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# The High Times

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## NJ DECA State Conference

### *Record Year for Ridgewood High School*

**Rebecca Tomilchik**  
staff writer

On February 27, 2013, one hundred and eight Ridgewood High School students set out to Cherry Hill, New Jersey to participate in the 2013 state wide DECA conference. The students competing had been preparing for months, and were hoping to obtain a spot at the 2013 ICDC conference. A typical day at the competition consisted of either one written test, and one to two role plays, or a presentation. If the students had scored high enough to proceed into the finalist round, then they competed once more, and had to wait anxiously for their results. The role plays and tests are all specific to a certain event, specifically concerning a branch of financial or business services. The presentations, which were either about research papers or chapter projects, were about anything from a made-up company, to an event sponsored by DECA. After two days of challenging, written tests, role plays, and presentations, Ridgewood students sat on the edges of their seats as their competition results were announced. After the closing ceremony, thirty-three Ridgewood students were awarded the opportunity to compete at a national level, in Anaheim, California.

Mrs. Karen Mendez, one of the Ridgewood DECA chapter advisors, had this to say about the results: "I am proud of all the

to participate in healthy competition, but also brings students a better understanding of the business world, and helps propel students into thriving colleges and careers. During



*Students receive awards on the final day of the New Jersey DECA State Competition for both individual and group performances.*

RHS students for their performance in both the preliminary and finalist rounds of competition. Ridgewood DECA has been acknowledged by other advisors as fierce competitors."

DECA not only allows students

this year's DECA state conference, a Ridgewood High School student was awarded the Northern Region scholarship for his commitment to the RHS DECA chapter. Jack Bragg, a Ridgewood senior and co-president of the

Ridgewood chapter, was given a check for \$1000 for his hard work and dedication to DECA. All students have the opportunity to be awarded these types of scholarships, which are sponsored by DECA or businesses affiliated with the chapter such as Men's Warehouse. These scholarships recognize the time and effort these students have dedicated to their high school's DECA chapter.

During this conference, the state officials were coming to the end of their high school careers, and had to pass on their positions and responsibilities to new candidates. Emily Burnside, a junior at Ridgewood High School, was running for state recording secretary. After five strenuous months of prep work, and an arduous campaign, Emily was elected to the position she had hoped to fill. As of last Monday, Emily is the official state recording secretary, and will begin to fulfill her responsibilities as such immediately. Her duties include attending monthly NJ DECA meetings, and recording the information discussed.

All in all, this year's DECA state conference was very successful, and the RHS DECA chapter is looking forward to competing at the 2013 ICDC in Anaheim, California.

## Rowathon

**Curran McSwigan**  
editor-in-chief

On Saturday, March 3 Ridgewood Crew hosted it's annual "Rowathon" which featured its athletes rowing on an erg machine in Van Neste Square. Ridgewood Crew, although made up solely of Ridgewood High School students, is a non-profit organization that receives no public funding from the district. Rowathon is one of numerous fundraising activities sponsored by Ridgewood Crew in order to raise money for new equipment, coaching costs, transportation and race entry fees. The weather turned out to be beautiful as the unusually warm March day melted away any of the snow left behind from the weeks snowfall. Upwards of sixty members of the Ridgewood Crew team spent their Saturday morning rowing several hours as community members watched on, and bought baked goods sold by the program in order to raise money. Ridgewood Crew Senior CJ Chiamonte commented on Rowathon saying "It was a really fun day, a lot of old coaches and former rowers came to visit and it was fun to spend time with everyone. The event was greatly successful as it proved to be a beautiful day to kick off the start of what is sure to be a great season for Ridgewood Crew, as well as a way to raise more money for the organization.

## There's Music in the Air at RHS

**Bradley Alsop**  
arts and entertainment editor

The New Players Company will be performing the musical *Aida* from Thursday March 21, through Sunday March 24. The opera turned musical is being directed by Ridgewood High School's very own English teacher, Louisa Luisi. *Aida* was initially an opera, composed by Giuseppe Verdi, one of the most famous composers to ever live. The opera was then re-structured into a musical, composed by revered musicians Elton John and Tim Rice. It premiered on Broadway in 2000, running consecutively until 2004. The story is based in Ancient Egypt, and centers on the eponymous character, a Nubian slave girl. Unbeknownst to everyone but the servant Mereb, Aida is the true princess of Nubia. She becomes enslaved along with everyone in Nubia, but attracts the attention of Radames, the captain of the Egyptian army, who is the fiancée of Amneris, the princess of Egypt. Without giving much of the plot away, *Aida* is a classic portrayal of unrequited love, deceit, and struggle. Leading actor Ben Currey says "This has an amazing score, a well written script, and our director Louisa Luisi brought this show to its full potential. The musical performance will be nothing short of sterling; the New Players never fail to impress. *Aida* is

portrayed by Meghan McCarthy, Radames by Alec Cohen, Amneris by Allie Seibold, and Mereb by Mr. Currey. Zoser, the Chief Minister of Egypt and Radames's father, is being portrayed by Ryen Martines, while Nehebka, the Nubian slave representative of the masses, will be performed by Julianna



*New Players rehearse a scene from Aida in preparation for their shows this weekend.*

Peacock. A near sixty-person ensemble, complemented by highlighted singers and dancers, will comprise the background and populace of the Nubian and Egyptian populations. The shows will begin at 8:00 in the Little Theater.

## Library Update

**Curran McSwigan**  
editor-in-chief

The Board of Education has approved funding for \$170,000 of work for the Learning Commons project, this is in addition to the \$400,000 already taken from the district's capital reserve account for the project in November. The district's capital reserve money is filled by unexpended funds and not directly from taxpayer money, which means the board does not have to go to taxpayers in a referendum to pay for these projects. As stated in a feature on the Learning Commons last month, the library renovations is expected to cost around \$925,000 and provide a completely revitalized research and study space. The proposition calls for an extension of the library, creating conference rooms, and new technology all around. The most recent donation by the Board of Education will go towards relocating and expanding the Main Data Facility at Ridgewood High School as well as rerouting both data and fiber optic cables. These developments will also help with Dr. Gorman's initiatives to encourage the use of technology for research by the students during school. The administrators even hope that it will allow both students and teachers the ability to access their personal school accounts and work from any electronic device.



# News

## Chinese Club

Theo Hong  
photo editor

Seemingly worlds away, China hosts a far different education system than that of the United States. Ridgewood Students gathered in the Chinese classroom on Monday, March 11, to listen to guest speaker Dr. Gang Zhou, resident and Fulbright Scholar from China who currently teaches at Bergen Community College. In his presentation, Dr. Zhou detailed the specifics of the Chinese education system. Students complete the “gaokao,” or college entrance exam, and it essentially decides the level of college a student goes to. Thus, students spend months cramming and taking extreme measures to study for this stressful exam. In terms of post-baccalaureate work, graduate school is generally a must to obtain a high level of work in the country. He drew a juxtaposition with the American system, in which post-graduate degrees, and sometimes even bachelors degrees are not always entirely necessary in obtaining a job. The presentation raised essential questions about the United States college system. The necessity of a college educa-



Chinese Fulbright Scholar Dr. Gang Zhou explains the Chinese education system.

tion to get a job, or lack thereof, combined with the rising costs discourages many Americans today from attending private institutions, or college at all. As one can see in China, an economic powerhouse, the stressful effects of the academic and textbook-oriented education system, that emphasizes schooling can be weighed with the positive effects it has on the economy and international standing. An analysis of the benefits and detriments of both systems were addressed in the presentation and left students with a broader understanding of the United States of America’s education system compared to what is happening on the other side of the plant.

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## Sophomore Semi-Formal

Curran McSwigan  
editor-in-chief

On March 6, 2013 Ridgewood High School held its annual semi-formal for sophomore students at the Tides Estate in North Haledon, New Jersey. The class of 2015 gathered for the evening to relax and dress up for a fun night with their peers. The semi-formal is always scheduled during the HSPA testing week, a time

when most students do not have a lot of schoolwork, giving the sophomores the opportunity to take a much needed night off from the stresses of school. The sophomore boys pictured below were enjoying the annual event, which features a sit down dinner and a long night of music and dancing with friends. The sophomore semi-formal is a great social opportunity that provides students with the chance to spend time with friends in a formal setting.



## Montclair State’s French Day

Sarah Davis  
staff writer

On Friday, March 1, students in French three, four, and five took a field trip to Montclair State University for French Day. This is the first French Day offered by Montclair State University, and the students were able to take two of the five offered sessions. One of the more popular workshops was *Tasting France*, where the students had the opportunity to taste traditional French food from Provence, Bretagne, and Aquitaine. Another workshop, *Global French Translation*, introduced students to translating and interpreting. The students could also attend *Singing Culture: on the Importance of Song in African Culture* where students lis-

tened to and sang African songs. An informational workshop about Quebec taught the importance of hockey and folk song in Quebec. Another workshop entitled *Exploring Morocco and Tunisia* explored those countries through films. At the end of the day students ate lunch and then gathered in the Montclair ballrooms to view the winning movies about francophone culture that students from various schools had submitted. All students on the field trip enjoyed the trip and had the opportunity to bond with their fellow French classmates. Furthermore, this field trip broadened students’ horizons on French culture. Hopefully, next year’s French classes will have the same opportunity to attend to French day at Montclair State University.

## Fun with Physics at Ridgewood High School

Elizabeth Kopec  
editor-in-chief

On Friday March 8, Dave Maiullo, faculty member of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Rutgers University came to RHS to give demonstrations on physics. During periods three and six, students from all grades saw various demonstrations showing physics in the “real world.”

To demonstrate inertia Mr. Maiullo pulled out a tablecloth from underneath a burning candle and glass vase. The tablecloth was easily removed with a quick pull and the vase and candle stayed in place. Mr. Maiullo attached a bowling ball to a string and showed how when he pulled the string up slowly the bowling ball would rise with it, but if he pulled quickly the string broke. This is because of jerk, which is the rate of change of acceleration.

Another demonstration involved Mr. Maiullo sitting on a cart and having the air of a balloon propel him. The force from the air from the balloon pushed the cart in the opposite direction. The same set up was replacing the balloon with a fire extinguisher, which propelled him even further.

