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The Beautification of RHS

How'd ya like dem shrubs?



Evie Cullen

Ridgewood Teen Scene

Daniel Greenman
editor at large

Ridgewood not only has one of the top high schools in the state, but also boasts a thriving central business district as well. Mayor Ramon Hache affirms, “Our CBD is the crown jewel of Bergen County. There is no equal.” Students use the downtown for food, shopping, employment and more. But do students get the most out of their downtown? The High Times conducted a survey to find out. About 75% of RHS students who took the survey said that they visit the downtown one to three times a week, and about 66% answered that they spend \$20 or less per week there.

Are those numbers good enough for Ridgewood business owners? Tony Damiano, president of the Ridgewood Guild, a local organization made of retail-



Daniel Greenman

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Swathi Kella
editor in chief

You overslept the alarm (again) and you're late for class. As you run towards the main entrance, marked by the recently-installed RHS emblem, you notice that where the doors should be there is only a massive cave entrance. You enter hesitantly, and the first thing you notice is the potted plants- they're everywhere, and they've grown since you've seen them last. In fact, the little bushes have completely overgrown their frail pots, breaking them and expanding into the hallway. A jungly environment surrounds you, as walls have given way to creeper-laden tree trunks and the ceiling to a leafy overgrowth. A hummingbird whizzes by you, and you swear you can even hear the holler of a gorilla somewhere. Bewildered, you take a step backwards, but the cave entrance has already been covered over by a verdant moss that hastily set in at 7:45. It's back to nature, alright.

You stumble upon your words as you ask, “What is going on?” Standing right beside you is Dr. Gorman, who cheerfully replies, “Why, it's beautification!”

While our school's efforts to beautify the school haven't gone quite that far yet, they do seem to have been advancing at a rapidly fast pace over the last few years. Many students have pointed out the new potted plants, the medieval signs indicating “ye olde Main Office,” and the college-like RHS flags decorating the lampposts around campus. To truly grasp the es-

sence of these new additions to the school terrain, the RHS High Times sat down with the architect of this undertaking himself, Dr. Gorman.

The purpose of beautification, according to Dr. Gorman, is “first impressions.” He elaborates, “When people look at a building, they want to get a good feel of the atmosphere and the culture. A lot of people come to me and say, ‘This building's a hundred years old, and it's starting to look like it's not in the best shape.’ When people look at a building and it doesn't look good, people then make, a lot of times incorrectly, assumptions about the place.” Gorman argues that this is a concept that us students, especially seniors, are already familiar with- “When you go on college campuses, it's all about that. Are the lawns neatly groomed, are the flags up, do they have a new pool? Then you look at the curriculum, the teachers, and so on.” Beautification, Gorman contends, would enhance this first impression and make the school a more lively place for students, teachers, and visitors.

RHS students seem to agree that the beautification efforts have, as a whole, succeeded in this goal of improving impressions. According to a survey conducted by the RHS High Times, 45.3% of respondents believe that the beautification has positively impacted how they see the school, and 14.1% say it has very positively impacted this view. As for individual projects, students have been a bit more skeptical. When asked to name their least favorite aspect of beautification,

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Project Grad '19

Grace McLaughlin
news editor

One of the many traditions that makes Ridgewood High School stand out from other schools is our Project Graduation. Since its beginnings in 1961 as a way to keep graduating seniors safe in the hours following the graduation ceremony, Project Graduation has evolved into a hallmark event of the RHS experience. Directly after graduation, seniors go to a dinner dance, and then arrive at Benjamin Franklin Middle School. BF will have been decorated in a particular theme that the parents of the seniors voted on earlier in the year. The theme is kept secret from the seniors. The newly graduated students are completely surprised upon arrival at BF, and stay there all night, until approximately six in the morning, enjoying a last exciting celebration as a Ridgewood High School class.

Project Graduation is kept a secret from students for many reasons, one of them being so students don't opt out of the celebration because they dislike the theme. “My theme was Wizard of Oz, and even if it was something I wasn't crazy about, I still would've had a really fun time,” reaffirms RHS 2013 graduate Meghan Callaghan. It is a challenge to keep the secret all year, but parents want the graduates to be excited to get to the party and find out the theme. Each year the theme seems to tie in with some kind of fantasy type experience of the graduating class. The theme is incorporated into practically every aspect of the party at BF, including decor, activities, and food. Themes are retired for 12-15 years before they can be reused. Some examples of noteworthy themes in past years are Harry Potter in 2006, Ice Hotel in 2011, Night at the Museum in 2014, Willy Wonka in 2017 and Toy Story in 2018.

Parents work tirelessly all year to make the night fun for their seniors. There are many different committees, each dedicated to a different aspect of helping Project Graduation run smoothly, and none of it would be possible without fundraising and dues. Fundraising efforts this year include parent socials, apparel sales, holiday boutiques, raffles, and the Senior Fash-



Nicole Kye

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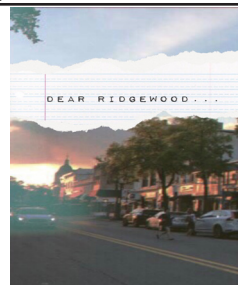
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Graduation “Traditions of Excellence”

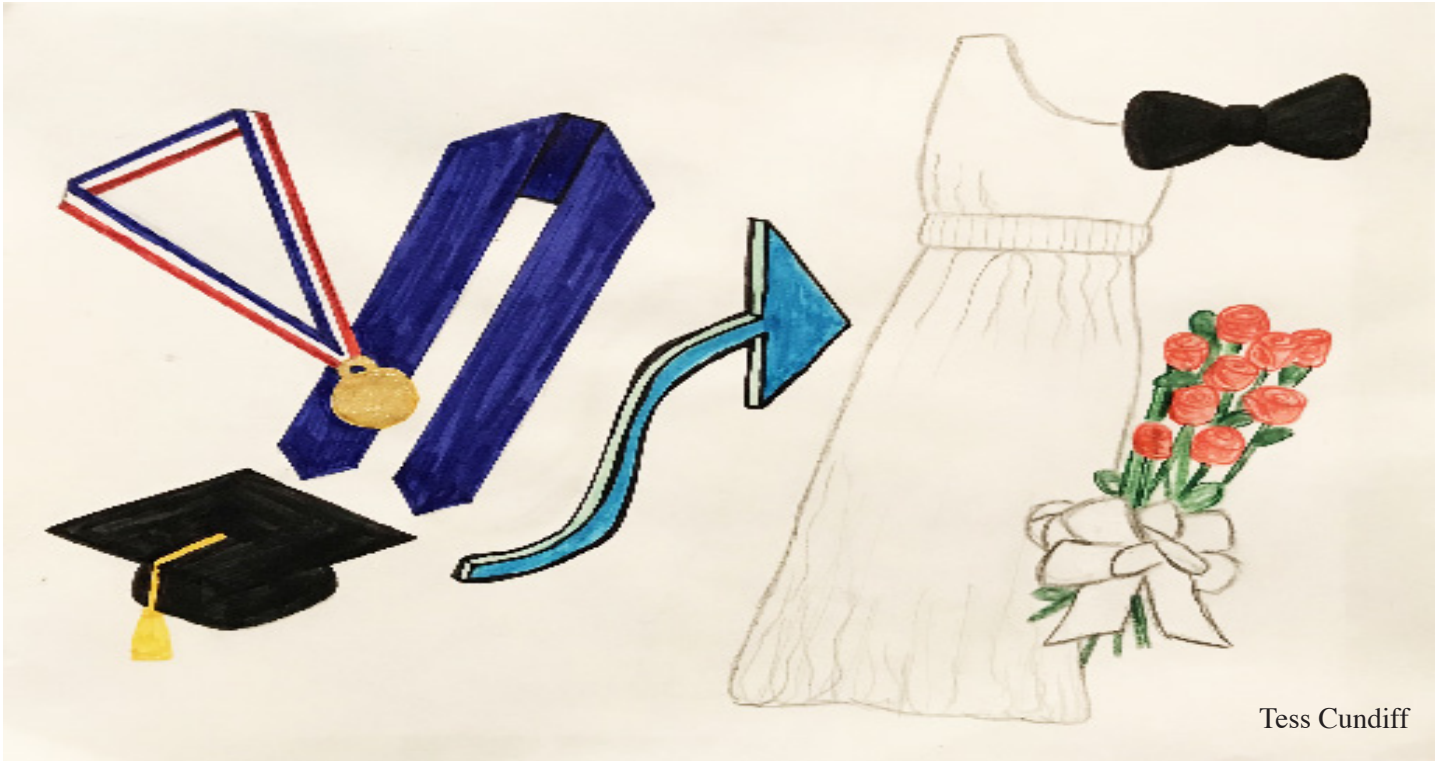
Daniel Son
staff writer

When looking at RHS, it is clear to see the quirks that make it unique. Following its tradition of excellence, RHS fights against societal norms in order to provide an even more memorable experience to its students. Take the prom for example. How many schools can say that their prom is on a boat? Although the location for prom may sound daunting to some, traditional celebrations may seem too ordinary. Nearly every other school party is held in a building, so why not

make prom special? Having a unique prom celebration is important in giving Ridgewood High School students a memorable high school experience. Furthermore, today’s graduation traditions consist of students lining up in alphabetical order, dressed in a cap and gown. Students anxiously wait for the moment to throw their caps into the air, signifying their graduation from school. However, Ridgewood High School protects its traditions that started back in the 1800s. According to Mr. Pizzuto, high school graduation traditions normally consisted of tuxedos and dresses. The only thing that Ridgewood High School does

is that it keeps the tradition going. At Ridgewood High School, students gather at the cafeteria during the last period of the last day, watching the clock until it hits 2:50 PM and counting down the last few seconds of their high school careers. The excitement that builds up during this time is similar to that of the throwing of caps in “traditional” modern graduations. The graduation ceremony at Ridgewood High School also differs from that of the average high school in that students line up in pairs according to height. Students dressed in white tuxedos and dresses walk down the high school field as they are called one by one.

Furthermore, after the graduation dinner, students file in a bus and take a trip to Benjamin Franklin Middle School — a familiar location for many Ridgewood students. A committee of Ridgewood parents gather in an effort to set up a unique graduation party for the seniors that is called “Project Graduation”. Although the theme of the event changes every year, there are always the nostalgic memories through hanging on the walls baby pictures and quotes. In this final gathering of Ridgewood seniors, students realize how far they have come together over the course of many years. So what is the motivation to be so unique? By having a graduation tradition unlike any other high school, RHS gives its students a unique story. The traditions at RHS spark a new flare in something that is so strict in today’s society. It allows for people that attend Ridgewood High School to have something special to talk about. Having unique graduation traditions also gives Ridgewood High School students a more memorable graduation overall. According to Mr. Pizzuto, many Ridgewood alumni return and talk positively about cherished their unique graduation experience.



Ridgewood Teen Scene

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ers, restaurateurs, professionals, non-profits and residents, says that the downtown should do more to cater to the teen demographic. “Teens must be given a reason to use the downtown,” states Damiano. He says that recently, he has observed teens disproportionately frequenting coffee shops. The survey results back this up, with Starbucks mentioned in about 20% of the responses on the question “What’s your favorite place downtown?”. About as many mentioned as Village Tea Shop, the other most popular answer. What can Ridgewood’s downtown do to bring in more teen patrons? Damiano says that following trends are an important part of business, and a rising business trend is experiential businesses, such as escape rooms. Experiential answers “Arcade/game room” and “Karaoke” share two of the three most popular answers with “Record store” on the question “What new businesses would you like to see in downtown?”, with the two experience-based answers making up about half of the total response pool. Mayor Hache says that with recent zoning changes in Ridgewood, “we now have experiential retail considering Ridgewood as a possible place to do business.”How would teens use such a business? David Balsamini runs and curates Morristown Game Vault, a collection of over 100 consoles from Burger Time to Metallica pinball, inside a former

bank. All the machines at Morristown Game Vault are unlocked, meaning that once you lose or win, you don’t need to pay to play again. Customers pay \$7 for 30 minutes, \$10 for an hour and \$25 for 5 hours. Balsamini says, “people can be brought in[to my business], go eat and shop around me, like part of a downtown experience.” Student answers to “What are some changes you would like to see in your downtown?” vary in interesting ways. One respondent said “It’s pretty cool as is” but suggested “more actual activities to do. There’s stuff like Color Me Mine and the movie theatre but nothing actually engaging and fun to do. Karaoke, laser tag or something would be awesome.” Another respondent said, “I think it’s pretty good how it is now. There are a lot of places though that aren’t recognized in town though, and it would be better if maybe there was more advertisement or talk about these places.” Another called for “more variety in the store selection. We mainly have restaurants but it would be nice to have some well-known clothing stores of funky shops to make it more fun.” Respondents were about 40% seniors, about 24% sophomores and about 18% each of juniors and freshmen. Although Ridgewood has a great downtown currently, they may need to accommodate additional entertainment for teenagers in order to expand their markets.



