the Titans 35-14. In the NFC, the New Orleans Saints played the Minnesota Vikings, and the Philadelphia Eagles played the Atlanta Falcons. The Eagles beat the Falcons 15-10. The Saints vs. Vikings was a spectacular game. The Vikings got off to an early lead, but the Saints came back. The Saints made a field goal to put them up by one point with about 30 seconds left. On the final play of the game, the Vikings threw to Stefon Diggs, who caught it and ran for a walk off 61 yard touchdown.

PJ Mckenna, a sophomore at Ridgewood High School, explains the play, “It was insane, I was like ‘no way’ when that play happened.”

Next, the Vikings will play the Eagles in the NFC championship, and the Patriots play the Jaguars in the AFC championship. The winner of these games will go on to play in the Super Bowl. The Super Bowl will take place in Minnesota on February fourth.

After an intense game that came down to the final minute, the Patriots defeated the Jaguars 24-20. Soon after, the Vikings scored 7 to the Eagles’ 38. The Super Bowl will now be between the Patriots and the Eagles. Millions of Americans and others across the globe are predicted to tune into this event, which will hopefully be as action-packed as the games that preceded it.



Maraea Garcia

Students React to New Schedule Ideas

Claire Sullivan
staff writer

Due to the large increase of incoming students in the 2018-2019 school year, the Ridgewood Board of Education has proposed making a new schedule for next year that will accommodate the increased population. Though nothing is known yet, some people speculate that the new schedule could change the length of classes and potentially disrupt the lunch period.

These speculations have generated a variety of thoughts and opinions among all students, specifically athletes and those that worry that a new schedule could impact student wellness.

Soccer player Mia Douaihy brings up an interesting point in saying “Longer classes could be overwhelming; it might not be the best approach to the situation for the sake of the students.”

“More class time could lead to more homework or information to study,” freshman student Ishika Arora states. “I’m always super occupied during the school year, so this could cause problems for me.”

Volleyball player and member of the crew team, Lauren Sudol adds, “It will be hard to focus and might cause students to be less productive during the school day. In some classes now it is hard to focus for a full 60 minutes, so paying attention for longer than that can be even harder.”

“Overall the schedule sounds like it has the potential to cause much stress,” softball player Kaylin Marshall explains. “The stress that results could end up affecting me greatly, especially in my sleep and energy level.”

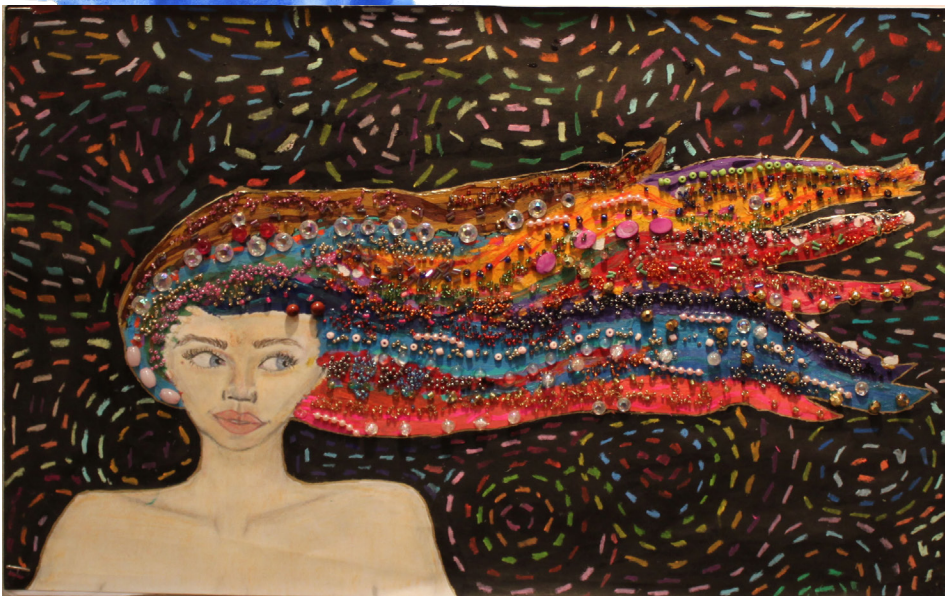
On the contrary, many students see the benefits of this new schedule.

“Extra time during frees will be super helpful,” dancer Lindsay Middleton states. “Even though it is just an extra few minutes than normal frees, it will help a lot when it comes to getting homework done during the school day. This longer break will give students time to relax before going back to class.”

“I like the idea that some classes might be shorter,” hockey player Tyler Kopff mentions. “It makes up for the fact that other classes could be longer; it is really no different from the current schedule when you think about it.”