Mr. Maiullo proved Einstein’s famous mass-energy equivalence formula. It was proven that energy equals mass by shooting a lightweight ping-pong balls at 700 mph at soda cans. The soda cans were broken, pierced and bent out of shape. To demonstrate air pressure, the

air was sucked out from a metal barrel and the air pressure from all of the air above the barrel was heavy enough to cause the barrel to implode.

Towards the end of the presentation, Mr. Maiullo laid down on a bed of nails and another bed of nails was placed on him. Two student volunteers then stood on him and showed that he was not hurt because of equal distribution of force.

Mr. Maiullo has received various



Members of the Rutgers University Physics and Astronomy Department demonstrate real world applications of physics concepts for RHS students.

awards, including the Distinguished Service Citation and the Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Association of Physics Teachers and the Rutgers University President’s Award. He is also president of the Physics Instructional Resource As-

## From Dart to Finish

Theo Hong  
photo editor

It’s hunting season at Ridgewood High School. The beginning of the Spring season brings with it more than longer days and warmer weather. It also brings the tradition of the Dart Wars here at Ridgewood. It is an annual competition in which students form teams of four and face off in a bracket-based competition. Students essentially have to hit members of the opposing team (outside of school grounds) with Nerf darts to eventually eliminate an opposing team, or else face off in a direct “shoot-out” at the end of the week.

Dart Wars was founded in 2005 and since then it has attracted students of all grades, genders, races, creeds, and religious faiths. This year, over one-hundred and fifty students from all grades are participating in the competition. Though the beginning couple of weeks consist of preliminary matches and round robins, the elimination rounds are often filled with intense dedication by the student players. Camping out early in the morning, hours of dart gun modifications, and constant caution whenever one is outside are not out of the ordinary activities for students participating in the months-long competition. It takes a great deal of commitment to eventually be declared the winning team whom traditionally receives a \$1000 cash prize. However, there are some restrictions. “If I see a Nerf gun on you in school, your team is out for the week,” says co-coordinator Aiden Kates. This is to prevent any disruption in students’ schoolwork, as well as to avoid trouble from the school administration.

This year Dart Wars is being led by Kates and senior Macky Schoff. In addition to skill the competition also takes a certain amount of wit as team names tend to range from creative wordplay to downright bizarre. For instance Matt Sehrsweeney’s senior team’s name is, *We’re All Really Handsome*. “Well, I mean, we’re all, really handsome,” said Sehrsweeney in explanation.

sociation. He has been featured on NPR, Science Channel, Discovery Channel, and National Geographic Network. Mr. Maiullo wrote Demo a Day in Physics about over three hundred physics demonstrations.

Not only is Mr. Maiullo very knowledgeable about physics, but he also is a captivating presenter. He has been giving physics demonstrations in the United States and Canada for twenty years.

A generous grant through the Ridgewood Education Fund and Valley Hospital enabled students to watch this amazing and fun physics demonstrations that students would otherwise not see at the school.



## American Studies Visits Nation’s Capital

**Robin Smith**  
staff writer

After school on Thursday, March 14, thirty-seven juniors from the American Studies program at Ridgewood High School boarded a bus and headed to Washington, D.C. Ms. Hans and Ms. Riordan, the American Studies English and United States history teachers, respectively, accompanied them. The trip was one of the various American history-based field trips that are an integral part of the American Studies program. The Washington trip, like all American Studies trips, was jam-packed with visits to historical sites, monuments, and museums.

After the long bus ride to the nation’s capital, the sightseeing began with a twilight visit to the Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam War Memorial, Korean War Memorial, and World War II Memorial. Melanie Taylor commented saying, “My favorite part of the trip was definitely seeing all the monuments at night. Because we saw them so late they were not crowded at all and were lit up beautifully.”

On Friday morning, the first stop was the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where students learned about the horrifying plight of European Jews during the World War II. The museum featured many informative exhibits on the rise of Nazi power in Europe and concentration camps, as well as a somber memorial room where visitors could light candles in remembrance of the victims of the genocide.

Next, the class visited the Supreme Court, the home of the United State’s judiciary branch. A tour of the Capitol building gave the students a look into where the legislative branch of the government convenes. Students enjoyed seeing statues of their favorite historical figures throughout the building, and the tour guide was impressed with the students’ knowledge

of and enthusiasm for American history. Students were then allowed a few unscheduled hours to explore the National Mall by themselves before meeting at the Amphitheater of the Ronald Reagan Building to see a performance by the comedy troupe The Capitol Steps. The hilarious group performs political satire, mostly in the form of parody songs. After the performance, another round of nighttime memorial visits brought the students to the Martin Luther King Jr., Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Thomas Jefferson Memorials.



*The American Studies Junior students gather around the Capitol building, one of many stops on their 3 day trip.*

Saturday morning was spent at Arlington National Cemetery, where students visited the grave of John F. Kennedy, toured the Arlington House (the former home of Robert E. Lee), and watched the Changing of the Guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers. The International

Spy Museum was next, where students explored the fascinating world of espionage throughout history, including a special exhibition commemorating the 50th anniversary of James Bond. David Marchionni said that the Spy Museum was his favorite part of the trip, “I really enjoyed the James Bond exhibit because I’ve been in love with the movie series since I was a child.” Finally, the trip was concluded with the Newseum, a museum dedicated to journalism and media. The favorite exhibit among students was the gallery of Pulitzer Prize-winning photography. Allison Salzman found the exhibit very interesting, “Seeing all the photographs that were on display from the 1940s to the present day was a great way to see how American and world history unfolded.”

The one downfall of the trip came in the disappointment of not being allowed to visit the White House, but even with that setback, the American Studies students greatly enjoyed their time in Washington. They departed back to Ridgewood extremely tired, but with a large amount of knowledge and a better understanding of United States history and government.

American Studies is a two-year program for sophomores and juniors who are interested in American history. Students in the program are accepted during the second semester of freshman year after an application process. The program consists of a United States history course and an English course each. The two years give students a chance to learn about American history on a deeper level through the use of primary source documents, American literature, and trips to historic places. Besides Washington D.C., other trips include Williamsburg, Virginia, Boston, and New York City’s Lower East Side. These trips provide students the memorable and educational experience of learning about historic events where they actually took place.

## Breakfast Grill

**Jackson Stone-Esposito**  
news editor

On Friday March 15 Ridgewood High School introduced a new Breakfast Grill to the usual menu. This new eating option is sponsored by the Pomptonian,. The new grill costs \$3.00 for a variety of different made-to-order meals, such as Belgium Waffles, French Toast or eggs with hash browns. Additionally, a student will receive a free eight-ounce coffee with the purchase of a Breakfast Grill meal.

The cafeteria typically only serves a few assorted muffins and coffee, but the addition of these meals allows students to enjoy a full breakfast if they did not have enough time to eat one at home.



*Waffles are one of the new additions to the RHS breakfast menu*

The addition of the waffle maker has been immensely popular with the students, as shown by the long lines that have been formed since the first day the grill opened. The made-to-order meals are quite inexpensive for a full breakfast, and it is clear that many students have taken advantage of the deal. It is uncertain at the moment whether the popularity of the program will prompt the cafeteria to extend the program’s length, or to at least revive the program at some point in the near future. Still, it is for certain that the Ridgewood High School student body is hungry for more.

## World News

### First Argentinian Pope Elected

**Daniel Park**  
staff writer

Thursday, February 28, 2013 marked the first time in 595 years that a Pope has resigned from his position as leader of the Roman Catholic Church. On that day, in Vatican City, Benedict presided over his final mass as Catholic pontiff. But what brought on this retirement? Benedict XVI attributes his resignation to old age hindering his ability to properly lead the Catholics, and after



*Pope Francis waves to onlookers as he makes his first public appearance at St. Peters at the Vatican.*

years of settling sexual abuse controversies, visiting multiple countries and praying deeply for his faith, he came to the decision to settle in, for an undisclosed amount of time, at Castel Gandolfo, the papal summer residence for a quiet life of continuing to pursue

the life of a priest. He will still get to retain all the titles and eminence of his former position but he will no longer be the head of the Catholic Church.

After saying a final blessing from a window of Castel Gandolfo, the ex-pope began his retirement, with thousands sadly bidding farewell to the pontiff as he ended his tenure. Ridgewood students were reluctant to see him off, one sophomore claiming that by leaving, Benedict “showed a lack of commitment to his beliefs and morals.” Another student was quoted as saying, “I feel that a man of God, chosen by God, should not have the right to quit.”

The conclave began the selection process for the new pope on March 12, 2013 and emerged after two days and five votes. Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio of Argentina took on the name Francis (the patron saint of animals) and became the 266th Pope (and the first Jesuit pope). The saint is “associated with peace, poverty and simplicity”. Francis’ election makes him the first Pope from the American continent, the second Pope from outside of Europe (the first being Syria’s Gregory III of 735 years before). The press feels Francis was an unexpected choice and not a strong candidate.

Benedict refused to follow his predecessors in shepherding Catholics from his deathbed, and now the Catholic Church has a new and capable leader. We at RHS have witnessed the departure of a pope from public life- but not from this world.

### New York City Soda Ban Revoked

**Sumita Rajpurohit**  
news editor

In an attempt to promote healthier eating and reduce the rapidly rising obesity rate, especially among children, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has been trying to pass legislation banning the sale of excessively sugary drinks. The mayor and his supporters often cite the fact that the city’s obesity rate is currently 24%, up from 18% in 2002. If approved, the new law would have banned any drinks more than 16 ounces and containing more than 25 calories per ounce. However, it would exclude alcohol and milk-based drinks. It also would not affect drinks sold in bottles in grocery stores, but rather only fountain drinks sold in places like restaurants, fast food places, and movie theaters. The ban was scheduled to go into effect on March 12, and offenders would be subject to a \$200 fine if caught violating the law.

But the law would have not affected all retailers , including 7-Eleven who sell their famous “Big Gulps”, which are a whopping 30 ounces.

Those retailers regulated by the state, chains like 7-Eleven, cannot not be effected by a city ban.

There are many people who were opposed to the ban. Many worried about the adverse effects of the decreased sales on the industry as a whole. This is especially true in places like movie theaters who rely on

these drinks for a significant portion of their revenues. Some people also feel that even if the ban is meant to promote healthy eating, it infringes on their rights instead. However, Mayor Bloomberg feels that “people are dying every day- this is not a joke-”, and that the money lost is a small price to pay to combat obesity and diabetes.