Project Grad ‘19

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-ion Show. The Fashion Show is a very important fundraiser, and fun for seniors to participate in. Profits from all project graduation events go directly towards the celebrations, which include the party at BF, the yearbook signing, and the Thanksgiving reunion brunch held the November after graduation. Students do have to pay dues, which along with the fundraising, offsets the cost of the baby picture gallery, the dinner dance right after graduation, transportation the night of graduation, and the entire party at BF. Each one of these events involve different committees and lots of meetings. Once the funds and committees are in place, the work of design and construction can really begin. The theme is chosen in the fall, and March is typically when construction for the theme will start at a secret location. Although most senior parents get involved, it is a firm tradition that the students don’t know the theme until they arrive. In one of the hallways in BF, parents hang up seniors’ baby pictures along with their senior portrait to add a sentimental aspect to the night. Families also think of creative captions that go with the baby picture, and the caption and the picture are usually a surprise to the seniors. Parents also provide entertainment for the students for the night, such as arcade games, music, and other fun activities. Usually, while graduation is actually going on, younger students and families get the chance to walk through BF and admire all the design, decorating, and hard work that the senior parents put into the night. Project Graduation provides seniors with a fun, entertaining, substance-free night after graduating, and gives some students who won’t see each other over the summer a chance to say goodbye before they go to college. Although Ridgewood isn’t the only school that organizes a post-graduation event for their seniors, our town is known for its extravagant decoration and fun themes. The parents work hard and put a huge amount of time into making sure that Project Graduation runs smoothly, and the seniors should be looking forward to a fun night after graduation.

Green New Deal

Julia Zambito
Staff Writer

A recent United Nations report predicts that worsening food shortages, deadly heat waves and mass die-off of coral reefs will occur in a mere 20 years if greenhouse gas emissions continue at the current rate. In 1896, Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius came to the conclusion that carbon emissions were, in fact, warming the Earth. That was 123 years ago.

In the 1980s, frequent droughts, heat waves and wildfires catapulted discussion on the climate crisis and began to shape political policies. The world and our country is, and has been, fully aware for decades of the industry's impact on climate change and the extreme threat it is posing for our longevity on this planet. The Green New Deal calls for the "10-year national mobilization" to change how we live, produce and consume within the limits of our planet. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and Senator Edward J. Markey of Massachusetts proposed the legislation in February but it was turned down in the Senate in March. However, the Green New Deal has heightened concerns about the environment nationwide, with most in agreement that we must do something to save our planet before it's too late.

The Deal, which combines Roosevelt's economic approach from the "New Deal" of the 30s with more modern ideas, aims to meet "100 percent of the power demand through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources." It outlines a plan to overhaul our transportation systems, upgrade power grids, and make the shift to cleaner energy like wind and solar. The Deal also addresses the issue of economic inequality and proposes to "create millions of good, high-wage jobs in the United States" as well as provide healthcare for all.

As of now, corporate polluters and

billionaires are benefitting in this economy while the working middle class is being subject to dead-end jobs, stagnant wages and exposure to toxic pollution. Climate change and inequality are linked, which is why the Deal addresses both. If a low-income community is hit by a large storm or disaster, the recovery is going to be much harder than it would be in an more affluent community. Inequality aggravates the climate crisis by stripping communities of the resources necessary to cope with extreme climates.

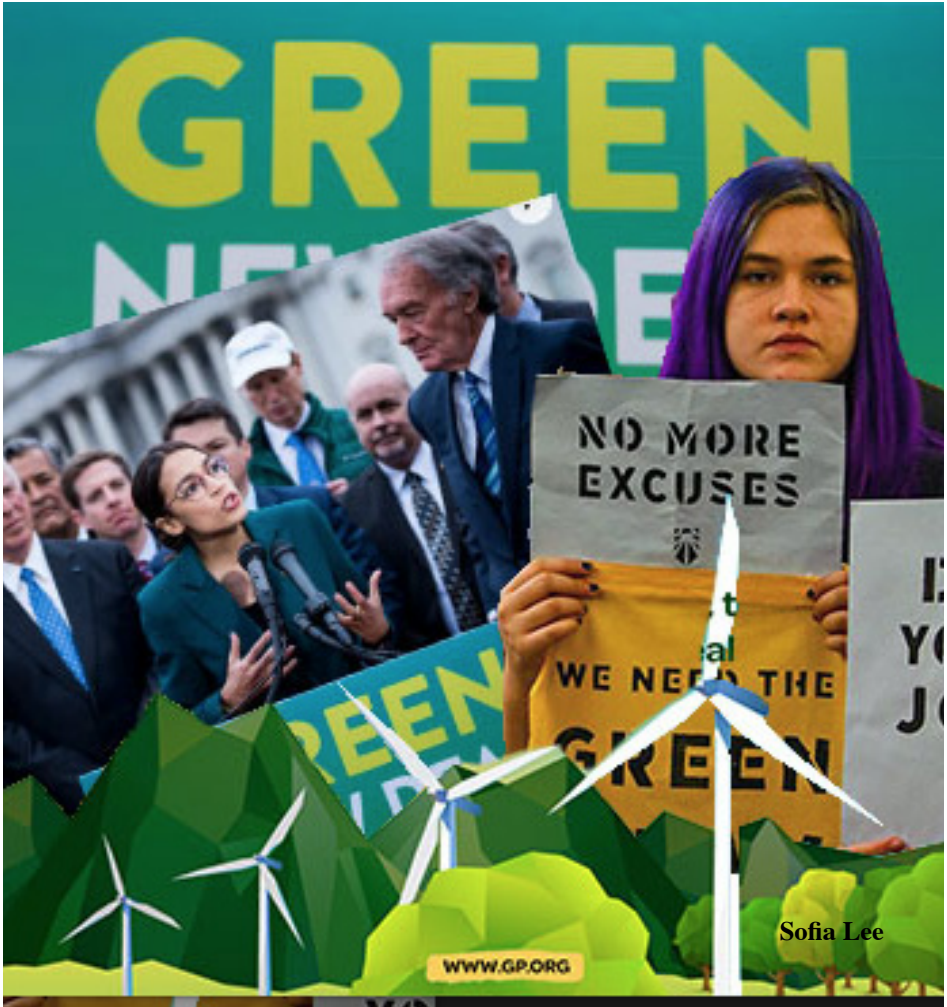
As of now, over 80 percent of Amer-

ica's energy consumption comes from fossil fuels. The Deal would essentially eradicate these industries and push the nation to rely on more sustainable and renewable forms of energy--but the change would come at a hefty price for Americans and broaden the government's role in the economy. Scientists agree that the goals of the Deal are technologically feasible, but are not certain that it could be accomplished within the ten-year time frame. It will cost trillions of dollars and will have to require serious sacrifice by American citizens and the fed-

eral government. However, we would be saving trillions if we prevent future catastrophes. It's important to asses the lengths at which we will go to protect the environment for the sake of ours and other generations to come.

Rep Ocasio-Cortez states, "Our first step is to define the problem and define the scope of the solution. We are here to say that small and incremental policy solutions are not enough." Many Republicans and Democrats alike in Congress have voiced disapproval of the Deal, claiming its goals are too "ambitious" and "not practical." Several congress members have expressed concern with the proposal's vagueness and lack of specificity. President Trump, who has called climate change a "hoax" has repeatedly mocked the Green New Deal, calling it a "high school term paper that got a low mark." However, supporters and sponsors claim that the Deal is simply a call to arms rather than a strict policy proposal. Co-sponsors of the deal include many of the potential 2020 candidates: Sen. Bernie Sanders, Cory Booker, and Kamala Harris among them. The Deal addresses a lot, so not all parts are popular. Ideas like a full shift to electric cars by 2030 and eradicating all power plants by 2035 are not entirely well-favored. However, a poll shows that policies like green jobs, reforestation and better drinking water infrastructure has unanimous citizen-approval in most states.

The Green New Deal is not only helping to fuel the discussion of climate change but is illustrating how significant change and reform is getting caught up in the tactics of politics. The bottom line is a piece of legislation that could potentially implement changes necessary to save the planet will be fought over for a long time. And during that time, climate change will continue its march.



How To Find a Summer Job

James Ellinghaus
staff writer

As the school year comes to an end, RHS students find themselves with an increasing amount of free time on their hands, leading up to a glorious two and a half month long hiatus from school. Everyone needs a break from the overload of homework, tests, and essays they struggle through during the school year, but when there's not much to do, summer can get boring. Vacations, college trips, and athletics can only take up so much time before one starts to grow tired of the lack of routine in his or her life. To stay proactive this summer, every teen with a flexible schedule should try and find a job. Here are some tips that will guide you through the job search process so you can stay busy this summer and make some money!

As a high schooler, your options are limited to the kind of jobs you can apply for. Most companies are looking for mature, responsible, and experienced workers, and either cannot hire teenagers for legal reasons or feel that they don't fit this criteria. To avoid this dilemma, think of the kinds of jobs that a minor could do. This obviously does not include working at a bar or liquor store, or any job that requires a college degree. Restaurants, clothing and grocery stores, local athletic facilities such as the YMCA, and country clubs are perfect for workers below the age of 18. Summer day camps, such as the Ridgewood Summer Day Camp at Graydon Pool, and sleep away camps are very popular places to work and hire many teenagers as camp counselors. Community pools and private swim clubs

like to employ high school students as lifeguards and concession stand workers as well; but remember, one must be certified in order to be a lifeguard. These are just a few examples of places that might employ a high schooler.

However, before you start investigating on your own, ask around town and see if anyone knows if there are any available job positions nearby. Unless you are dead-set on where you want to work, get in contact

with as much businesses as possible. Also, if a family member or friend has a connection, take advantage of it. It is important that you get a job as quickly as possible before they start filling up when summer begins.

After finding a suitable, open position comes the application part of the job search process. Many businesses require applicants to fill out forms explaining why they want the position they are applying for and what credentials they have. They obviously do not expect a lengthy resume from a sixteen year old, but, by looking at the person's other activities, hope to see that he or she are responsible and can take leadership. Another common thing employers do is ask the job applicant to cite a few credible people that can validate the kind of person and worker the applicant is. This list may include coaches, teachers, or other authority figures that he or she has developed a strong relationship with and know his or her determination. Sometimes, the employers will ask for a face to face interview with the applicant. In this situation, remember to be confident and polite, and express to the interviewers how grateful you would be to work at their establishment.

Summer jobs have a profound impact on student's lives. According to graduating RHS Student Grace McLaughlin "working in the summer months has given me a sneak peak of what life after school entails." Hopefully your job hunt this summer is successful! Good luck!