Although the schedule originally sounded detrimental to many students, it is very similar to the current schedule. Dr. Gorman commented on the potential schedule change and its effect on student wellness saying that, “The new schedule will not impact student wellness in a negative way, and the school day will remain largely the same.” The time before and after lunch will be three hours regardless of what the new schedule changes. An increased length of free periods could benefit all students greatly, not just busy athletes. Difficulty focusing could be a problem for some, but overall, the schedule will not harm stress and sleep.

February's Fine Art



Uma Van Schindel
Space Junk

Colored pencils, assorted beads, acrylic paint, and oil pastels

"I was inspired by the connections people had with their everyday lives and nature. Nature has been popular nowadays, so by using natural photographs and combining them with a pop culture woman, the two are fused together. Also, the inspiration came when I personally had to stop and think for a moment in all the chaos of a student's life. It's good to stop and ponder and enjoy nature."

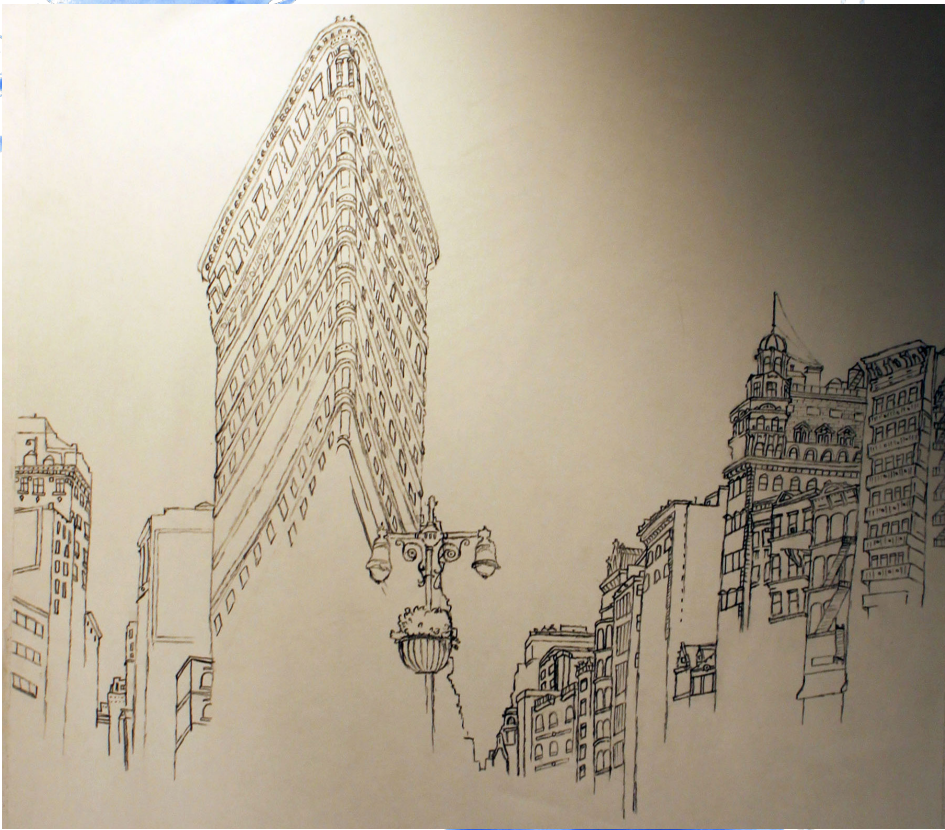
- Nicole Kye



Nicole Kye
Gazing Face
Magazines

"The drawing I did of the Flat iron was from the School of Visual Arts summer Design program of 2016. It was in a drawing studio class, the professor told us to grab pencils, paper and a board, and we followed him outside the building down to Madison Square Park. He gave us minimal instruction and told us to pick a string of building and to draw. There are imperfections in my drawing, but I decided not to go back and correct them as this would diminish the impromptu nature of the assignment. But yea I just sat down and drew what I saw over the span of 4 hours in the middle of MSP I'm the middle of July."

- Alex Santangelo



Alex Santangelo
Untitled
Pencil

"I think that high school is an environment where we learn and encounter new things, but at the same time we have to learn to grow up on our own too. The theme of it is based around the idea that we as students highlight each other's differences point fingers rather than celebrate them. The fingers that I cut and glued are representative of that. The watercolor at the bottom and the contrasting red and blue colors show turmoil which inevitably comes from feeling like your individuality needs to be suppressed to conform to a norm rather than being proud of the parts that make you, you. The title of the piece was "Watch Your Mouth" because it's important to understand that while we're the same in some aspects, that doesn't mean we should actively strive to be so by suppressing our differences. And that it shouldn't be other people's job to tell you how to be you."

- Audrey Kang



Audrey Kang
Watch Your Mouth
Collage Watercolor