*Mayor Bloomberg’s controversial ban on sugary drinks over 16oz was struck down before it could be put into effect.*

On Monday March 11, a New York judge struck down the bill shortly before it was supposed to go into effect. The ruling judge stated that the numerous loopholes in the law, including the lack of a ban on refills, which make it ineffective. The ruling was seen as a defeat for Mayor Bloomberg, though he still plans to appeal to higher courts to uphold the law in the coming months.

Some businesses, regardless of the ban are even enforcing the elimination of large sodas on their own terms, stating “Its about making a change.” This sort of initiative is not as common place as Bloomberg would like and he is continuing to push for reconsideration.



Opinion

Diplomat or Dimwit: Rodman’s Failed Attempt at Playing Ambassador

Connor Anovick  
op-ed writer

In recent months a threat to America has been growing. After the death of North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-il many hoped that the countries next leader would be a more diplomatic and approachable. Unfortunately, we received the opposite, a more aggressive leader in the form of Kim Jong-Un. Since the start of Kim Jong-Un’s leadership back in April 2012, it has been clear that one thing has been at the center of North Korea’s agenda, nuclear development. The country began testing missile over the summer, which they claimed were not for nuclear warheads. The missile testing was largely a failure with many of the tests crashing or not lifting off correctly. However in early February of this year North Korea successfully set off a nuclear weapon underground in a testing area. Since then we have seen multiple threats made by North Korea about launching a nuclear attack on America. This is obviously a concerning situation. The threat of a nuclear attack is a serious issue not to be belittled or minimized. On top of this, the threat is being made by North Korea, a country which we have little to no positive diplomatic relations with. So in such a serious and sensitive situation most Americans assumed our best diplomatic experts were on the case. Individuals such as Bill Clinton who is infamous for his international appeal and diplomatic excellence were popular candidates for the delicate situation. Instead, in a shocking fashion, Dennis Rodman was sent to North Korea, where he watched basketball and mingled with Kim Jong-Un. For those unfamiliar with Dennis Rodman he is known for playing on the Chicago Bulls, starring in a pitiful 90’s action film, having a marital affair

with Madonna, and frequently dying his hair outrageous colors. In summation Dennis Rodman is a former NBA star, turned mediocre pop culture figure, who is now simply the occasional punch line to a late night joke. However, who are we to judge, sometime talent comes from unexpected places.



Dennis Rodman, former NBA star, discussing his trip to North Korea.

Kim Jong-Un clearly is not a fan of the traditional American diplomat so maybe Dennis Rodman could bring something new to the table to relate to North Korea’s leader, or maybe not. On Rodman’s trip he ran a basketball camp, watched a game of basketball with King Jong-Un and traveled around the country. So after spending so much time with Kim Jong-Un, a man content on destroying the American way of life, what did Rodman accomplish? Upon Rodman’s return he sat down for an interview informing the public on the success of his trip. He showed up to his ABC interview wear-

ing a jacket covered in pictures of money, a purple polo hat, sunglasses, and multiple large nose and lip rings. I certainly didn’t expect a man who once sported green hair to come out in “Suit and Tie,” but on that night his attire stood out as an early warning for the rest of his interview. To begin Dennis

worse, with Rodman saying that Kim Jong-Un was a great leader because of the respect his people have for him, Stephanopoulos pointed out, “aren’t they forced to.” Rodman responded to this question with “well, I say no”. Glad to see that the man, who the CIA says knows more about Kim Jong-Un than any other American doesn’t even understand the nature of a communist dictators relationship with his citizens. The seven-minute interview is full of incoherent, misguided, and uninformed statements made by Rodman on his newfound friend. The interview itself is almost too infuriating to watch. To put it lightly Rodman is one of the last human beings I would send to open diplomatic relations with anyone. He has even said he “loves” Kim Jong-Un and that he has found a “life long friend.” I am relieved to see that he has become friends with Kim Jong-Un, a dictator who hates everything about America, because I certainly hope Rodman is not an example of American values. He encompasses everything that is wrong with our country today, an arrogant free loader who provides nothing to society yet has been elevated to an astronomical position of power thanks to our country’s obsessive focus on sports and celebrity. I am infuriated by the fact that this is someone who holds any influence over our country’s bearings and outraged by his inappropriate behavior. Rodman says he has plans to not only to return to North Korea but to also make a trip to the Vatican to meet the Pope. It appears that Rodman believes he has obtained even more power and influence from this trip. What does it say about us that Dennis Rodman is our international diplomat? I don’t know about everyone else but I didn’t think this would be the way the second Korean War or World War III would be playing out.

HSPAs: Pre-Exam Exercise

Elise Chelak  
staff writer

One of the only things harder than getting up early in the morning is getting up early to take an exam. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of the week of March 4, juniors at Ridgewood High School took the state-mandated High School Proficiency Assessment exam that all students must pass in order to fulfill the state’s minimum graduation requirements. While the rest of the school had a three-hour sleep

test on the first and last day [but noticed on the middle day that she] did not feel like she was producing her best effort.” What Rhonda liked most about the yoga sessions, besides the physical activity to get the blood circulating, was the mental relief and relaxation that overcame her before taking the test. Although I did not take part in the exercise sessions offered by the school, I did walk to school on the first day of the tests. On, the following two days of the test I was able to get a ride to school, and I noticed a clear positive correla-



Students do yoga with Ms. Kameno before HSPA exams.

in, the juniors took a lengthy exam. For the benefit of the juniors and to help them get a higher score, Ridgewood principal, Dr. Gorman, organized exercise sessions of fifteen minutes in which the juniors could choose to participate in. Studies have shown that fifteen minutes of exercise can positively impact a student’s score by kick starting the brain along with the body. RHS junior Tatiana Rhonda attended the yoga session instructed by Ms. Kameno on the first and third day. Rhonda said she, “felt better during the

tion between getting physical activity right before the test, where I was able to think better, faster, and clearer. I personally endorse the idea of taking part in brief physical activity before any type of test, whether it is the HSPAs, SATs, or ACTs. The physical activities one can engage in before an exam range from basketball to yoga, or even light warm ups. The key is choosing an aerobic activity that will help to circulate the blood so that ultimately one may increase cognitive control and ability to pay attention.

Heermance Parking

Betty Chen  
staff writer

Heermance Place has been open to the public for years, but the majority of Ridgewood Village Council is most likely going to agree that the parking spaces should be for teachers only. It has always been on a first-come, first-serve basis. Getting to school by car is definitely more convenient than walking, and for the past three years I have been coming to school by car. However, this year, I walk to school and it takes me about twenty-five minutes. Even

dents living close to school, I think it is much better and healthier for them to walk to school rather than drive. On the other hand, not all students feel the same way. “I think that it should be public parking to students, residents, and faculty. I used to fight for those spots. Some students wake up very early to get a Heermance spot, if students can do it staff should do the same if they cannot find parking,” says Lizzy Herberling-Yang, senior. This is especially true for students who live far from school and also require parking. If Heermance will be assigned for



Heermance Parking is currently reserved for students only.

though this cuts in on my sleep, a few minutes walk is not really a big problem for young teenagers, especially when compared to that of teachers. Teachers carry paperwork and come and go often throughout the day. I am not saying that teachers are superior to students as people, but being a teacher is a career. If teachers are late to work, there are bigger consequences for them, as opposed to those for students. The problem will only get worse as more students are enrolling, more teachers will be needed. For stu-

teacher parking the school needs to find a solution for students as well. It could discourage students from participating in activities or sports as they will miss the bus, and parents will need to pick them up. “[Parking] makes more sense for seniors who stay after school for a long time. I live so far away, and the walk from Vets to the high school is definitely not as bad as the walk to my house,” says Kathryn Leung, senior. Parking has always been a problem at RHS and no matter what it is a problem that seems without a solution.



# Opinion

## College Acceptance: Are you a Number or a Person?

**Sarah Sandler**  
opinion editor

It’s that time of year again. Between December and April, seniors begin to hear back from the colleges and universities they applied to. With this long process comes downfalls and triumphs, as well as inquiring friends, family, and peers who wish to know, “Have you decided where you are going to college yet?” Even though I am not a senior yet, the focus on colleges is already a daunting one. This has become a particular problem for me, especially. Like many people I know, when I visit a college campus, regardless of whether I loved the school or not, I want to get a sweatshirt. Does that mean it is my favorite school and I am applying there early decision? Absolutely not. I happen to just really like sweatshirts.

Since the beginning of junior year, I haven’t gone a day without wearing a college sweatshirt, and I haven’t gone a day without someone asking me about it. It has gotten so bad that I was in the grocery store last weekend, casually perusing cereals when a middle aged man approached me and questioned my sweatshirt. He asked if I attended the school, and if not, if I intended to apply. He even went so far as to say he knew someone who worked in the admissions office and if I wanted their phone number. Somewhat taken aback, I replied that I was still in high school and I had no idea if I was going to apply to that particular

school. The truth is that I have no idea yet which schools I want to apply to, let alone that one in particular. Needless to say, I abandoned the cereals and moved on to the produce section.

Whether it parents, teachers, peers, or even strangers in a cereal aisle there has become an overwhelming focus on grades, standardized test scores, college, and all things included in this realm. I agree that these things are important and can have an impact on your life, but in what way will it benefit you to know these details about other people? Students are already constantly comparing themselves to one another. A few thousandths of a point in your GPA can make all the difference when an inquiring mind wants to know. Standardized test scores are boasted, whether they are asked about or not. Your score will be the same whether you tell people or not, so why bother advertising it? If you are one of the ones who refrains from bragging, beware, because there’s no doubt peers will ask.

What students need to understand is that college admittance is based on more than numbers. Admissions counselors take into account the caliber of the classes you take and how well you do in them rather than just the exact number of your GPA. Also, the majority of admissions counselors have said that standardized test scores are one of the last and least important things they consider. With enough practice and retesting, anyone can get a decent score on the SATs or

ACTs. These assessments are not direct indicators of your intelligence.

What counselors care more interested in is who you are and what you have to say, as shown by your recommendations, essays, interviews, and extracurriculars. I sometimes wonder what happened to make the college



process this competitive. High school and college applications have become exponentially more stressful since the time of our parents. One can always blame the increased demand for college degrees in the work force, the culture of continuing education, or even the sweatshirts. Yet, there is one thing I know, it doesn’t matter what you wear or what other people think. Getting into college depends on you.