Beautification of RHS

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many of those who responded wrote that the plants seemed unnecessary. Junior Luca Richman even wrote, “Some of the plants are fire hazards, in my opinion.” Other critiques of the beautification campaign have been aimed at its execution. Senior Aidan Callaghan says, “In the science wing there are super blurry photos in very nice frames. I think we could invest in slightly higher quality photos.” Similar complaints have been directed at the blown-up photo of the school near the campus center and the main office. Many students wince at the low-resolution image and the stark black-and-white color scheme against the off-white wall. Sophomore Aaron Friedman called this installation a “pixelated image that just looks absolutely terrible.” Friedman further commented on the undertaking in general, “School beautification is a worthy cause... however, it has to be done in a way that looks professional.” Despite these minor criticisms, most students agree these projects have generally been a positive undertaking. The signs, in both the main office hallway and elsewhere, have succeeded as a stylistic execution of their main goal: to help students and visitors find their way around. Dr. Gorman commented, “Just a few years back, I was getting complaints from parents and from visitors who didn’t know where the front entrance is. They don’t know where the front entrance is, they don’t know where the gymnasiums are. So that’s why we started putting up the signs. Right away, that helps with all of the people coming in for SATs. So all that helps logistically, by helping students fundamentally go about their day.” And students seem to agree - 64.1% of survey respondents reported that they approved or strongly approved of the hallway additions. As for funding, most students have voiced negative opinions concerning the perceived cost of the beautification campaign. In the survey, sophomore Luke Notaro remarked that he disliked

how beautification was too costly and that he felt the money could be better spent. Sophomore Alex Kenney commented, “Trying so hard to make the school pretty but not making real improvements in the system just adds to the stereotype that Ridgewood only cares about preserving its reputation without taking real action.” Both these students are proponents of a viewpoint shared by many in the RHS student body, which is that beautification is a costly enterprise that pulls money away from more worthy pursuits. However, these students and many others would be surprised to learn where money actually comes from. When asked what percentage of beautification they believed was funded by the school budget, 32.8% of respondents reported 20-40%, and 40.6% of respondents reported 50-70%. In reality, the correct answer to this question is 0%, an answer that not a single respondent chose. Dr. Gorman elaborated, “Money for these beautification

projects, which is a small amount, is coming only from the Alumni Association, the HSA, and the Education Foundation.” This means that funds aren’t being detracted from the taxpayer-financed school budget, which covers other matters such as the curriculum, staffing, and building repairs. In addition, the relative cost of beautification is actually quite low. Dr. Gorman stated, “Plants and other small additions might cost \$1,000, but give a really good impression and also help beautify the place. These organizations are giving me a few thousand for beautification, but then they’re also giving me \$10-\$20,000 for other things. Take for example the \$175,000 grant for the sciences - that had nothing to do with beautification. The HSA also gives me money for band equipment. It’s about trying to do all of these different aspects simultaneously.” To put the few thousand required for beautification into perspective, the cost of replacing a single leak is usually

around \$100,000 because it requires replacing all of the piping. The school is still working on fixing necessary issues in tandem- in fact, the Board of Education is currently talking about a \$70 million referendum (from the school budget) to fix a whole range of issues, including the vents, windows, and leaks. These projects continue alongside beautification and are not diminished because of the campaign. In the end, the changes brought about by beautification are a response to what students want. The process for starting a beautification project begins with a “wish list” that Dr. Gorman formulates in accordance with the requests of students, parents, teachers, and administrators. This list then goes to the HSA, the Alumni Association, or the Ed Foundation, which may then continue with the proposal or shoot it down. Dr. Gorman likened this process to a balancing act, saying, “We’re constantly trying to juggle different aspects.” This balance allows for development in many different areas of the school simultaneously. As this development continues, there are many more things students hope to see in the future. 75% of respondents reported that they would like to see furniture improvements in classrooms. More specifically, a few survey respondents wrote that they would support the addition of better desks and interactive tables like those in the Economics room. Others called to repaint the stairway walls, improve the cafeteria, and “make basement smell better.” Hopefully, in a few years, many of these goals will be realized as RHS continues to modernize. So you may not find yourself in the jungle in a few years, but you will find yourself in a school that is rapidly changing to accommodate new needs and desires. Though students have differing opinions on specific projects, most seem to agree that the effort as a whole is worthwhile.



Logan Richman & Aaron Friedman
staff writers

For students in RHS DECA, the whole school year has been leading up to these six days, DECA’s International Career Development Conference in Orlando, Florida. From arriving on April 25th, to the official convention from April 27th-30th, and leaving on the 31st, DECA members participated in an event that marked the culmination of an entire year of work and preparation. More than 19,000 students from around the globe attended the conference. 39 RHS attendees competed, participating in presentations, tests, and role-plays that focused on marketing, finance, hospitality, and management. Ten others attended Academy, a way for students that did not pass states in their competitive event to learn and connect with students from across the country. Following the District and State rounds, 49 RHS students were able to attend ICDC, the largest group in RHS history to attend Internationals. 10:00 PM: Once they touched down at Orlando International after a three hour flight, the group was on its way down the highway, surrounded by the famous lakes and lagoons of Florida, in transit to the magical land of Orlando. At times, although the focus of the trip had always been competing and networking, the trip felt like more of a vacation than a typical school trip. The perk of this year’s location was obvious — Disney World. Between competitions, students rode Space Mountain at Magic Kingdom and Tower of Terror at Hollywood Studios.

DECA ICDC

On the first full day of the trip, Friday, RHS DECA participated in the Disney Youth Education Series at Hollywood Studios. The group split in three and attended the “Managing Your Brand” program which focused on personal branding and how to make yourself more attractive to colleges, companies, and peers. Back at the conference, attendees visited Saturday’s Opening Session, where RHS students were pretty bored. Even still, everyone was excited

that the conference was finally commencing and in the hour before the speeches started, they had fun trading New Jersey state pins with pins from other states. The keynote speaker, Ben Nemtin, a Canadian producer, writer, speaker and television personality, was the mastermind behind the critically acclaimed MTV series “The Buried Life.” Nemtin inspired the audience by speaking about his journey while creating the show and how he made his seemingly impossible dreams

such as playing basketball with then President Barack Obama possible. During the heat of Monday’s competition, DECA students still found room to visit a third theme park. While fellow RHS students back home were facing the start of a full week of schoolwork in anticipation for upcoming AP exams and a strong fourth quarter performance across the board, Universal Studios had been closed to the public for a DECA exclusive Universal Night. RHS students especially enjoyed the thrill rides of Universal: The Mummy, Hollywood Rock-it, and The Hulk. Somehow, there was also time for enjoying the Hilton Orlando’s various amenities: carelessly lounging in the pool, sunbathing, hot-tubbing, trips down the lazy river, and dinners around bonfires. But Google Classroom notifications and early mornings were always there to remind students that although it may have felt like one, this was definitely not a vacation. On the last morning, the RHS delegation gathered in the lobby, a group of satisfied, sunburned students in high spirits, happily reflecting upon the past few days. While no one from Ridgewood carried any DECA hardware in their luggage, students did carry cool pins and merchandise traded from other states. Regardless of the outcome, all participants returned with fun memories, new experiences in DECA competition, and a renewed drive to reach Nashville next year for ICDC 2020.

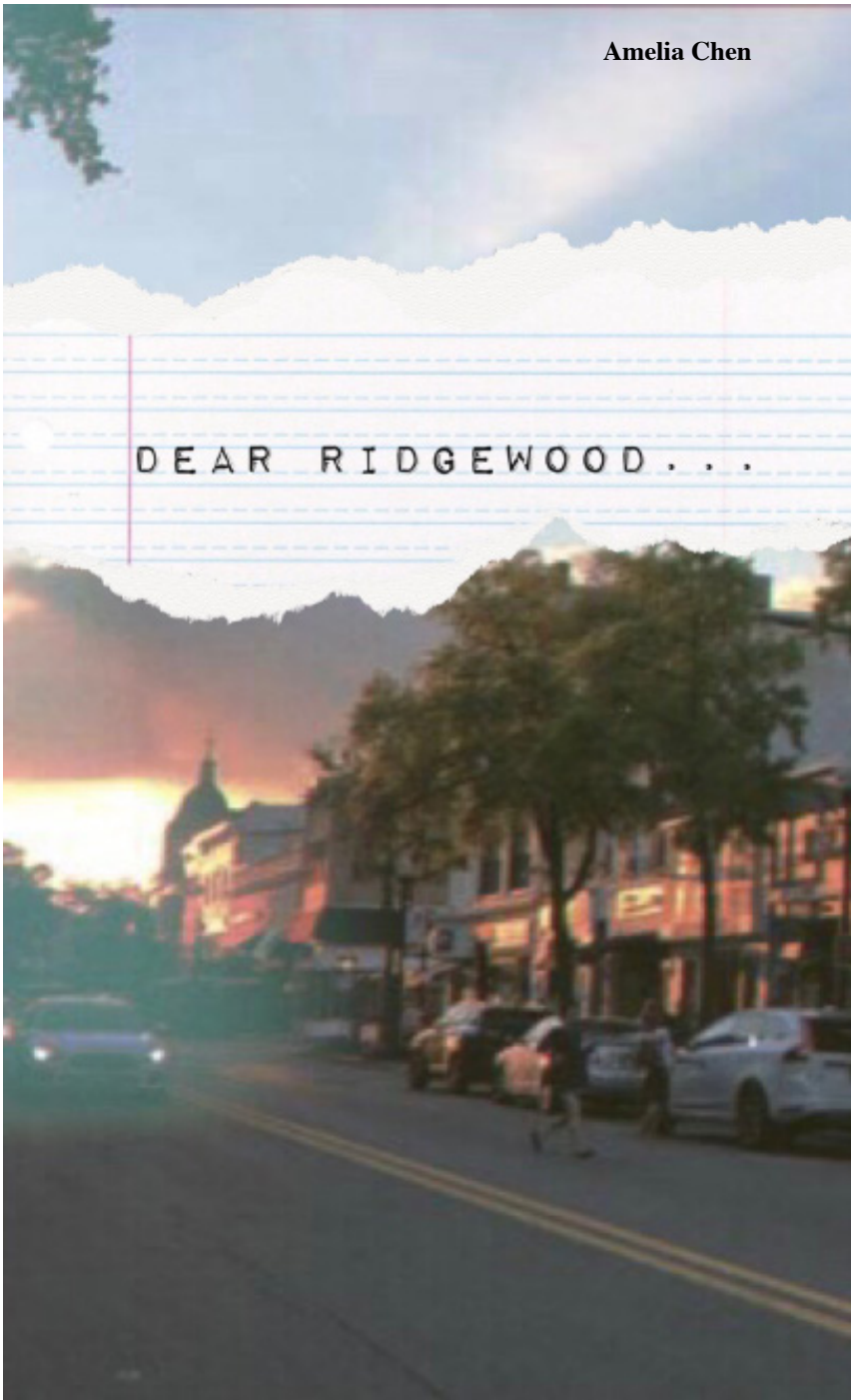


A Goodbye Letter to Ridgewood’s Architecture

Violet Maxwell
arts & culture editor

Nothing evokes home to me quite like the empty silhouette of downtown Ridgewood on an early Sunday morning. Before I lean haphazardly into my morning shift of mass producing lattes for the public, I feel the shape of the buildings against the sky like an old friend. If nothing else, I place my identity alongside each gothic Victorian house lining the sidewalk, each night spent observing the opulent moonlight on Track 2 of the train station. Much could be said of the fifteen years I’ve lived in this town. Many of the days sputtered past at a rate so stagnant it felt nearly retroactive. As I find myself looking ahead towards the next phase of life, I find myself drawn to architecture. I daydream about the buildings and lack thereof, the opportunities that come with inhabiting unfamiliar space. In the same dizzying moment, I have to feel the weight of what I’m leaving behind: a man-made duck pond where I spent summers volunteering in blistering heat, seemingly illogical back roads where I rode my bike as a child. Each fork in the road of my life can be reduced to something physical that I encountered in Ridgewood, a design choice that left the town slightly different than it was before. Formally created in 1894 and dubbed the Village of Ridgewood, the town had already been inhabited by settlers starting with Johannes Van Emburgh in the early 18th century. With over three hundred years of history, the town seems to be in a constant state of fluid motion, never ceasing to pay homage to the antiquated houses of

the past. But for each Victorian home left standing despite the odds stacked against it, there’s the James Rose Center nestled quietly in the center of bustling traffic. Of all the suburbs of the northeast, the accomplished landscape architect James Rose opted to build a masterpiece in the backyard of a football field in Ridgewood. Hidden places like this are what tie me most closely to my environment. I may never understand what led Rose precisely to this town in 1953, but I find myself deeply and inexplicably fulfilled in the space he created here. As I reckon with my departure from the school I’ve attended for four years, I think of the details I was usually too preoccupied to notice. I sit at the base of the school, looking upward. Notice the bell tower, often the subject of urban legend, and the angularity of the bricks that lead my eye there. I trace the hexagons of the wire fencing in the courtyard, take extra note of the creek I pass every day on my way home. Maybe home is a sense of familiarity. Maybe it’s not having to look where I place my next step in the sidewalks around my house. Knowing each notch and crack in the pavement may not amount to architecture in the minds of many, but the suburban landscape of Ridgewood feels implicitly second nature to me. In thinking tentatively of the next place I’ll call home, architecture is a tangible reminder that not everything in this world is in a constant state of transformation (though it may feel like it to every class of graduating seniors.) You just have to look to your environment to remember that some things remain unchanging, preserve their foundations in spite of it all.



Amelia Chen

Orchestral Journey

Amelia Chen
graphics chief

I ran my fingers on its beautiful body; my finger lifting off at the tip to only come swooping down to the next curve. The ridges of the wood were subtle, but defined enough so I could still feel the texture of the ebony. I accidentally touched the string and as I lifted my finger, and it was as if the string cried out for me to play it. My parents took notice of my fascination with the violin and once I was in the fifth grade and I immediately started private lessons. For the first few times I practiced, my violin squeaked and whined for forgiveness. My parents moved me to the basement to play after their violin induced headaches. But after a month worth of lessons, I gained control of the bow. Bending at the wrist as I move my bow upwards, collapsing it as I played downwards. There were

so many technicalities in one stroke: applying the right pressure, playing in the right area, and bowing fast or slow and yet I loved the challenge. “You’re way more advanced compared to all of her students” my mother would say, hoping that she would raise not one (my brother) but two musical prodigies. As I began to change teachers, the demands grew. Each lesson was a strict spew of words from Ms. or Mrs. _____. “Play faster, no no no louder. Faster bow. More vibrato, sing it. Less vibrato. Vibrato is a privilege not a right. Why isn’t your bow straight? Straighten out your bow!” My resentment for the violin grew silently and creepily. A month before a competition, I was expected to play for an hour and a half. Nothing less, but almost always more. A week prior, I would spend two hours a day practicing and, after I finished, another hour would be dedicated to scrutinizing over every intonation flaw. In the shower, I sang melodies over and over

again and I hummed in my head during dinner. My fingertips were calloused and I picked them until they became pink and raw. After I slowly reached an overwhelming amount of hypothetical layers of animosity towards the violin, I was done. I had botched my regional orchestra audition in my freshman year of high school. The screw up was unintentional of course but now, looking back, I think it represented my extreme exhaustion. My sophomore year, I still continued lessons but began to lose interest in practicing very quickly. One and a half hours became one hour, then quickly diminished until it was just a half an hour of me angrily bowing. Recordings of delicate trills, arpeggios and exaggerated double stops were replaced with exasperated sighs, stomping and cussing. There was no more melody singing in the shower, just silence. The humming in my head had stopped. It took too many fights with my mother about practicing and tears

to finally to finally tell her that I quit. She couldn’t understand at first. She was surrounded by music her whole childhood, her dad a violinist, herself, a pianist. She put my brother in front of the piano before he even learned how to read his first chapter book. And so when I told her I didn’t want to play it anymore, it being the violin, she was upset but she must have seen it coming. I’m still in orchestra at RHS. I’ll admit that I struggle more than the rest of my section, but that doesn’t bother me as much as it would have three years ago. I still love the violin, playing when I feel like it, admiring its elegant frame, and listening to it when I study. The layers of hostility have depleted. And although I will never be the violinist I once was, I am incredibly thankful for what the violin has given me. It taught me discipline. It gave me a community and good friends. My years of violin gave me a lifetime of lessons and for that, I will forever be appreciative.



Amelia Chen

Lara Baskin
arts & culture editor

Before one can measure the importance of art in society, it is useful to ponder the question: What is art? According to the dictionary, art is “the conscious use of skill and creative imagination especially in the production of aesthetic objects.” In reality, however, art is not nearly as straightforward as its definition suggests. Whether something can be considered art is not always black-and-white, and is often open to debate. For example, many people disagree over whether dance should be classified as an art or a sport. However, one of the greatest things about art is that it cannot truly be defined. Art is diverse; it’s all-encompassing. Art can be intentional or a complete accident. Some art pieces take decades to create, while others of the same quality may only take minutes. Some pieces have clear direction, others are entirely up to interpretation. Some are made for a specific audience, others for no one at all. Art is unpredictable; there are no prerequisites. Art exists among all different mediums— painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, music, photography, film— the list goes on and on. Because art is so multidisciplinary, it reaches every person in one way, shape, or form. Whether they know it or not, every member of society is a

Art is Integral To Society: Here’s Why

frequent viewer of art. Simply watching a film or reading a book is a mode of experiencing and appreciating art. Despite the universality of art, when multiple people read the same book, they do not share the same experience. Although the text itself is the same, the readers’ emotional responses (the sign of an effective work of art) always differ. Each reader is left with something different: the emotions they feel, the questions they ask, the ways in which they can personally relate to the story or characters. It’s difficult to evoke feelings in quite the way that a novel does. One reader may feel underwhelmed after finishing, wishing they had opted for a different author, while another reader may be impacted for the rest of their lives. There are as many ways to understand a work of art as there are people to view it. Art tends to be extremely personal, reaching viewers in ways little else can. This subjective experience sets art apart from any other discipline. For this reason, art has the potential to be quite therapeutic, both for the artist and the viewer. Art enables us to grow and reflect. It furthers our understanding of ourselves, our peers, and the world around us. Art is a must in society; without it, our world would be a colorless, soundless, meaningless abyss of what we call living. As stated by Rick Vian, life without art is stupid.



Amelia Chen

Artistic Goodbyes

Swathi Kella
editor in chief

Adele recently divorced her husband, and we all know what that means- a new album is coming. Music has long served as an effective outlet for artists’ “goodbyes,” with some of the most famous examples being “Don’t Think Twice, It’s All Right” by Bob Dylan, “Love Will Tear Us Apart” by Joy Division, and “Irreplaceable” by Beyoncé. For years, performing artists have found comfort in their music to bring closure to a part of their lives. But goodbyes can be just as profound- and often just as messy- in the world of visual art. The following four pieces highlight some of the most historically significant goodbyes that have been delivered through a visual medium. The Broken Heart, Maria Pizzuti (1907)- A looming metal structure depicting half a heart sits in the center of Limerick, Ireland. It was designed in 1907, a memorial to the thousands who fled the streets of their homeland to escape the Potato Famine. The “potato blight” that gripped the country between 1845-1852 killed around three-fourths of all potato crops and set off a period of mass starvation and disease. It is estimated that the famine claimed around one million Irish lives and forced another million to flee to Great Britain and North America. In just seven years, the population of Ireland fell by about 20-25%. Many who left never returned back, leaving half of their heart in a land they would never again see. The Broken Heart Memorial stands as a tribute to these lives. Say Goodbye, Catullus, to the Shores of Asia Minor, Cy Twombly (1994)- While Twombly’s Say Goodbye concerns the art of letting go, it betrays his own reluctance to do so- the piece took 22 years to complete. Started in 1972, the piece hung on the walls of Twombly’s studio in Rome for over two decades before he could call it finished. “It’s a passage through everything,” Twombly remarked about his piece. Accordingly, the piece moves from wispy graphite markings in the

lower left corner to large, heavy clouds of yellow, red, and black towards the right. The piece serves as an allegory for Orpheus’s trip to the underworld. The Two Fridas, Frida Kahlo (1939) This painting was created the same year that Frida Kahlo divorced Diego Rivera, with whom she had a turbulent yet passionate marriage. It depicts Frida Kahlo’s two different personalities, one in a traditional Tehuana costume and the other in modern, freer clothing. The two are holding hands. The heart of the traditional Frida is cut open and exposed, with the artery cut off and blood dripping onto her white dress. The sky behind both of them is tempestuous and thundering, representing the turmoil that Kahlo was experiencing at the time. Kahlo wrote in later years that the piece was an expression of her isolation and desperation after her separation from Diego Rivera. Albert Memorial, Sir George Gilbert Scott (1872)- Some goodbyes are not just of personal significance, but of national significance. Such was the passing of Prince Albert of Great Britain, who died of typhoid in 1861. Following this tragic loss, Queen Victoria commissioned the creation of a physical monument to honor his life in Kensington Gardens. Architect Sir George Gilbert Scott designed the monument in the Victorian Gothic style of architecture. It also included many elements that reflected Prince Albert’s accomplishments and interests. Additionally, the base of the memorial features 187 contemporary painters, poets, sculptors, musicians, and architects in a tribute to Prince Albert’s appreciation for the arts. With all this in mind, it’s important to remember that seniors, rapidly approaching our own “goodbyes,” are not alone. Throughout history, artists have faced countless situations where they’ve had to leave behind a part of their identity. So as a lesson to our current seniors (including myself), maybe instead of lazing around and counting down the days to the end of the year, we can say a proper goodbye to our hometown by making art.



Evie Cullen

PROM 2019



Features



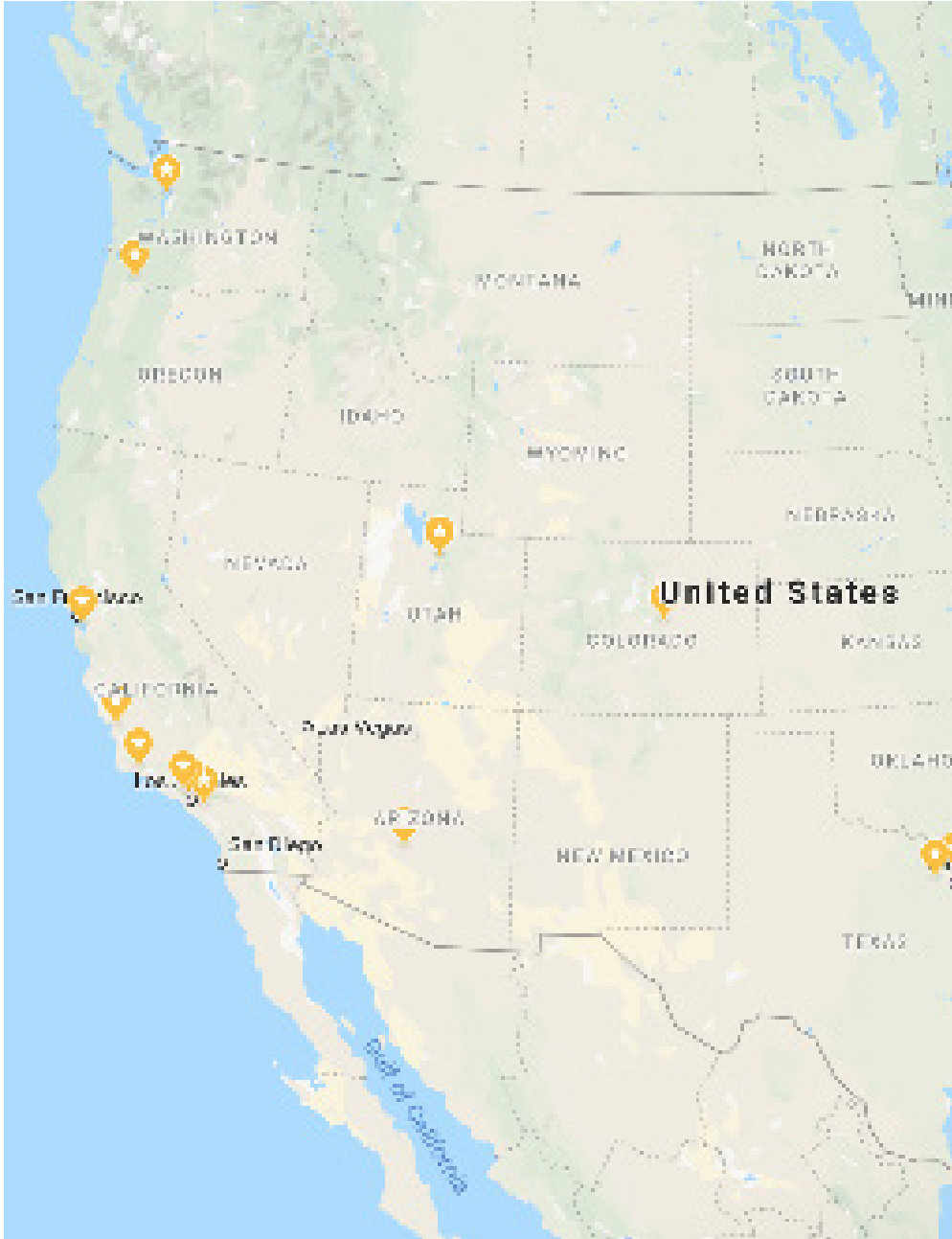
PHOTOS FEATURING
SENIORS FROM THE RHS CLASS OF 2019