## Campus Center Turned Asylum

**Chloe Norell**  
staff writer

Recently there has been a lot of talk amongst students about the new installment of the campus center lights. While initially appearing to be an improvement to the campus center, students are quickly finding out that these lights are less-than-adequate. The illuminating qualities make the campus center appear bland, old fashioned, and similar to a horror-house asylum. This appearance has given the campus center a nickname of “Asylum” or “Interrogation Room” among students. Even though the campus center will never be perfect, its once friendly atmosphere has crossed into a realm of creepiness that seems to be a cross between a Juvenile Detention Center and prison. A good majority of the students seem to agree that the their beloved campus center has become a scene out of some type of weird Twilight Zone spin-off. This horror aspect may reflect the fact that the lights originally came from a graveyard.

These campus center lights are not new. In fact, they are the ones that resided in Benjamin Franklin Middle



School’s gym before being replaced. RHS took the old ones because our lights had been violating a code about the lumen-count (our lights were under count). While obviously our school has to obey the rules, the students are disgruntled because of how the lights have transformed the room with a gloomy ambiance. Students have taken notice of the deathly pale glow that is being cast by our new lights. The change is very noticeable and in the opinion of many students, it has not been a change for the better..

Eightoutofthetenstudentsurveyed firmly agreed that the new lights cast the campus center in an unfriendly atmosphere. The other two students surveyed had not even noticed the change in light, though once it was pointed out their reactions were negative all the same. It is always disappointing and frustrating to see that our school, which has such modern and up-to-date gyms, fields, and other recreational and academic facilities cannot find an adequate way to update and maintain the lights in one of the most used areas of the school. If this school can find close to a million dollars for renovations (that are not critically needed) for our school library, why can it not also find some additional money to pay for decent lighting. In fact our school could benefit from a lot of improvements, not only to lighting, but also to our air-conditioning system and most importantly our temperature control. These problems can be fixed with encouragement and positive pressure from students. There is nothing wrong with a good horror movie , but I don’t want to live in one.

## Too Cool for School: RHS’ Heating Problem

**Curran McSwigan**  
editor in chief

Early on in the week of March 11, Ridgewood High School experienced some maintenance issues that caused a lack of heat in a majority of the classrooms. As the week wore on there seemed to be nothing going on to fix the problem and the cold persisted throughout the building.

The chilly classrooms are being attributed to both a broken safety valve on the boiler as well as a major pipe that was leaking. Maintenance crews were called to work on the issue, but many classrooms were left without heat for several days, as the boilers were unable to sustain the pressure needed to reach the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor classrooms.

The gym area endured the worst of the situation, and is still waiting for heat to return. The school has even asked girl students with lockers in the team rooms to clear out their belongings so to allow for emergency repairs.

The constant cold in the building, especially in the classrooms facing Heermance Place, made it difficult for educators to teach. Many teachers made the decision to bring their classrooms to the cafeteria or campus center, deciding to forego lesson plans in exchange for a heated “study hall” period.

Yet not all teachers could afford to do this, and students found themselves breaking out their winter jackets to help tough out the uncomfortable cold for their classes.

Although there is no real way to predict such incidents from occurring, it is unfair to make students and faculty endure such uncomfortable conditions. A little cold is nothing to complain about, but some classrooms dipped into the fifties forcing teachers to decide whether tough it out or give up altogether.

Having to take a statistics test in the middle of the noisy cafeteria was less than ideal, as my teacher had no choice but to abandon our extremely frigid classroom. When the tempera-

ture starts to interfere with learning, teaching, and overall classroom performance the school needs to take some action in alleviating the discomfort caused by such a problem.

Although missing more school is out of the question at this point, a delayed opening or early dismissal to allow maintenance crews time and space to sort out the issue might have made solving the problem an easier and speedier process. Even spending some money on small makeshift heaters would have temporarily taken care of the lack of heat, and definitely would have come in handy if a similar incident were to occur again.

Currently, there are no guidelines in New Jersey that requires school districts to create a temperature-controlled environment within school facilities. The New Jersey Education Association is supporting a bill in the Senate that would set guidelines for proper air quality in school facilities, and make sure students are in an environment that is conducive to learning. If the temperature is too low or high, the quality of teaching, learning, and even attendance will likely suffer.

New York has already passed legislation that requires “indoor work spaces to be supplied with heat to maintain a temperature of not less than 65°F.” Those in the NJEA feel that New Jersey should be following suit with a set of temperature guidelines of their own, stating in the bill that if room temperatures drop below 63°F students and teachers should be relocated.

Perhaps, it is unrealistic to expect that all the classrooms in the school will be a toasty 70°F at all times, but when it is so cold that it is distracting to students and teachers something needs to be done, whether that thing is supplying portable heaters or even canceling class. The health of the students and faculty should not be jeopardized due to something that is out of their control, and having to suffer in the cold for 8 hours a day hardly seems fair.

## China’s Friend with Benefits

**Zion Chang**  
staff writer

What does China want from North Korea? Simply put, nothing. All China wants is its sphere of influence to remain over North Korea. Because of this ambition, China does not want North Korea to become independent or belligerent. It is the reason why China has stood as North Korea’s representative, patron, and protector for so long. China also wants to make sure there are not any factors destabilizing China because of the relationship. This means that ultimately China will not help the cause of creating peace that the US is looking for.

China has been the most critical of North Korea’s nuclear ambitions and will certainly continue to be the broker of North Korea’s relations with the outside world to keep North Korea a non-nuclear country. However, China wants to protect North Korea in order to keep the United States from reuniting the two Koreas, which would give the US a much larger geopolitical power in China’s sphere of influence.

It is a tightrope that China has walked for years, and although from



a certain view, China might seem to be seeking peace between North Korea and the rest of the world, it is only protecting its own power and influence in the region. For the rest of the world and the starving majority of North Koreans, the United Nations should make effort to persuade China to take all possible actions that can end North Korean tyranny, as China may be the only country who could accomplish it.



Features



Ashton Murray

Ashton Murray is the Head Custodian and has been working at Ridgewood High school for six years. He is one of the most seasoned members of the custodial staff. The high school is the first school he has worked at, despite having worked at various jobs since the age of fifteen. Though he admits he does not have much to compare RHS with Mr. Murray still feels that Ridgewood is a great place for kids to get a start in life, and serves as a place of true opportunity. He enjoys working with the other custodians who to get the job done. Mr. Murray’s favorite part of working at Ridgewood High School though is having the “opportunity to create an environment for kids to learn.” He jokingly stated, “Because we make sure the school is ready, there is no excuse not to learn!” Outside of work, he enjoys studying poetry, and enjoys very much playing the harmonica, the ukulele, and the guitar, all of which are talents he has performed for the students of Ridgewood. You can usually see Ashton Murray in the halls wearing a great big smile and ready to greet any student he sees.



Clementina Pena

Clementina Pena is, according to Ashton Murray, “the hardest working person in the school, and all the people love her.” Originally from Columbia, Ms. Pena has worked at Ridgewood High School for many years. She has previously worked at Drew University, but since transferring to Ridgewood, she states that she has encountered no real problems, and remains always impressed with size of the high school and the great academic and athletic great opportunities presented here. As long as her job for the day is completed, Ms. Pena says she is “content.” After finishing her tasks at Ridgewood, her “only other job is as a mother.” Ms. Pena is very proud of her son who just graduated from college, and her daughter who is currently deployed in the United States Navy.

The Custodial Workers of RHS

Jaesung Son  
staff writer

Each person in Ridgewood High School is in the building for a specific reason. Out of the numerous people in

presentations, and Asian festival. Just as students study for upcoming tests and quizzes for their classes, the custodians also prepare for check-ups from inspectors who come in regularly to see if the school’s sanitation



Some of the custodians in 2002.

the building, not much attention and praise is often given to the custodians. Everyone in Ridgewood has their own jobs and tasks, but of all of them it is the custodial staff that receives perhaps the least amount of acknowledgement or praise for their tireless efforts. There are two different types of janitors at Ridgewood High School. There is the morning crew who encounters situations such as wet floors due to spills and other liquid accidents, and then there is the evening crew who is typically assigned specific tasks that need to be accomplished to prepare the building for the next day of school. Although both of these types of tasks may be what students often envision when they picture the job of the custodial staff, the tasks of the janitors do not end there.

The janitors of Ridgewood High School maintain the Interior of the school, which include jobs such as changing the lights, cleaning up messes, and setting up the campus center for events such as well as the gyms and other areas for things such as wrestling, in-school

is up-to-date. According to the school janitor Ashton Murray, “The hardest part is when you have to repeat what you already did. You clean this table yesterday, knowing you have to clean the same table tomorrow.” Like most custodians, Ashton feels that students



The high school’s janitors in 1972. From left to right: George Roukas, John Young, and John Osbourne.

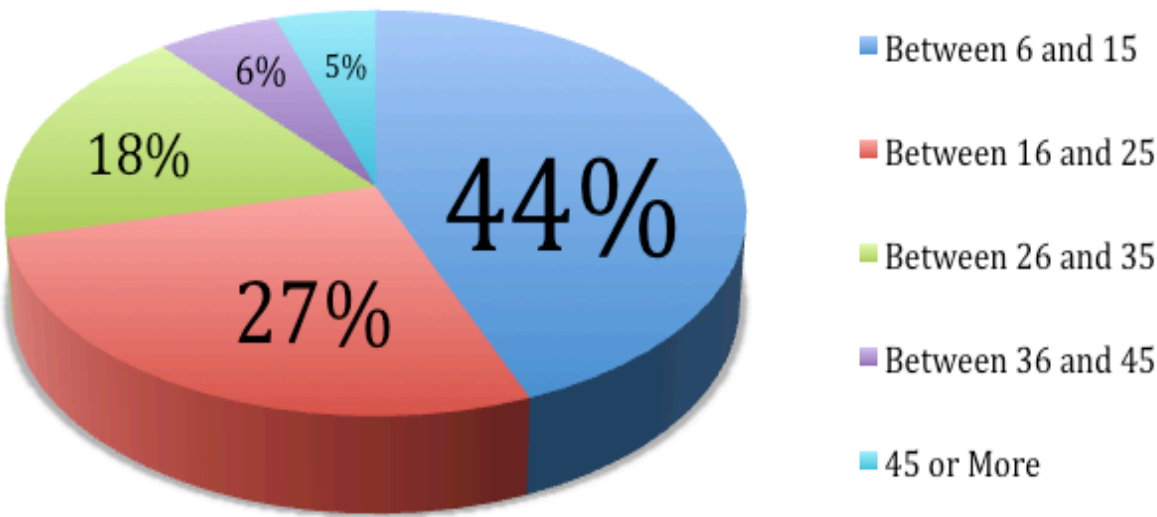


Joe Coronel

Joel Coronel, the Custodial Supervisor, began working at RHS four months ago. He worked at a high school in Brooklyn, NY, where he was raised. Mr. Coronel feels that RHS is an amazing school compared to the others he has been to. He states, “The difference between Brooklyn and RHS is almost a complete 180.” Though he has not had many opportunities to interact with the students yet, he has received “good vibes” up to this point. Daily, Mr. Coronel manages practically everything, making sure the school is safe and operational. Yet he faces he greatest challenges at the hands of the “surprises.” Instances such as the boiler breaking, or unpredictable amounts of snow, call for a quick reaction on the spot, which is very challenging at times. Despite these predicaments, Mr. Coronel genuinely enjoys his work. He thinks that the staff is great, his coworkers being the best part of his job.

should be responsible for cleaning after themselves in the cafeteria and the hallway. He still enjoys his work and finds pleasure in “being able to come here, set the standard, and create a nice environment in which students are able to study.” Furthermore, Ashton would like to make students aware of the fact that the students’ purpose in school is to learn, graduate, and succeed in life. In brief, it would be thoughtful and wonderful if students made the janitors’ jobs easier and appreciated the diligent work all of the custodial staff does for them.