- American University (2)
- Andrews University (1)
- Arizona State University (1)
- Auburn University (2)
- Baruch College of the CUNY (1)
- Bentley University (2)
- Bergen Community College (7)
- Berkeley College - Paramus Location (1)
- Berklee College of Music (2)
- Binghamton University (2)
- Borough of Manhattan Community College of the CUNY (1)
- Boston College (6)
- Boston University (5)
- Bowdoin College (1)
- Brandeis University (1)
- Brigham Young University (1)
- Brown University (3)
- Bryant University (1)
- Bucknell University (7)
- Caldwell University (1)
- California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (1)
- Carnegie Mellon University (2)
- Case Western Reserve University (1)
- Champlain College (1)
- Chapman University (1)
- Clark University (2)
- Clemson University (6)
- Coastal Carolina University (1)
- Colgate University (4)
- College of Charleston (2)
- College of the Holy Cross (3)
- Connecticut College (2)

- Cornell University (5)
- Dartmouth College (2)
- DeSales University (1)
- Dickinson College (1)
- Drew University (1)
- Drexel University (3)
- Duke University (1)
- Eastman School of Music - University of Rochester (2)
- Elon University (4)
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University - Daytona Beach (1)
- Endicott College (1)
- Fairfield University (4)
- Fashion Institute of Technology (1)
- Felician University (1)
- Fordham University (10)
- Franklin & Marshall College (3)
- George Mason University (1)
- Georgetown University (1)
- Gettysburg College (3)
- Hamilton College - NY (2)
- Harvard College (2)
- High Point University (1)
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges (2)
- Hope College (1)
- Indiana University at Bloomington (4)
- Iona College (1)
- Ithaca College (1)
- Johns Hopkins University (1)
- Kent State University (1)
- Lafayette College (3)
- Lehigh University (6)
- Louisiana State University (1)

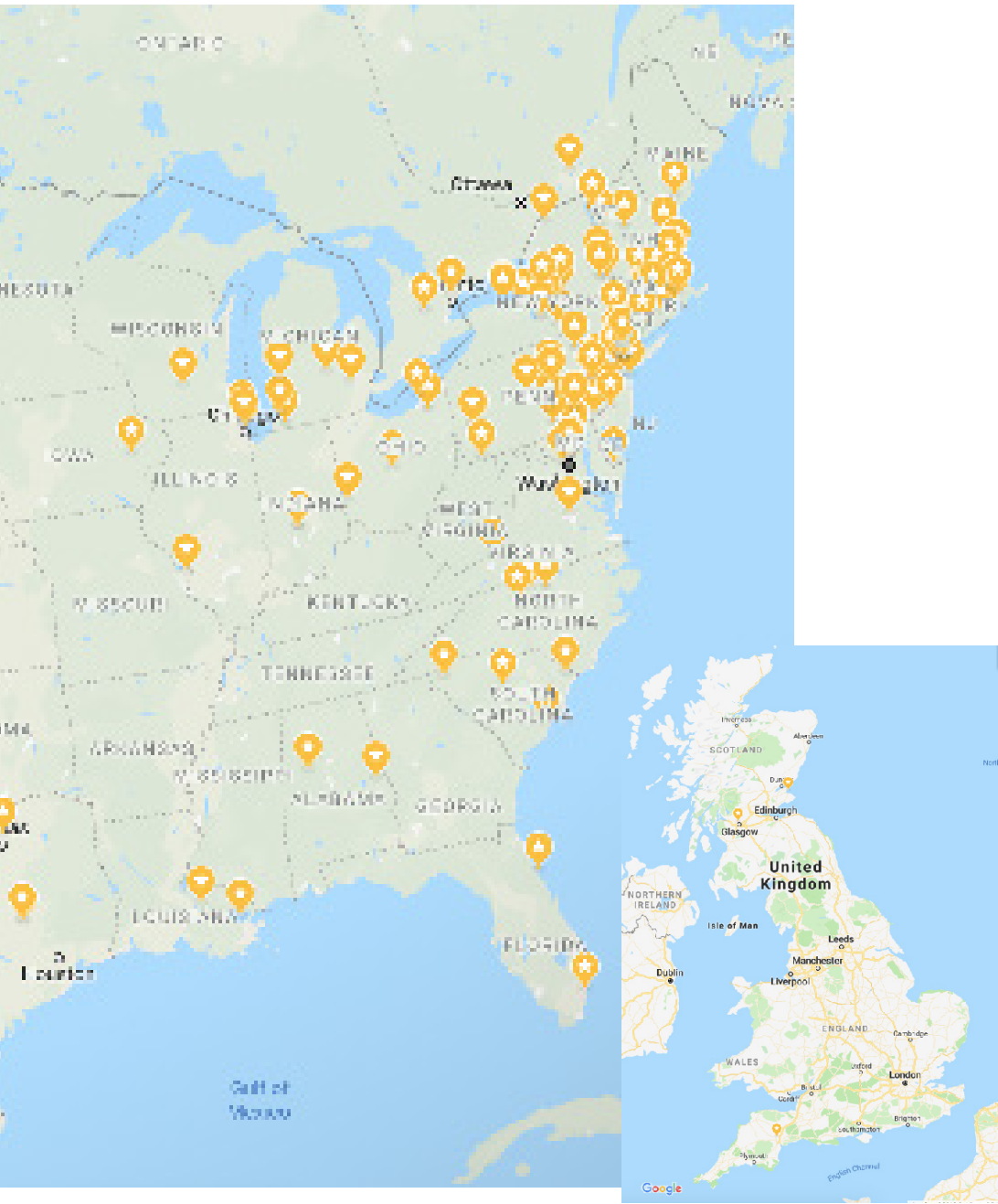
- Loyola University (1)
- Manhattan College (1)
- Marist College (1)
- Marymount Manhattan College (1)
- McGill University (1)
- Miami University (1)
- Michigan State University (1)
- Middlebury College (1)
- Millersville University (1)
- Monmouth College (1)
- Montclair State University (1)
- Muhlenberg College (1)
- New Jersey Institute of Technology (1)
- New York Conservatory of Music (1)
- New York University (1)
- Northeastern University (1)
- Northwestern University (1)
- Pace University (1)
- Pennsylvania State University (1)
- Princeton University (1)
- Providence College (1)
- Quinnipiac College (1)
- Ramapo College (1)
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (1)
- Rider University (1)
- Rochester Institute of Technology (1)
- Roger Williams University (1)
- Rowan University (1)
- Rutgers University - Newark (1)
- Sacred Heart University (1)
- Salisbury University (1)
- School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1)

Oh, the Places
RHS CLAS



es You'll Go!

S OF 2019



University of Maryland (2)
University of Maryland, College Park (4)
University of Massachusetts (1)
University of Michigan (2)
University of Minnesota, Oxford (2)
University of North Carolina (4)
University of Pennsylvania (1)
University of Pittsburgh (1)
University of Rhode Island (6)
University of South Carolina (3)
University of Tennessee (1)
University of Texas at Austin (1)
University of Virginia (7)
University of Wisconsin (3)
University of Wisconsin-Madison (2)
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (1)
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (1)
University of Wisconsin-Stout (1)
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (1)
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh (1)
University of Wisconsin-Superior (1)
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (1)
University of Wisconsin-Fox Ochs (1)
University of Wisconsin-Grover (1)
University of Wisconsin-Keshena (1)
University of Wisconsin-Madison (23)
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (4)
University of Wisconsin-Stout (1)
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (1)

School of Visual Arts (1)
Seton Hall University (4)
Skidmore College (1)
Southern Methodist University (1)
St. Lawrence University (2)
St. Thomas Aquinas College (1)
Stanford University (1)
Steven's Institute of Technology (4)
SUNY College at Cortland (1)
Susquehanna University (2)
Syracuse University (10)
Texas A&M University (1)
Texas Christian University (1)
The Catholic University of America (1)
The College of New Jersey (12)
The George Washington University (5)
The Ohio State University (3)
The University of Alabama (2)
The University of Iowa (1)
The University of Scranton (2)
Trinity College (1)
Tufts University (2)
Tulane University (4)
Union College (New York) (1)
United States Air Force Academy (1)
University of California, Los Angeles (2)
University of California, Santa Barbara (1)
University of Chicago (1)
University of Connecticut (1)
University of Delaware (6)
University of Exeter (1)
University of Glasgow (1)

University of Hartford (3)
University of Maryland, College Park (8)
University of Massachusetts, Amherst (4)
University of Miami (4)
University of Michigan (7)
University of New Hampshire at Durham (1)
University of New Haven (1)
University of Notre Dame (4)
University of Pennsylvania (3)
University of Pittsburgh (4)
University of Portland (1)
University of Rhode Island (3)
University of Richmond (2)
University of Rochester (2)
University of South Carolina (5)
University of Southern California (1)
University of St. Andrews (1)
University of Toronto (1)
University of Vermont (6)
University of Washington (1)
University of Wisconsin, Madison (3)
Villanova University (4)
Virginia Tech (2)
Washington University in St. Louis (2)
West Virginia University (1)
Wilfrid Laurier University (1)
William Paterson University of New Jersey (2)
Yale University (1)



PROM 2019



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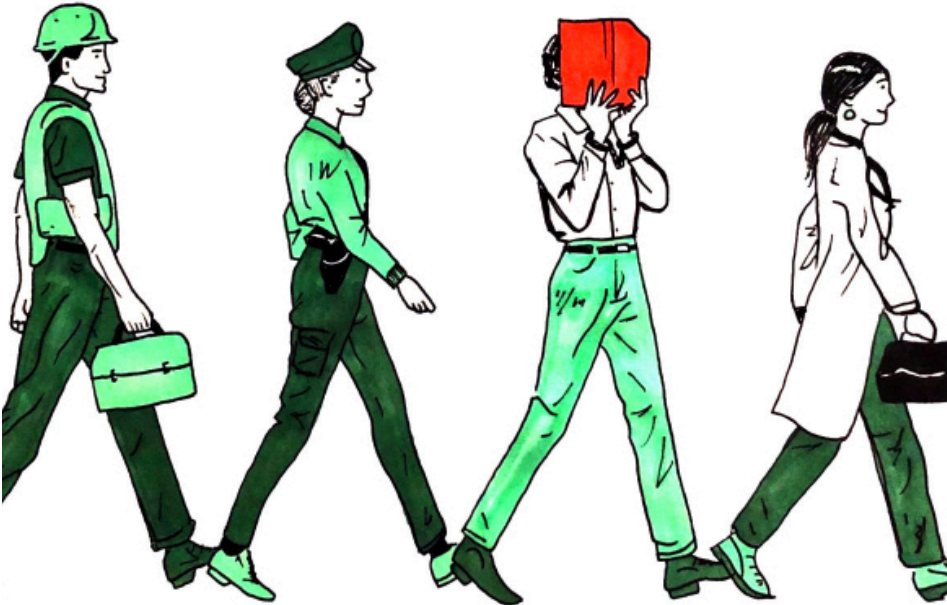
Rethinking Our Definition of Criminal

Swathi Kella
editor in chief

Close your eyes and picture a criminal. What do you see? Probably a dark, shadowy figure with a malicious snarl and a glinting knife. Chances are, you don't see a well-dressed businessman with a charming smile and a firm handshake.

As your response to this scenario might indicate, our perception of crime is heavily skewed towards the lower classes of society, the more visible and the less powerful. In reality, however, white collar crime is much more prevalent and damaging than we give it credit for. According to the FBI, white collar crime costs the US more than \$300 billion annually — money that could be spent towards welfare, education, or infrastructure. The FBI predicts that “losses due to fraudulent activity approached 10% of the amount of money that we expend in health-care.” Despite this, we still don't treat many of these white collar-criminals as criminals at all. While our prisons fill up with low-level blue-collar offenders, the upper-class market masterminds generally walk away scott free.

In a clear example of this, just a few months ago, Donald Trump's campaign chairman Paul Manafort received an initial sentence of only 47 months in prison on charges of bank fraud, fake tax returns, and failure to report foreign assets. Scott Hechinger, a senior attorney at the Brooklyn Defender Services who advocates on behalf of those who cannot afford legal representation, responded that one of his clients



Evie Cullen

was offered a similar sentence merely for “stealing \$100 worth of quarters.” Though Manafort's prison sentence was eventually raised to 7.5 years, it still falls short of the suggested range of 19.5 to 24 years in prison. Not surprisingly then, a 2017 study by the University of Iowa reported that federal judges in white-collar cases, “frequently sentence well below the fraud guideline,” and follow the advisory guideline in less than half of all cases. In stark contrast, many blue-collar criminals come up against the harsh

and sweeping mandatory minimum laws, which allow no leniency for nonviolent drug offenders in imposing a minimum sentence of five years.

Why the disparity in treatment? A large reason is our popular culture, which glorifies white-collar crime in a way that makes it acceptable and even fascinating to the general public. TV series such as *White Collar* and movies such as *The Wolf of Wall Street* romanticize the glamour of high-profile crime. The term “con man” itself comes from a New York Herald re-

port of the 1800s that dubbed property thief William Thompson as “the Confidence Man.” Clearly, we give much attention to high-profile criminals, but not the right kind of attention.

While white-collar crime seems harmless, it has very direct and damaging effects on the public. One of the greatest examples of these disastrous consequences is the 2009 Recession. The predatory lending practices that resulted in the housing market crash also led to the loss of 8.7 million jobs in the US and were linked to over 10,000 suicides across North America and Europe, according to CBS. Despite these tangible repercussions, not a single top officer from any major bank was sentenced to serving time in prison.

It's easy to forget about these cases as they fade from prominence, but now we're forgetting at a faster rate than ever. According to the New York Times, white-collar cases have only made up about “one-tenth of the Justice Department's cases in recent years, compared with one-fifth in the early 1990s.” Additionally, law enforcement agencies under the current administration have greatly cut back on prosecution. During Trump's first year in office, “the Justice Department's fines against companies fell 90% from what they were in Obama's last year in office.”

The United States' justice system needs to change, and this begins with a change in our perception of crime. If we're going to hold all people equally accountable for criminal behavior, we're going to need to rethink our definition of “criminal.”

The Effectiveness of the New Schedule

Katie Hu
staff writer

With the school year coming to a close, our next two months will be free of the dreaded 80 minute classes and the extremely long frees. As homework winds down and we sit in our classes, counting down the minutes, the once new schedule seems like an old routine. This new schedule received backlash when it first came out, however after a while, it was clear that it was going nowhere. With the growing population of freshman populating the school, the old schedule of hour classes was no longer an option. After an entire year of this transition, can we honestly say the new schedule effective?

The students that have been affected the most are those taking Advanced Placement science classes. These students don't have a block free, but rather they have two frees every four days. Labs for these AP science students last for an extra 50 minutes, compared to the new 80 minute lab periods for students not in the advanced placement program. And unfortunately for peer counselors, they only have one free until the last quarter.

After talking to several junior students, most of them agreed on the ineffectiveness of the new schedule. Junior Livi Janjigian argues, “It has been extremely ineffective. As a junior, I experienced the old schedule, and I enjoyed it much more. 80 minutes is way

too long to sit in a class and none of my teachers even like it. After a certain amount of time, students do not focus and I still haven't adjusted and it's the end of the year.” Other juniors continue to point out how this new schedule has hurt classes. It has placed several classes behind where they should be, based off of the time limit with the 50 minute period. However, a few students have adjusted and now appreciate the long period. They expressed their enjoyment for longer periods in their classes. During the so-called “80,” they feel that they typically get more done, feel more accomplished, and bond more with their teachers. On top of that, most of them are allowed a break outside of the classroom — something they look forward to.

The multiple departments in the high school have been affected differently. French teacher Madame Polk, in the language department, has mixed feelings about the long block. “I believe that the schedule is ineffective for students as they typically can only pay attention in 20 minute increments. However, I believe that it is effective for presentations and longer tests, especially in advanced placement classes as they can act as mock tests.”

For the physical education department, the plans for each class were easily adjustable. High school students typically don't mind long periods in these classes, as physical activity keeps us busy and health classes aren't as aca-

demically demanding as other classes. As for math, there is great variation for every level and teacher. Some classes teach through the entire 80, but the durations of assessments have not changed much. English and history classes are typically branded together and have not been affected as much. During the long periods, it seems that

they are more utilized as work periods or times to show films. Each type of class has been affected differently and so has each student and teacher.

As we look to next year, we must appreciate the ability of teachers and educators to alter their schedules to fit with the new times. Maybe 80 minutes of class isn't so bad after all.



Erin Kim

Opinion

The Price of Grades

Swathi Kella & Eddie O'Keefe
editor in chiefs

In the past couple of weeks, RHS has become the epicenter of an extra-credit controversy that has managed to grab national attention. The affair began when RHS parent Colette Tretola spoke up at a Board of Education meeting regarding extra credit that was awarded to students who purchased a \$20 fundraiser ticket.

Her daughter had been refused a work-based extra credit opportunity. Tretola was outraged as she shared her perception that the school prioritizes monetary contributions over effort, creating a system of indulgences corrupting what should be a meritocratic institution. As the story spread, things quickly spiraled out of control.

Parents immediately took to the Facebook group Ridgewood Moms and Dads and shared their opinions on the matter. One parent wrote, "If this is [moving] C's to B's in every class, or even a large portion of them, then this practice actually is tipping the scales in a large way for students who can or will pay for points." Further, an anonymous commenter on The Ridgewood Blog alleged, "Corrupt NJ reaches into classrooms and teaches kids the New Jersey way. Important lesson. Maybe it is the American way now. Thinkin of big pharma and opioids. You can go on and on. Money is ideal." The story circulated through such community forums until major news organizations eventually caught wind of the conflict.

One such news organization was CBS New York. In a video story, CBS reporter Meg Baker showed clips of Tretola's statement to the Board of Education and pulled aside a high school freshman on campus to lend credence to her statements. The freshman confessed that she herself had brought in tissue boxes on occasion to gain some points. The news outlet then likened the incident to the college admissions scandal, with Baker concluding that students at RHS are able to "pay to get a better grade."

However, most RHS students will agree that this hyperbolic statement could not be further from the truth. The allegations have been drastically blown out of proportion, and they stray from the reality of the situation for a



Erin Kim

number of reasons. First, from talking with a number of students, we have found that extra credit is rarely offered in class. Even when it is, it translates only to an insignificant number of points. Speaking with RHS students casts more doubt on the "scandal," as Senior Grace McLaughlin shares, "I've done extra credit assignments in the past—going to events, handing in tissues, doing extra work—but that extra credit has hardly changed my grades." When taken into account along with the many other assignments and tests that students complete, extra credit is virtually inconsequential for a grade. With this insight, it's irresponsible to make the false assumption that students are "paying for their grades." It is more accurate to say that students are encouraged to take these

Dr. Gorman further commented, "You have to remember when you do extra credit, it's usually two points or five points. Then when you look at the total number of points, which could be five hundred or something like that, it's a really small number of points that you're talking about. So it's really not so much about the points than it is about trying to get kids to participate in

different things which add to the culture of the school." Many students can validate Dr. Gorman's statement—the intention of most non-work-based extra credit is to get students more involved in school and community events. For instance, some history classes offer extra credit for attending historical and civic events in the community, such as the local Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration or "Meet the Mayor." While the process for approving a field trip can be long and tedious, such extra credit activities are easy ways to incentivize students to celebrate landmark moments in history and get involved in their community at large.

Extra-credit-motivated community involvement also extends to school events. For example, students may earn a few extra points by attending a Maroon and White recital, sports game, or New Players production. While these events are largely free to attend, a New Players ticket can cost up to \$15, potentially creating an attainment gap between students who have disposable income and students who do not. However, this gap rarely materializes as students can often gain

the same number of points by attending a free event as they can by attending a ticketed event. The gap is also rare because, again, extra credit points are almost inconsequential in determining a student's final grade. In addition, students who are unable to take part due to the monetary stipulation are always assisted by school funds. Ultimately, the motivations of these extra-credit opportunities are pure, as teachers are merely trying to encourage students to support their peers.

Additionally, these types of extra credit opportunities aren't unique to Ridgewood. Leonia High School similarly asks students to go to events and bake food for a total contribution of around \$5-\$15. Even Bergen County Academies, the most prestigious school in the region, offers extra-credit to students who attend school plays. These extra credit practices have even farther reach—for example, Arcadia High School in California offers extra credit opportunities that require around \$5-\$15.

Clearly, extra credit is not a phenomenon that is unique to RHS. However, RHS is still the center of this "controversy." As Dr. Gorman commented, "Ridgewood High School is definitely under the microscope, and we do attract a lot more press than other surrounding districts do." He added, "It's unfortunate that they take a certain slight angle and they really blow it out of proportion in some sense to make a bigger story. It's unfortunate because I think a lot of the things they have painted Ridgewood High School as are not true. And I think a lot of the kids agree with that, that it has not been an accurate portrayal of who we really are." And Dr. Gorman is correct—many of the students here do agree that this controversy has erroneously cast the school's character in a negative light.

As for policy changes, the school is currently investigating the issue and will soon come up with a response, whatever that may be. Dr. Gorman commented, "The way I look at it, there's only three ways you could go about the whole thing. Ban extra credit outright, find some kind of middle ground, or continue with the current practices. Those are the only three ways you could go." While the extra credit situation currently remains in limbo, we're going to have to wait until next

Why Seniority Matters

Alexandra Jerdee
staff writer

Seniority at RHS is inevitable. The concept of seniority is that individuals who are older or have experience gain more privileges. This is considered a basic law of life at RHS, from senior captains of clubs and athletic teams, to upperclassmen scoffing at the freshman's inexperience with the Learning Commons' printers. We even separate lunch areas by grade, and it's commonplace to hear outrage over a freshman in the campus center or cafeteria.

As much as students like to ridicule freshman inexperience, we were all freshman at one point, lost in a maze-like school and oblivious to the social code that came with being a ninth grader. Sympathy towards underclassmen trying to figure high school would greatly improve inter-grade relations at this school.