How Many Custodians Do Students Think Work at RHS?



\*Answer: 21 Custodians work at RHS



## The Origin of our Custodians

**Gabby Bonfiglio**  
features editor

Contrary to common belief, the RHS custodians today, unlike most teachers and administrative professionals, are not hired individually. Instead, a private company called

The GCA has been employing custodians for RHS for approximately six years; beforehand, our district hired from a similar provider called Sodexo. (The district did not disclose the information as to why they switched providers.) Before Sodexo, Ridgewood simply hired its

reviews the GCA's quality of work and then renegotiates its contract with firm. In contrast with the original custom of hiring just a handful of janitors at a time, Ridgewood now staffs a total of twenty-one custodians. This number may come as a sur-



Members of the custodial staff in 1992.

the GCA Services Group staffs the district's custodians, meaning that the district pays GCA, and the GCA in turn hires, trains, and pays its employees. A self-proclaimed, "leading national provider of quality facility services," the GCA functions as provider of cleaning, custodial, and maintenance services for institutions across the United States (including Petrochemical and Nuclear Power plants). Ridgewood specifically employs GCA's Janitorial/Custodial Services.

custodians individually, as municipal employees, and staffed only a few of them at any time. Now, the RHS custodial staff is managed quite meticulously. Before accepting any new custodian RHS is guaranteed by GCA that the employee is fully trained and equipped. Even after being hired, each employee receives "weekly and monthly education and training sessions," according to the GCA website. Furthermore, at the end of every school year the Ridgewood school district

prise to many students, but with good reason; the custodians work on a rotation of three shifts that together cover the twenty-four hours of the day. The first shift begins at 6:30 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m., the second shift takes place from 3:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., and the last shift begins at 11:30 p.m. and ends at 7:00 a.m. Throughout these shifts the custodial staff maintains the school facility and aims to create the best learning atmosphere for the students.

## The Disregarded Educators

**anonymous**

Most students do not know much about the custodial staff at RHS, such as who makes up this force, what their responsibilities are, the trials and tribulations of their job, and the character of these

connect between the students and those who ensure their education everyday. The student body is not always conscious of the crucial involvement of the custodians in the high school, and at times this ignorance can border on disrespect. There is an unquestion-

times resulting in a lack of empathy. Frequently, students carelessly litter the school and treat the building without care. Now, these acts are not done to intentionally affect the custodians, and many students at RHS are in fact, very considerate, but the truth is that we do not even realize that there is a person who will eventually have to clean up after us. We are not accustomed to responsibilities of this sort. The activities of students in Ridgewood are extremely different from those that many encounter outside of the town limits. What makes our absentminded acts even more displeasing, is the pivotal role the custodians play in our education, a role usually unnoticed by the majority of students. They are responsible for all the maintenance, safety, shipments, and many more of the essential behind-the-scenes jobs. At the end of the day, the custodial staff is equally as instrumental in delivering the exceptional education at RHS, as the teachers and the administrators. We need to always remember to show a sense of gratitude and respect when seeing these hardworking members in the school. Without them an their daily efforts the school would be immeasurably different one. We should thank them for all their hard work.



Some of the RHS custodians in 2012.

individuals. It is important to acknowledge and appreciate this hardworking and dedicated part of the RHS staff, as well as prevent impersonality and dis-

able social gap present, due not only to class, but also to culture. In our one school individuals from vastly different worlds interact on a daily basis, some-



Norman Campbell

Mr. Campbell, hailing originally from Jamaica, has been working at Ridgewood High School for seven years. Before working at RHS, he worked at Colgate University. Mr. Campbell's daily janitorial duties include cleaning the cafeteria, the hallways, coolers, and bathrooms. He also takes pride in taking care of the RHS students. "If the kids are not in a good mood," Mr. Campbell "runs a little joke and talks to them." He explains that the teachers have an obligation to give work, and that it is fine for students to take a break sometimes. Mr. Campbell likes the student body and "looks out for them and protects them." He thinks that RHS is professional and has "a good principal, good teachers, students and work crews." Mr. Campbell's favorite part of his job, in fact, is being around the kids and staff. He likes the people he works because "if I didn't like you guys, I wouldn't be here." Mr. Campbell is 54 years old and has four kids. In his free time, he watches movies, stays home and helps his wife.



Horace Peart

Horace Peart was born and raised in Jamaica, before moving to the United States. He has worked at Ridgewood High School for only eight months, but says he enjoys the job very much. Before transferring to the high school Mr. Peart worked previously at Benjamin Franklin Middle School. Mr. Peart says that he likes the students at the high school as he feels that the students of Ridgewood cooperate well and he encounters no difficulties in communicating with them. He does admit that as much as he enjoys his job the hardest part is when it snows Shoveling pounds of ice and maintaining safe conditions proves very exhausting and difficult in the winter, especially on cold and windy days. During his time off, he enjoys reading, playing soccer, and playing music. You can often find Mr. Peart in the halls, dusting and sweeping with a smile.



Arts and Entertainment

Unchaining the Portrayal of African Americans in Film

John Ricatto  
staff writer

The evolution of the depiction of African Americans in Hollywood films can easily be traced from the medium’s beginnings in the early twentieth century to the modern day. Films often act as a reflection of the values of the era in which they are made. They can

“The new film by Quentin Tarantino, *Django Unchained*, especially shows how far the movie industry has come in regards to overcoming its racist past.”

be used as a barometer for the racial attitudes of different pe-ri-ods in American history, and audacious filmmakers can even themselves shape racial attitudes with their works. The evolution of the depiction of African Americans in film has been a slow and sometimes degrading processed,

but it is at least moving in the right direction. The new film by Quentin Tarantino, *Django Unchained*, especially shows how far the movie industry has come in regards to overcoming its racist past. From 1939, to modern day, the depiction of African Americans in cinema has greatly improved.

At the Oscars in 1939, *Gone with the Wind* swept virtually every category by winning ten awards, including Best Picture. The film was a Civil War epic told from the southern perspective that glorified slavery and plantation life, while attacking Reconstruction and black equality. The film followed a wealthy southern family who had lost everything in the war, always portraying them in a sympathetic light. The African American characters in the film were depicted as being dutiful and content with their lives as slaves, and even choose to continue to serve their former masters after their emancipation. It was an insinuation that even African Americans themselves acknowledge their inferiority, and know that they cannot take care of themselves without the guidance of their white masters. The film, at the time, was the highest grossing movie ever, and an indication of the stereotypical views many Americans had about African Americans.

It would take decades until popular films would promote messages of tolerance and racial equality. For instance, the 1962 film, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, depicted the trial of an innocent African American man named Tom Robinson who was convicted of rape in the Deep South, and the good-

hearted lawyer, Atticus Finch, who works vigorously to defend him. Al-



Jamie Foxx plays Django in the movie *Django Unchained*.

though the film marked a huge step forward for the film industry in regards to its anti-racist message, the character of Tom Robinson is still one who is noticeably weak, naïve. The character is unable to take care of his own problems. This leads to the implication that African Americans always need white people to solve their problems for them. Similarly, a great deal of films attacking slavery and racism continued to portray

African Americans in a similar “help-less” light in the following decades.

The character of Django in Quentin Tarantino’s new film *Django Unchained*, can be considered the full realization of the strong, capable, intelligent black hero. In the film the former slave and titular character, Django, controls his own destiny by freeing his wife from the bondage of a cruel slave owner and exacting revenge on his former oppressors. Django does not need an Atticus Finch-type white character to solve his problems for him; with his intelligence and physical might he overcomes oppression himself. It is truly a wonder that members of the black community such as Spike Lee have stated that the film is racist, as it is a very progressive depiction of an African American hero. The film is almost a complete 360 degree turn from *Gone with the Wind*, which showed slaves as being docile and weak. Django is resilient and unwilling to be put down by a slave master.

All in all, the depiction of African Americans in film has not completely come to what it should be. Tyler Perry is still making films that degrade African American culture, and the tickets to such films are selling like wildfire. However, *Django Unchained* is a huge step forward in the long evolution of the depiction of African Americans in movies. It provides a hero that is not bound to any form of stereotype or prejudice. If more films like *Unchained* are made, the future of racial representation in movies will be bright.

Bradley and Ethan’s Underrated Albums

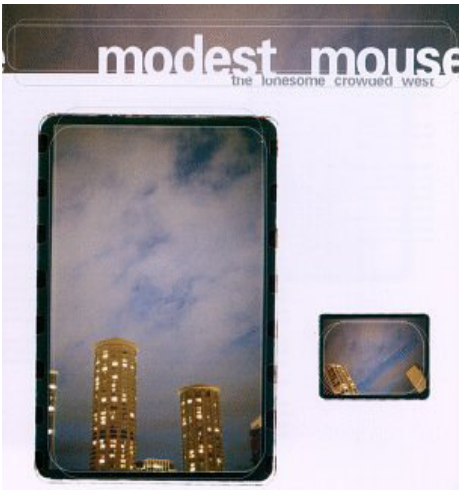
Bradley Alsop  
entertainment editor

The Lonesome Crowded West  
By Modest Mouse

Modest Mouse came to prominence with 2004’s *Good News for People Who Love Bad News*. Washington State’s resident alt-rock oddballs opted for a more conventional sound on the album, their newest to date. The instrumentalism is tamer and the song selection is more conservative, with only a slight tinge of what they once were in the early to mid-90’s.