However, freshman empathy makes up the majority of my disdain towards seniority. Being older does not mean that one is wiser, but passing off the torch between leaders of



Amelia Chen

extracurriculars each year is a beautiful tradition that gives the eventual leaders time to get a feel for what that job entails. In the current system for the majority of clubs at RHS, leadership opportunities are given based on a combination of both seniority and skill. This means officer positions for sophomores and juniors and leadership positions for juniors or seniors.

For underclassmen, the system may seem flawed at the time, but if

they really deserve a role, they will receive one when they are old enough to be considered. By giving power to the inexperienced, clubs would destroy the slow training experience that they have used for years.

The similar status quo applies to the multiple years of participation on a sports team in order to become a leader. This seems fitting, given that the future leaders have plenty of time to observe how their predecessors

sors did the job. In this way, the vision of the original founders are still lived out by these clubs, even as they evolve with the times. Beyond getting a sense of leadership within a club, when leaders are older, they are also much more familiar with the members. Having this familiarity is crucial to building trust with those in charge.

Just as freshman arrive at RHS without knowing where their rooms are or how to use the printers, they also don't come into clubs and teams knowing how to run them. It is up to their fellow students to guide them through the high school experience so that one day those students can do the same for future freshman to come. It is only in this way that our school may continue its precious traditions and institutions four years from now, when every student in the school today has graduated to greater things. Seniority is the reason why the school we entered on our very first day will be in many ways the same as the day we graduate. It is our job to make this school better for the next generation, rather than restart with each coming year.

It's Summer! Now, What To Do...

Lia Vaynshteyn
staff writer

It's that time of year again! School is coming to a close, and summer is just around the corner. This means that there are just over two months of break. With all this time, what do we do?

Some students see this two-month-gap as a chance to get ahead or catch up on school work or athletics. They work hard all summer, and when school comes around in September, maybe they get on varsity football, or they excel in AP calculus. But is that really the best way to spend your summer? Sure you get ahead for the school year, but summer is meant to give students a break: to let us catch up on sleep, not academics.

Teenage mental health is a growing concern in our society, but how can we expect to become mentally healthier if we are constantly being pushed to be the best at whatever it is we do, whether it be music or sports? Sometimes we get pushed to the point where we find the need to work over our breaks. But the purpose of a school break is just that — a break. We spend over seven hours, five days a week for ten months at this big brick building. That's almost the same amount of dedication as a full-time job, but we don't get paid.

As students, we need a recess

from the constant essays and studying. When it comes to the summer, I believe in doing the bare minimum in relation to school work. We have all of September to June to work our hardest in school. I'm all about hard work, but you need to work hard at the right times. And summer is not the time.

Summer is the time for kicking back and relaxing. It is the time for laying in the sun until you tan five shades darker. Summer is the time for sipping lemonade in the pool, floating by, in a gigantic inflatable swan. It is the time for eating ice cream until you get a brain freeze so bad, you're minutes away from a sugar-induced coma. Summer is the time for hanging out with friends, meeting new people, and trying new things.

When the warm temperatures arrive, it is also important that we spent enough time with our families. Students have plenty of time to ourselves. Perhaps it is also time to appreciate those we love, like our parents, siblings, and pets.

No doubt, the best part of summer is the weather, so naturally, the most important thing for you to do this summer is to get outside and enjoy the nature. From the crashing waves of the beaches to the looming trees in the forests, there are endless possibilities. You simply need to go out and find them.



The Dreaded Resale of Concert Tickets

Grace McLaughlin
news editor

Have you ever scheduled your entire day to buy tickets see your favorite artist's concert? You set an alarm and rush to the ticket website the moment they come out. But they're sold out and now there are no other options but to buy tickets for over \$400 elsewhere. You accept defeat.

Anybody who goes to concerts knows how stressful it can be to secure a ticket. Usually, there's a presale for certain credit card users, and then the tickets are open to the general public. Ticketmaster, a credible website that most artists use to release tickets, allows potential buyers to sign up for special codes that they can type in to purchase their tickets. However, the process is sometimes selective and there are times when fans aren't given a code and unable to buy tickets. That's where the resale process comes in. People will buy tickets off the original website, such as Ticketmaster, and resell them for a much higher price on StubHub, VividSeats, and other sites. Fans are put at a disadvantage because most people can't afford a \$400 ticket in mediocre seats. In the end, fans feel frustrated with the artist for allowing their ticket prices to inflate so high. This raises an important question: should the artist take responsibility for how high their ticket prices are?

Bands and singers that are popular today have built most of their fanbases off of Twitter, YouTube, or even Vine. Social media not only introduces people to new artists, but gives fans the chance to interact with each other and the artist themselves. Without the support of

their dedicated fans, performers would not be able to sell out arenas or stadiums. Artists making their ticket prices so high seems like a pretty poor way to repay the people that support them.

Obviously, concerts can't be free. Artists have to gain revenue from their tour so they can continue to perform and produce music. However, only a handful of fans are able to buy tickets at their face value. A front row seat could originally cost \$200 on Ticketmaster, but anyone (including a ticket-bot) could buy it and resell it on StubHub for \$1,000 or more. Good seats for popular artists, such as Shawn Mendes, have been known to resell at almost \$9,000. Resellers hope that fans will be desperate enough to see their favorite singer up close that they'll pay just about anything. Yet, this shouldn't be the case. Artists and their teams

should be managing and regulating how much a ticket is sold for on the resale sites. Right now, it almost seems as though performers turn a blind eye to how much fans pay to see them.

Ticketmaster has recognized the problem and organized their Verified Fan program, which is what sends out the codes mentioned above. In their description of Verified Fan on the Ticketmaster website, it clearly states, "Ticketmaster Verified Fan doesn't guarantee that everyone who is Verified will get a ticket" but it does, "level the playing field." Artists have the option to team up with Verified Fan — or not. Websites also tend to create a panic among fans when tickets go on sale. Things are constantly reloading, refreshing, and many buyers are put on an online cue. Shouldn't there be a more efficient, fair way for fans to purchase tickets?

One contributor to the problem is the venue the artist is playing at. A small venue means less tickets, so the process of buying seats is even more frantic. But a large arena doesn't necessarily mean tickets are cheaper. At MetLife stadium, seats in the upper level — the 300's section — are around \$60 for big names in music, such as Taylor Swift, which is a good deal. However for Z100-iHeartRadio's Jingle Ball hosted by Madison Square Garden every December, tickets behind the stage start at \$300 to \$400 dollars.

Besides concert tickets, many artists will also choose to sell meet and greet packages as well. Artists and their teams have been known to charge around \$650 dollars for meet and greets. The excitement around talking to and taking a picture with your favorite singer is understandable, but the concept around meet and greets of paying to meet another person is a little strange. Also, it can go horribly wrong if the artist is having a bad day and the interaction doesn't go as well as the fan hoped.

I am personally a big fan of music and artists. I enjoy going to concerts, and I've gotten the chance to meet some of my favorite celebrities for free. After taking a step back, however, I realized that I shouldn't have to pay \$250 for a mediocre seat at a concert, nor pay almost \$700 to meet them. Artists continuously say, almost without thinking, that their fans mean everything to them. Do singers care so much that they would create a system that prevents tickets from being resold so that more fans could avoid being scammed? Their fan bases will have to wait and see.



Sports and Wellness

Is Practice Getting Out of Hand?

Luca Richman
staff writer

Students are spending more time in the world of RHS outside of the regular academic day as sports continue to extend long hours after school, on the weekends, and sometimes before school starts in preparation for the fall season. Even though RHS excels across the board in fall, winter, and spring sports - success that is a testament to the long hours of practice - the intense commitments beg the question of how much practice is too demanding.

With practice starting after Period 9 and most practices ending within the 5 PM to 6 PM window, there is a good balance between school and sports, even though athletes are sometimes excused early for games or meets. However, performance days may extend longer than that, as athletes arrive back to the high school well beyond sunset. Trips to train or compete can last multiple days as well, taking students out of school. Baseball's preseason training in Florida and Track & Field's cross-country trip to the Arcadia Invitational in Arcadia, California includes some of the many overnight athletic commitments that student-athletes pursue.

But how much practice is too much? Students frequently sacrifice sleep and stay up well into the night to finish schoolwork, but is that the result of too much practice? Would less practice, in order to create more time for schoolwork, sacrifice the tradition of excellence that RHS Athletics enjoys?

In my opinion, daily practice should last no longer than 90 minutes. Any-

thing longer than this is disruptive to a student's work and sleep schedule, as well as physical wellbeing. Specifically, members of the crew team devote four to five hours to commuting to practices and workouts each day. On their race day each Sunday, they are typically expected to be on a bus around four in the morning and return back to Ridgewood around seven at

night. Rowers are aware of the commitment that the sport requires, but they often share how they feel overwhelmed and discouraged when it comes to studying. Although this year round sport is not sponsored by RHS athletics, they are confident that they would be in a much better mental state if their practices were even one hour less than what they currently are.



Ridgewood Junior Varsity Boys Quad achieve first place at the Stotesbury Regatta, the biggest scholastic race in the world, on May 18th.

A shorter practice time affords students with a set amount of time each night allotted for schoolwork and ensures that no student is disadvantaged from participating in a sport that takes up more time than another sport. In addition to the time benefit, this amount of time would also work in conjunction with the Ridgewood High School wellness program. If a student is lifting in the Fitness Center during his or her Strength and Conditioning class, that student should not feel over exerted before attending a long and physically taxing practice. Less practice time could mean, well, less practice, but it could also decrease the prevalence of injuries, as athletes won't be over-exhausting their bodies each and every day.

This rule should not apply for days with games and meets; it is unreasonable to think that away days, requiring bus transportation, should only last an hour and a half. For example, a regulation soccer game lasts 80 minutes, plus halftime and warmups. On performance days, athletes should expect to get home later and manage their time accordingly. Regular practice, however, should be held to some standard to create some form of predictability.

With many coaches stressing the importance of education in conjunction to athletics, as well the RHS policy of a minimum GPA in order to participate, the emphasis on an athlete's life outside of practice lies not only on his or her sport. A set limit for practice time would greatly help in achieving a stable balance between the academic and athletic sectors of the RHS student experience.

RHS vs the Competition

Emily Sue
staff writer

Ridgewood High School has excelled in many areas throughout its years, but one area that has constantly dominated is athletics. Our school offers a myriad of teams at various levels in order to cater to the large number of student athletes, but regardless of the season or sport, each team delivers success to the school. As a result, this victorious image has deemed the school as one that produces some of the state's most tremendous athletes and produced an outstanding reputation for the town.

RHS has always strived to be a welcoming and kind school that treats the competition as friends rather than rivals. "It feels like a family," says Sophomore Emily Rau, "even though there is a lot of pressure we all deal with it together, so you never feel alone." RHS's great sportsmanship separates Ridgewood from the other schools but the competitiveness can be overwhelming.

The competition this year in the lacrosse community has been especially high for RHS compared to other sports and other towns. The girls section is currently #5 in the nation and that title is not held

lightly. In addition, the team's roster is full of talented athletes, many of whom have committed for the same sport, such as Notre Dame commit Jackie Wolak who has been a powerhouse for the school and helped Ridgewood ascend to the spot they have. The boys have also proven to stand out amongst the crowd being placed at #4 in Nj.com's "Top 20".

Many teams in RHS have felt that the competition this year has been a lot higher than in previous years, but it has helped them focus on winning rather than bring them down. Such optimism can be seen through Ridgewood's Track & Field program which showed they were no less than magnificent at the Penn Relays. Each athlete showcased the school's high level of talent among some of the nations best athletes. This expectation itself wields immense pressure, but the students did not fail to deliver.

Given that Ridgewood's athletic program is one of the best, there will always be a sense of increased competition year to year. Regardless of the pressure, the athletes still treat each other as family which is what truly makes RHS a different and unique place compared to other schools in the county, state, and even country.