*Good News* was by no means a bad album: many of the songs were extremely catchy, and still managed to grasp the left field styling that defined their earlier works. In fact, it was the ubiquity of one song that skyrocketed Modest Mouse to the forefront of the alternative rock scene. “Float On,” became one of the quintessential songs of the 2000’s, a surefire hit that defined the lackadaisicalness and free spirit of the 21st century youth. But the mystique and intrigue that once fully encompassed their music was frustratingly absent. The album seemed like a more mainstream push for the band. It simple terms, it felt safe.

My favorite Modest Mouse album came before “Float On” was blasting out of car radios everywhere. 1998’s *The Lonesome Crowded West* epitomized the sound of the old Modest Mouse, and the off-kilter, against the grain musings of lead songwriter Isaac Brock and his fellow musicians. The lyrics are thought provoking, while the music was at times haunting and at times jubilant. Here Brock showcased his brilliant lyrical ability. He is able to convey both descriptors provided in the title, the spare solitude along with incessant push and pull of a tide of people glimpsed everyday, but never fully seen. The album gives voice to the unfulfilling experiences of everyday



The cover of Modest Mouse’s album.

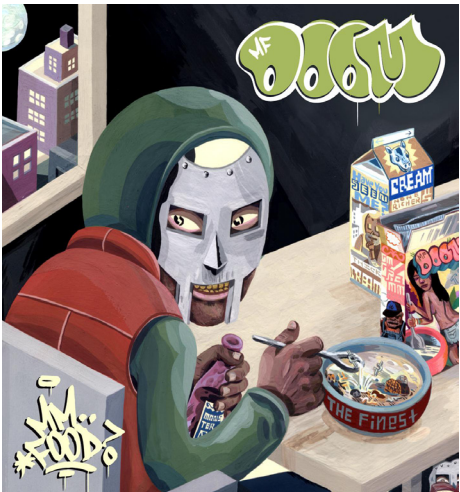
life. Highlights include the jaunty, serpentine guitars in songs such as the absolutely schizophrenic “Heart Cooks Brain.” The lyrics portray the polarizing differences between the desires of the heart and brain. They are nonsensical and abstract, but, when complemented by the music, the message becomes abundantly clear. A personal favorite is “Out of Gas.” The song is a country-infused barn-burner, with lyrics that both seemingly inane, but also completely relatable. “Opinions Were Like Kittens/I was Giving Them Away,” is a truly ridiculous metaphor, but in a myriad of social situations, it is miraculously applicable. Modest Mouse deserved the success that they received from *Good News*, but for me it will never stand as their best album. The songs that I love, and the ones that forever enthralled me with Modest Mouse are the emotionally vivid, subtly heart-breaking anthems that comprise *The Lonesome Crowded West*. It doesn’t scream for accessibility; moreover, it doesn’t even remotely ask for it. The album is content with its ambiguity, its veiled messages coarsing through the cryptic lyrics. But it provokes thought and emotion, which, in essence, is the main focus of music itself.

Ethan Sapienza  
entertainment editor

MM..FOOD?  
By MF DOOM

By far one of the strangest icons to emerge in recent music history is Daniel Dumile, more commonly known as MF DOOM. His antics are bizarre, as he always wears a metallic mask, and often enraging, when he sends imposters to perform in his place at concerts. Yet DOOM has managed to be successful due to his unprecedented flow, tactful selection of samples and incredible rate of album production. His most celebrated album was a collaboration with the producer Madlib, where they were collectively known as Madvillain, creating one of the best rap albums of the 2000’s. Though his most famous work, Dumile’s best album was one he crafted on his own. Titled *MM..FOOD?* (2004), the rapper is at his finest on possibly his strangest album to date. Almost entirely dedicated to food, DOOM recites his best rhymes over an assortment of peculiar samples, drawing from lesser-known R&B to children’s cartoons. His intricate use of unorthodox samples provides for rather lengthy instrumental pieces on the album, characterized by voice overs from classic cartoons, giving the album an original pacing unlike most rap records. Though uncharacteristic to the genre, these interludes add comedic value to the album as well as giving the listener a look into DOOM’s inspirations.

Though the album flows masterfully from song to song, specific tracks require special praise. The album opens with “Beef Rapp,” a song somewhat in alignment with the theme of the album. Yet by using descriptions of food and their potential health risks, Dumile manages to comment on feuds between rappers, the idiotic nature of these exchanges, and advises those participating in such hostilities to stop doing



DOOM on the album’s cover.

so before someone actually gets hurt. DOOM even comically uses the term “Beef” to reference these feuds, hiding the true message of the song in the title.

Later on in the album, Dumile displays his incredible music knowledge on the track “One Beer.” The sample of the song, though basic, is unbelievably obscure, and is masterfully used to compliment Dumile’s raspy vocals. The sample comes from a 1975 album entitled *Troupeau Bleu*, by a French jazz group called Cortex. The vocals of the sample sore, adding an unusual layer to the rhymes normally absent in other songs of his.

Possibly his best song to date comes at around the middle of the album, called “Deep Fried Frenz.” By combining snippets from “Friends” by Whodini and “Friends and Strangers” by Ronnie Laws, DOOM crafts one of the smoothest backing tracks to a rap song in recent memory. His lyrics and sample intertwine and flow in a poetic matter, all the while covering Dumile’s dissatisfaction with his friends. The song is a work of art, and showcases the artist’s musical talent.

Though a seemingly odd album consisting of eccentric characteristics, MF DOOM put together one of the finest and most laid back rap albums to date, one that is most certainly worth listening to.



# Arts and Entertainment

## RHS Shows It Has Talent

**Mickey McGinley**  
staff writer

The Ridgewood High School Backwoods held “RHS Has Talent” in the George Washington Middle School auditorium on Saturday, March 9 at 7 p.m. The show exhibited a wide variety of talents, including singers, guitarists, pianists, dancers, musical groups, a magician, and even an Irish flautist. The pressure was high for each performer as they took the stage for a panel of judges, and an auditorium completely full of spectators.

The night featured seventeen acts, all different and impressive in their own specific ways. Some of the highlights of the show were Matthew Mandeli, a magician, who proved to be a great start to the night as the only magician in the entire show. His performance set the bar for the other acts with his extraordinary showmanship and slick routine. Allison Milch, singer, and Maxine Peskens, guitarist, together performed an acoustic version of David Guetta’s “Titanium.” The judges responded to this performance calling Milch’s voice “smooth” and commented that it was different than the other singers. Jukebox, the only band performing that night kicked off act two by performing two of their original songs, “Five Leaves” and “Human Being.” The band had never performed live before. Their only playing experi-

the acts down to their top three choices and the audience was given the chance to vote for the winner. Regina Park, freshman, was the last performance of the night and blew the crowd away with



Maxine Peskens and Allison Milch perform a song.

her voice and took third place, which came with an \$100 cash prize. Lockie Nidds, Irish dancer and one of only two dancing acts took second place. Nidds incorporated some modern elements into his classical routine with his song choice and dance moves, putting a nice twist on a dance style that is not easily relatable to the majority of the audiences. He won second place and a cash prize of \$250. In first place, dance team Courtney and Caitlin Sullivan brought home a grand prize of \$500. Near the end of the second act, when the audi-



Henry Lee, Gabe DeOliveira, Jonah Salzman-Cohen, Keiko Nagami and Paul Mallalieu of Jukebox perform together.

ence together came from practice sessions in drummer Jonah Salzman-Cohen’s basement. The band commented that they were thrilled to finally perform in public and reveal their talent to the student body. Near the end of the evening Cormac Bohan, a sophomore, entered the stage with confidence and sang his own version of “Dream A Little Dream of Me,” putting the audience in a craze and receiving possibly the loudest applause of the entire night.

By the end of the second act, the audience and the judges narrowed all of

ence thought they had their minds set on the winners, the girls stole the show and clearly deserved to take first prize.

The acts were all entertaining, full of surprises. The night was an absolute success. The RHS Backwoods put together yet another great school event, and many students are already hoping that there will be another show next year. The amount of talent present at the show was astonishing. It was an incredible opportunity for students to showcase their talents, and an overall a magnificent evening.

## Maroon and White

**Mark Perfect**  
staff writer

On March 7, Ridgewood High School musicians and artists once again exhibited their abilities at the monthly Ridgewood Maroon and White, showcasing talent ranging from songs to Celtic knot designs.

Performers included singers Brenna Knight, Rebecca Lampiasi, and Neil Schoff, percussionist Shayna Lyandvert, violinist Keiko Nagami, and saxophonist Shoko Nagami. The three vocalists and all of the seniors performed their recitals at Ridgewood High School with works by classical and contemporary composers alike. The artists displayed in the art gallery that night were Noah Lanza, Louis Lim, Claire Walter, and Ophelia (Ziqian) Xu.

Lyandvert began the concert with *Autumn Portrait*. Despite using four mallets, Lyandvert still exhibited expert control in making the melody

ring out. Knight went next, beginning with a piece by Mozart, and going on to sing works by Schubert, Copland, Porter, and Herman. Her strong voice, coupled with an emotion-filled performance, culminated in an enthusiastic applause following *Whatever He Ain’t*, from *Mac and Mabel*.

Violinist Keiko Nagami was next, performing *Lento Malinconico*, the fourth movement of Schumann’s *Fairy Tale Pictures*, op. 113. She utilized a liberal amount of vibrato to convey the expression of the slow piece. The hardest part about playing the movement, according to Nagami, was “making [the music] and not just the notes.”

The only male vocalist of the afternoon, Schoff sang a difficult program with works by Scarlatti, Schumann, Vaughan Williams, Copland, and Loewe. His crescendos and decrescendos complemented his large vocal range, resulting in a memorable performance. Shoko Nagami followed by Schoff by performing *So-*

## Girl Rising: The Movie that Raises Hope

**Elizabeth O’Keefe**  
staff writer

On Tuesday, March 19 Ridgewood High School hosted a screening of the recently released feature film *Girl Rising*. The movie was shown free of charge to Ridgewood High School students and faculty at the Ridgewood Public Library. Ridgewood High School joined over 100 prominent universities and secondary schools in this special opportunity to offer this film for their school community.

*Girl Rising* is a powerful new film by Academy Award-nominated director Richard E. Robbins. The movie is a hybrid of a documentary and a narrative film. It spotlights the lives of nine girls born into unforgiving circumstances, whose personal stories reveal the strength of the human spirit and an education’s impact on a person’s life. Girls like Sokha, an orphan who rises from a life in the gar-

Freida Pinto and Liam Neeson, with original music from Academy Award winner Rachel Portman and Lorne Balfe.

The film is being released in the wake of the horrific October 2012 shooting of Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani schoolgirl that defied the Taliban to pursue an education. Her acts much like this movie inspired a timely message that will resonate with all who hear it. *Girl Rising* is the centerpiece of 10x10, a global campaign to educate and empower girls. Richard Robbins explained the overall goals of the film in an interview, stating, “we began to talk about [goals] in three simple phrases: Change minds. Change lives. Change policy. The lives we want to change are for the millions of girls out there struggling to get an education. The policies are made by our government, and those around the world. Achieving those changes is the core of 10x10’s mission.”

The initiative was founded by



AN UPHILL QUEST TO EDUCATE AND EMPOWER GIRLS

10X10 PRESENTS

# GIRLRISING

You've heard the statistics, you've read the articles, and now you're wondering what you can do to educate girls and change the world.

The poster for Girl Rising.

bage dump in Phnom Penh, Cambodia to become a star student and an accomplished dancer. Suma is a girl that wrote songs to help her endure forced servitude in Nepal and today crusades to free others like her. Another girl showcased throughout the movie, Ruksana, was an Indian “pavement-dweller” whose father sacrificed his own basic needs for his daughter’s dreams.

Each girl is paired with a renowned writer from her native country, and each is story narrated by successful a female celebrity, including, Selena Gomez, Meryl Streep, Cate Blanchett, Alicia Keys, Salma Hayek, Kerry Washington, and Anne Hathaway. *Girl Rising* also features

award winning journalists from the Documentary Group and Vulcan Productions along with Intel Corporation. *Girl Rising* was also produced by award-winning, former ABC News journalists. *Girl Rising* is powered by strategic partner, Intel Corporation, and global television distribution partner, CNN Films.

Through this film and a growing grassroots campaign, 10x10 seeks to raise awareness that girls around the world face barriers to education that boys do not. Many Ridgewood High School students have a passionate interest in this issue and will have the opportunity to support the 10x10 campaign through future club activities.

nata for Alto Saxophone and Piano, by Lunde. Lampiasi concluded the concert with works by Handel, Ruckert, Gershwin, and Manuel-Miranda. She ended her recital with *One Perfect Moment*, a song title that aptly described her whole performance.

The visual artists all employed different aesthetic techniques to achieve desired effects. Lim enjoyed working with Conté crayons and charcoal.

and Walter employed Crayola Crayons to create her three self-portraits. Xu also created a self-portrait, so detailed that it was only differentiated from a photograph upon close examination. Lanza, for his display, burned intricate designs into mdf, a board combined with sawdust and glue.

The next Maroon and White will be on Thursday, April 04, 2013.



Keiko Nagami playing the violin.



## RHS Spring Track Sprints Into Season

**Laura Weisberger**  
sports editor

The boys spring track team has high aspirations going into this year. One of the first things on their to-do list is to win the Bergen County and State Sectional Championships as well as the thirteenth straight league championship. Key senior contributors include Storm Dublirer, mainly an 800 meter runner, Nick Salamone, an important part of the distance team, Kevin Chung in sprints and hurdles, Neil Schoff, a sprinter, James Barnett, who competes in shot put, discus, and javelin, and Downing in pole vault. Important juniors include Jake Sabatini, an important up and coming sprinter, Luke Dublirer, who also competes in the 800 meter, David Frering, a distance runner who recently broke 4:30 in the mile, Bryan Clarendon, a mid-distance runner, and Allan Wong in the pole vault. The team is looking to become the first team in the North I Group IV history to win four straight sectional championships. Coach Saladino says, “I am excited for the season to begin. We have an opportunity to win championships, which is something this program has prided itself on for years. I’m looking forward to seeing the leadership this senior class brings.” The girls team

is hoping to win the Bergen County and State Sectional Championships, and Coach Brown is excited to host the annual Pawlowski relays at the BF track. Notable seniors include Micaela McPadden, who was named first team all county in the 400 meter this winter



Junior Jake Sabatini runs a relay at Nationals last spring in North Carolina.

track season and also helped the Ridgewood girls run to victory at outdoor nationals last year, as well as Mimi

DeVita, a strong pole vaulter, Anna Caffrey, a sprinter who specializes in the 200 meter, and Sirai Ramirez, a sprinter and hurdler. Important juniors include Laura Weisberger and Emily Fishbein, two distance runners. Notable sophomores include Catherine Pa-

track and field world, and Kelly Cleary, a distance runner who recently made it to the State Meet of Champions in the 3200 meter this winter. Kelly Cleary says, “I am really excited for this year because spring track is my favorite season and I know this team is capable of a lot. I can’t wait to see how far we can make it and hopefully go back to Outdoor Nationals to defend our title.” On March 8 and 9, the boys and girls winter track teams concluded their seasons by going to New Balance Indoor Nationals in New York City. The girls competed in the distance medley relay and the shuttle hurdles relay, while the boys team ran in the distance medley relay and the 4x1600 meter relay. Although no relay placed in the top six, which would have earned the teams the prestigious title of All American, the Maroons competed to the best of their ability, predicting a successful spring track season in the next few months on both the girls and boys sides. Senior Micaela McPadden commented by saying, “Although our relays did not place as well as we had hoped, it was a great way to end my high school winter track career by running in such an important meet. I ran in outdoor Nationals last year, and it is always fun to have the opportunity to run fast with such fierce competition.”

## Wrestling Comes To a Close

**Mike Antosiewicz**  
staff writer

After a crushing loss to North Bergen in the State tournament, the Ridgewood wrestling team maintained composure to win the district tournament in Fair Lawn, a feat which the Ma-

roons by a three point deficit, and could have won. Unfortunately, North Bergen won out, and the Maroons lost by nine, an improved margin from their first match. After the loss, the only competition remaining for the team to win was the district tournament. Although the district tournament is primarily in-



RHS wrestler competes during the 2012-2013 season.

roons have never accomplished before. For the first round of the state tournament, the Maroons were pitted against North Bergen in a highly-anticipated rematch. The Maroons lost the first home dual by 16 points. Although the margin appeared considerable, the statistics suggest otherwise. Out of 14 varsity matches, the Maroons held their opponents on their backs for at least a three count in six matches, and did not pin. This means that the Maroons theoretically left 15 team points on the mat, which reduced the deficit to a meager one point. Therefore, the rematch was undoubtedly going to be close. The Maroons certainly improved from their last encounter. Kyle Inlander and Sukmin Yoon exemplified this desire to win in their matches. Inlander wrestled a back and forth match which was tied entering the last 30 seconds. Fortunately, Inlander kept composure, relied on his conditioning and made the last takedown in the match to win. Yoon, two matches later, fought off his back to prevent himself getting pinned, and saved valuable team points. Going into the last match, the Maroons were behind

dividual, each victory by a wrestler counts as a point for that wrestler’s respective team. In the end, the winning team is decided by the sum of all the points accumulated throughout the course of the tournament, and Ridgewood performed exceptionally well. Ten out of 14 Maroons won their first match to progress in the bracket. From that point forward, three Maroons, Joe Oliva, Stephen Gerdner and Sukmin Yoon, were lucky enough to win their respective brackets, and become district champions. Oliva, who won districts his freshman year and then regions his sophomore, is once again expected to win his region and win bouts in the state individual tournament. Six other wrestlers will also be fortunate enough to wrestle in regions. They are Tyler Giovanetti, Nick Sagglimbeni, Aaron Martinez, Austin Purritano, Kyle Inlander and Andrew Moras. Out of this group, Inlander is the only freshman. Altogether, the exceptional individual success by the Maroon wrestlers culminated in the Ridgewood wrestling team winning the district tournament for the first time.

## DECA Kickball Tournament

**Joyce Kwon**  
editor-in-chief

On April 6, 2013 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., DECA will be hosting a kickball tournament for the Learn and Earn Chapter, a project which will be submitted to the DECA State Competition next year. Groups were assigned the task of researching different fundraising methods creating a plan which will allow them to raise the most money towards their goal. The Learn and Earn Chapter will discuss the methods that worked and those that did not, as well as the aspects that could have been improved. The paper that the groups will write will embody the members’ experiences in establishing growth in business and marketing techniques. This event is dedicated to raising money in hopes of a celebrity concert next year. At the moment, Jordin Sparks, Sean Kingston, and Cascada are being considered as performers. However, the decision will not be made without the input of the student body. The money

from this concert will be donated to the expansion of the Ridgewood Library.

Demi Kontos, Nikhil Mendriatta, Emily Press, Jack Grygier, Spencer Kates, and Natalie Weil organized the event after developing the idea at one of their weekly meetings. The tournament will mark the start of their project, and they are striving for success in order to bring the Learn and Earn Chapter as a whole one step closer to completion.

All students are eligible to compete in this event after submitting permission slips and creating a team name. A maximum of twenty teams of five people each will compete at ten dollars per player or fifty dollars per team in an effort to raise an anticipated 1,000 dollars.

The members of this DECA group have been considering a dodgeball tournament in the near future as well. They hope that these efforts will further involve RHS in the renovation of the Ridgewood Library, an improvement which will greatly benefit the student body and the Ridgewood community.

## Ridgewood Crew Ready to Row

**Sophie Noel**  
staff writer

The Ridgewood crew team is ready for action this season. They have a new head coach, Boris Roque, who, according to team members,



Ridgewood Crew junior Maeve Cannon and senior CJ Chiamonte pose for a picture at a regatta last season.

has “already prepared us so much for the water season and continues to teach us new things everyday.” This season, the Maroons hope to

grow as a team and place at big regattas like Cities, Stotesbury Cup, and to hopefully get some of their boats to youth nationals. The team practices at the Passaic River in Northern New Jersey. The Ridgewood Crew Organization is also not directly funded by the high school or district. Therefore members have to pay to be a part of the team, as well as hold several fundraisers a year, such as Row-athon, in order to fund the program.