The Debate Over Run days

Donovan Joseph
staff writer

In almost every student government campaign speech, candidates advocated for the removal of run days. The majority of students feel strongly about getting rid of the twenty minute runs that we all experience during some point of the school year. However, myself and many others still believe that the value of run days is underestimated and should be recognized by the student body.

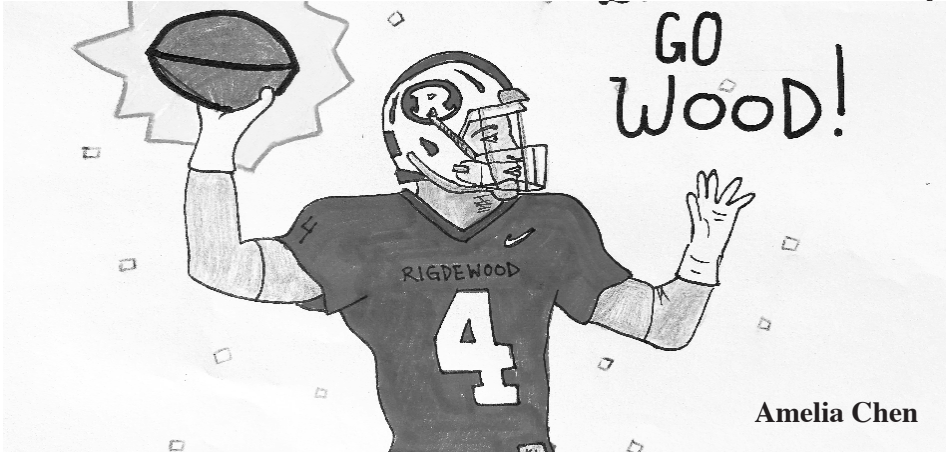
Several students have offered alternatives to run days, which includes replacing them with various sports. Playing basketball in the gym instead of running sounds fun, yet a handful would end up standing around in the corner of the room and not get the exercise they would have received during a run day. Another proposal that has been made is that in-season athletes should not have to participate in run days. These proponents argue that athletes already get the exercise they need during a practice or a game. That is a viable proposal, yet students will take advantage of the rule. It will be difficult for the school to verify whether a student is actually getting the exercise equivalent to a

twenty minute run during practice.

Overall, a number of these individuals do not understand that run days offer more benefits than just physical gains. Exercising also enhances brain activity and alleviates stress. Therefore, teens could not be exercising at a better time than right in the middle of the school day. Students should use run days to listen to music, talk to friends, or just relax in a relieving environment.

Personally, one complaint that I have with run days is the redundancy of running in circles around the track. Now that we use Runkeeper, which tracks average pace as well as the route at which a student ran, we should be able to run to different places around town. We are all old enough to handle running on our own. If students were able to run along the stream across from RHS or at the duck pond, run days would get much more positive feedback.

Although students dread run days, once everyone starts running, we all realize that it is not as big of a deal as we make it out to be. Before you know it, the teacher blows the whistle and it is over. Run days may be unpopular, but they are the only exercise that some students get in a day and should not be removed from our school's wellness curriculum.



Baseball and Softball Thrive

Kevin Collier & Sophie Howard
staff writers

RHS Baseball and Softball are off to a strong start this upcoming season. The baseball team has been being ranked number 5 by NJ.com in the Big North Conference Division and has a solid 14-3 record as of May 13th. On the other hand, the softball team has also been highly ranked at number 6 by NJ.com in the Big North Conference Division and has a strong 14-5 record. The baseball team is driven to have a repeat win in the North I Group IV championship this year following up on the 2018 baseball team's record.

With wins against Glen Ridge, Hackensack, Northern Highlands, and Teaneck, RHS's baseball season is expected to be extremely successful. In addition, the softball girls have achieved victories against Glen Ridge, Hackensack, Northern Highlands, and Teaneck.

Both teams have strong bonds which have helped them become so successful in the past few years. Senior Kristen Yee says, "Our team has been playing together basically since we were in third grade. As a team, we've been through so much so whatever happens, I think we all want to be able to look back

and remember accomplishing something great together for our last run." Varsity star Payton Angus, who has been on the team since her freshman team, also shared that "we are really close as a team, basically a family. We all play for each other which makes us really successful." Similarly, the boys baseball team has become very close over the last few years. Varsity catcher Brian Skettini stated, "we have a great team and I have become closer with everyone on this team as the season continues."

Even the JV baseball team is growing closer together as the season continues. Junior Varsity player George Hadfield says, "JV baseball has been very fun this year. Us juniors and sophomores have bonded extremely well. We are 16-2 this season and just keep on winning with the JV tournament and semi-finals coming up." The Junior varsity team anticipates a successful end to another outstanding season.

As their seasons near their end, Varsity baseball and softball are preparing for the playoffs and have high hopes of competing well. With both teams having solid start to the season, Ridgewood could be the North I Group IV champion for baseball and softball this year.



Spotlight on Fencing

Theresa Cundiff
staff writer

When you think of RHS Athletics, which sports come to mind first? Probably lacrosse, football, or maybe even soccer. However, there are plenty of successful but less popular sports at RHS that are often overlooked and forgotten. One club of these clubs is fencing.

Fencing is a one vs. one contested event where the objective is to not get hit with a weapon while attempting to do so to your opponent. Matches are three, three-minute rounds in length. Sophomore fencing club participant Francesca Alvidrez informed me that "there are three different types of weapons, Foil, Saber and Épée, and I fence Épée."

When I questioned Alvidrez about her experience with the fencing team, she explained that "the high school does not have an official fencing 'team'. We just have a club and we are trying to get the athletic director to

make it an official team." Alvidrez stated that "this year with the school team, we practiced a couple of times a week with footwork and bouts. We would be split up for bouts because there were both Saber and Épée fencers there, so Saber would fence each other and same with Épée." A "fencing bout" is simply the term used to describe a match where the goal is to be the first to reach fifteen points. Alvidrez told me that she normally practices at an outside club and takes private lessons a few times a week, but she would definitely become more involved at Ridgewood if it were to become an official sport.

A great fencer must possess agility, endurance, precision, strategy, and flexibility. Fencers must stay focused and mentally strong when facing the intense conditions of combat. This undoubtedly sounds worthy of the consideration of a RHS sport and hopefully, this club will blossom into the athletic program where it deserves to be.



An Edge to Athletics



Claire Sullivan
staff writer

In the past few years, college has become harder to get into than ever before. Acceptance rates are decreasing, and colleges are growing more selective each year. The applicant pools are more competitive than ever: at selective schools, all of the applying students have a plethora of academic achievements. A 4.0 GPA and High Honor Roll are impressive feats, but when all the applicants have similar accomplishments, it is hard to stand out. As a result, extracurriculars, like sports, play a powerful role in getting into college.

Students that have been committed to a sport possess many strong character traits. Student athletes must have good time management skills in order to balance their school work and sport. They also must have great communication and leadership skills. Having these strengths help the personality development of an athlete. Student athletes also have to learn from their failures. Losing games teaches lessons and encourages toughness to high schoolers. All of these attributes are certainly characteristics of a student that any college would like to have on campus.

Extremely talented high schools athletes can be given special treatment when it comes to the application process. They can be provided scholarships, recruited, or even accepted because of their athletic achievements. A student who fits this description is

Ashley Blaka. She is only a sophomore and has recently verbally committed to play Division I Soccer at Dartmouth upon graduating from RHS.

"Colleges are definitely uneasy about recruiting younger players lacking test scores and other criteria," Blaka stated. "But I have an advantage coming to Ridgewood High School compared to other high school athletes. I think good colleges trust the education I am receiving here."

Despite her age, Blaka impressed college coaches with her skills, both athletically and characteristically. The recruiting process takes a lot of time and commitment: Blaka has spent a lot of time travelling around the country with her team.

"I enjoyed the process because I love soccer," Blaka explained. "So it did not really feel like any extra work for me. Getting recruited by colleges for my sport has proven that doing what you love can benefit you in every aspect of your life, including academics."

As aforementioned, athletes learn abilities they will need later in life which can flourish in many other ways. While sports can give applicants an edge in applying, playing sports is definitely not a mandatory extracurricular to get into college. Sports may help some students get recruited to a college they may not be able to get into otherwise, but in most situations, playing sports is just a great opportunity to learn, compete, and have fun, while simultaneously being a great activity to have a resume.

The Hardest Level of Intensity



Grace Gluckow
staff writer

Which sport is truly the most demanding or difficult? This question has been pondered and argued by various experts. According to ESPN, this label is based on endurance, strength, power, speed, agility, flexibility, nerve, durability, hand-eye coordination, and analytic aptitude: the skills that only some can become elite in.

Boxing is listed on ESPN as "the toughest sport in the world." Not only does boxing require all of the aforementioned skills, but it also requires a high pain tolerance. It also has a psychological factor make it even more challenging, as it makes you feel nervous which leads to fatigue. Boxing is notably linked with death too: the worst brain injuries occur in the sport.

Ice hockey is the second most demanding sport according to ESPN because of the necessary application of power, speed, durability, hand-eye coordination, and analytic aptitude. Before starting one's career in hockey, a player has to master skating. Then, the


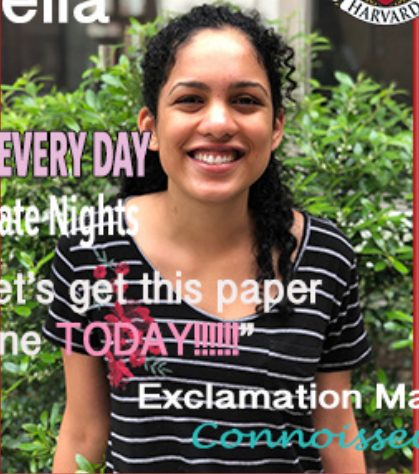
athlete has to learn how to play in the game with other skaters on blades going at high speeds with quick reaction times. Ice hockey is considered to be one of the fastest-pace sports which makes it one of the most challenging but also unique. Skaters speeds can be up to or even faster than 29 mph and pucks are regularly clocked at 100+ mph!

At number three is football. Football requires strength, power, speed, and durability. These each come into play based on each position. Many who do not play find the sport difficult to understand which proves exactly how complicated the game is. Playbooks are not only full of plays, but each player must know their assignment, their teammates assignments, and watch film on their opponents. In addition, many have heard of the serious injuries that come with playing football, from concussions to brain damage. Football is not only physically hard, but demanding as it requires quick decision making.

Overall, there are many difficult sports that are challenging in their own ways. What sport do you think is the most difficult?

High Times SEN19RS

Swathi Kella



On EVERY DAY of Late-Nights
“Let’s get this paper done TODAY!!!!!!”
Exclamation Mark Connoisseur

Editor-in-Chief

Christine Han



In Every Class Ever
“I’m TIRED”
Professional Food Fighter

Editor-in Chief

Daniel Greenman



Favorite Pastime
“Get Interviews”
Brunner’s Fav

Editor at Large

Grace McLaughlin



“Wait guys, do we have High Times today?”
Anonymous Senior

News Editor

Annie Probert



Deep Thoughts
“Does anyone know what the Roman Numerals on the front page mean?”
Cookie Contributor

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Janus Kwong



On pronouncing wafers correctly
“It’s pronounced WAH-FERS”
Part Time Soup Dumpling

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Talia Rosen



Struggling at Late Nights
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On the What is Art Debate:
“Anything counts as ART if you think about it long enough”
Professional Eddie O’Keefe Roaster

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Lara Baskin



“That’s WACK attack”
The GOON

Arts Editor

Evie Cullen



Question Everything
“Do I REALLY need to come today?”
Graphics Editor?

Graphics Chief



Erin Kim



“Cutting your noodles is a sign of weakness”
Clementine Connoseiur

Graphics Editor

Danielle Poole



On the job 24/7
“I need to take a picture of THIS!”
Instagram Expert

Social Media

Derya Ekin



“I gotta get a pic for the gram!”
Crafty Captioner

Social Media