Important rowers on the boys team include seniors Anthony Criscitiello, John Sluis, and Trevor Wilkinson. Girls expected to make a big impact this year are juniors Amanda Criscitiello, Kathleen Simon, and Emma Brickfield. The girls are racing a JV 8, JV 4, JV double, JV quad, a varsity double and varsity quad. The freshmen girls will race two doubles, while the freshman boys will race two quads and a double. Last year, one boat, of junior Maeve Cannon and senior Cj Chiamonte, placed at states, and three boats went to nationals and two placed.



Sports

Swinging into Girls Golf

Bradley Alsop  
entertainment editor

This season for RHS girls golf has high hopes. Their goal is to win the league and also to win the county championship. Last year, the team’s season came to a close when they did not place in the first round of States. This year the Maroons want to make it past the first round. This year’s top four is made up of junior Julia Sullivan and senior Taryn Carroll, the two captains, along with junior Joyce Kwon and sophomore Jessica Chang. Academy of the Holy Angels and Tenaflly are the team’s biggest competitors, and they are hoping to pull off wins against them this season. Captain Taryn Carroll, when asked about her hopes for this season of RHS girls golf, said, “we’re looking forward to a great year; we have a lot of potential and the ability to go far.” Returning contributors, as well as new ones, include senior Hannah Lee, junior Annie Thurston, junior Christina Benson, junior Kelsie McKenna, junior Jill Kaplove, and freshman Kiley Chmiel. This year, the players began utilizing indoor facilities at Greenhouse Golf. It is especially useful during inclement weather. Debbie O’Connor, he

sister of the BF gym teacher Mrs. Skettini, is training the golfers one hour a week at Greenhouse Golf. Coach Quirk said that “we’ve steadily built a program with tremen-



Kiley Chmiel uses a stimulator at Greenhouse Golf.

dous teamwork. We rely on a group of players who have worked hard for a number of years. And it’s my hope that if they play within themselves- their scores will improve and more importantly, our team will challenge for the County and state titles.” With Mr. Quirk as their coach and a lineup of twenty girls on the team this year, the outlook for RHS girls golf is looking very positive.

JDRF Basketball

Elizabeth Kopec  
editor-in-chief

On Friday March 22, The National Honors Society is hosting Maroon Madness, a 3-on-3 basketball tournament to raise money for research of type one diabetes. The National Honors Society is working with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, a global organization that funds type one diabetes research, is ultimately hoping to find a cure and eliminate type one diabetes from people’s lives. Forbes named JDRF an All-Star charity in 2012 because of its efficiency and effectiveness. JDRF provided \$110 million for type one diabetes in 2012 alone. RHS is one of the first schools in the Northern New Jersey and Rockland County Chapter to hold an event for JDRF. Sign up in Mr. Bailey’s office in room 109, or by the sign up table outside of room 109 during Unit Lunch by this Thursday. Mr. Nyhuis, Mr. Monahan, and Mr. Scevola will be playing in the tournament in their own team. The price is ten dollars per team member, and donations are welcomed. There will be prizes for the winners.

Boys Tennis

Sumita Rajpurohit  
news editor

This year’s boys tennis team has high hopes to win the county tournament after coming in second last year to Ramapo. The Maroon boys are the favorites this year to come in first. Their toughest matches this year will be against their biggest rivals Bergen Tech and Dwight Englewood. The RHS boy’s tennis team had split season matches with Bergen last year and lost to Englewood. This season is a change because they graduated 3 starters from last year who were all important members of the team and this year the team must step up to fill their spots and make sure the RHS tennis program lives up to its name. This year’s captains are Timber Erskine, Greg Maslak, and Jason Linker. Returning varsity players include Timber, Jason, Greg, Kyle Boyce, Barfu Yildiz, Jakob Dvorken, Mike Lai, and Aidan Kates. When asked about the season, Timber Erskine says, “I am confident this years team can win counties after a difficult upset this year. We are looking strong and most of the guys have been preparing all year for tennis so I think we all have high hopes for what we can accomplish”

Baseball Steps Up to Bat

Dom Boresta  
staff writer

The Ridgewood High School baseball team is coming off of a spectacular season as Group IV Champions and the team hopes to make an even bigger impact with this upcoming season starting as soon as April. Coaching in his fourth year for Ridgewood Varsity Baseball, Kurt Hommen of Tenefly is back and ready to lead the team to another successful season accompanied by Trone and Schneider. Junior Varsity coaches Chris Foglio and Adam Scevola expect only the best from their upcoming all-stars on the penultimate squad. The 25-man freshman baseball team, will be coached by third year returner and long-time Ridgewood legend, Jeff Yearling.

Players and coaches are all ready for a stellar season which will hold home games at Veteran’s Field from April to June. Hommen’s Varsity pitching rotation will consist of seniors Kevin Skettini, Nick Purritano and Jack Rikuki, juniors Eric Lewis and Conner Van Caugherty, and sophomore Anthony Hronchich. The starting lineup in the field will be predominately compiled of juniors, obviously some seniors, and possibly another sophomore in the mix. Every player expects playing time. Senior pitchers Skettini and Purritano, along with Nick Coppola, were chosen to be captains to lead this season’s team. The program expects to yield great results as it had the last year, sparking a wave among Ridgewood’s own young-

sters to pick up a glove and bat. I had the chance to interview Varsity starting centerfielder Kengo Kawahara, who had ambitious goals set for the team, including, “State champions, of course... also County Champs... to win more than 25 games this season. All of that good stuff.” Obviously Kawahara is amped and full-throttle for this upcoming baseball season, portraying a picturesque mind-set for every single player that will play under Hommen. I also asked Kengo the tough question of, why do you love baseball? He took a couple of seconds to gather his thoughts, and said, “I think... It was because I grew up watching baseball; I was constantly around the sport. Also, a lot of my friends were playing it.” As the starting centerfielder, his mind

must be one hundred percent ready. Head Coach Kurt Hommen also had some aspiring and hopeful things to say. I asked him about the success of last year’s baseball team, he responded, “Well, we came off a great season last year, and it was a shame to lose some good players. We of course have some new guys stepping in that will take on some big roles.” When asked about what he expects out this season, he told me; “Some look at the numbers [or stats], I tell everyone to keep improving and forget the numbers; the numbers will come with players getting better.” This will be Coach Hommen’s 23rd year as a head coach at a high school and he has experience playing in college. The Ridgewood High school baseball program will define him as our coach.

Girls Lacrosse Returns

Katie Conklin  
staff writer

On June 5 of last year, as the final buzzer of the TOC Semi-Finals sounded, Ridgewood Girls Lacrosse was defeated by one point to Chatham. As the Cougars cheered, tears silently dripped down the faces of Ridgewood players both on the field and on the sidelines. After a seven goal streak by Ridgewood to tie the game, it just was not enough. To make it to the semi-finals, practically tasting victory, the loss was devastating. Such as loss could put a team in a slump, but will it? From the looks of this year’s roster, I think not. Losing the likes of All American and record holder Kelci Smesko, as well as the first captain of the USC Women’s Lacrosse Team, Courtney Tarleton, may sound like a death sentence for any other team. After graduating a senior class with every player going on to play collegiate lacrosse, one may wonder what the team has left. What many may not realize are the talented unsung heroes that remain on the nationally recognized team. Leading the squad in offense are co-captains Lauren Beausoleil and Maggie Carver. This dynamic duo will soon become rivals as they con-

tinue playing lacrosse at Lehigh and Lafayette next year. Both veterans of the team, they know what it takes to win. Pushing the newcomers to their full potential, they command the field and allow scoring power. Possibly the fastest girl on the field, co-captain Maura Feeney will lead the defense. As a captain for the soccer team as well, she has the ability to lead and direct. This is crucial due to the numerous spots needing to be filled in the back line. With goalie Zoe Ferguson directing and organizing the play, the team will be in full throttle. Returning starters such as Darby Kiernan, Katie Smesko, and Devon Maltz will be crucial to the team’s success. Other returning players including Bridget McElroy, Jordan Ford, Anna Jorgenson, Kelly McBrearty, Baker Earl and Olivia Rosenfeld are expected to make large impacts as well. A new player who has stepped up to fill the places of those who graduated is freshman Katie Bourque. As one can see, although the team has lost a lot of players, there is no lack of talent. The most crucial element that will lead this team to success, though, is teamwork. Every year, a word is chosen by the captains to represent a goal for the upcoming season. This year, the

word is “Together...To Get There.” To go far, and eventually redeem their loss to Chatham in the semi-finals, the team must work together in unity. So far, the camaraderie between the team seems to be abundant, leading many to believe a successful season is in the making. Undeclared in Bergen County,

ship start on April 2 against powerhouse, Summit. RGL’s biggest game is against Moorestown at the RHS home field on April 27. Ridgewood beat Moorestown for the state championship game two years ago, but Moorestown won last year. The Maroons are hoping to take back the title and re-



The girls lacrosse team practices in preparation for their upcoming season.

the new Ridgewood Girls Lacrosse Team has a chance to defend their title. The plunder felt after losing to Chatham has been left behind, but not forgotten. The road to both the Bergen County and State champion-

claim their spot as best in New Jersey. The talent the team possesses, the ability it has to grow, and teamwork being built, and the dire urge to win just may return the Ridgewood Girls Lacrosse Team to victory.



Art and Photography

Artist of the Month:

Ophelia Xu



I’ve been drawing since a young age. I decided to pursue art as a career in middle school because I was always absorbing myself in fantasy/science-fiction movies and video games... I wanted to bring my overactive imagination to life and create things that are both new and visually stunning. I still have leagues to improve on with my drawings, but it’s the most successful feeling in the world to see my art progress through the years and to see myself create better pieces than before. I guess that’s why I love drawing so much and why I stuck with it throughout the years.

My biggest art history influence has to be J.C. Leyendecker, although I draw more inspiration from contemporary artists who do entertainment design or animation. Most of the people I look up to and admire aren’t even famous, but then again, inspiration can come from anyone and anywhere.



This past summer I was offered a \$1000 scholarship to study in an art college program on the west coast, and in the next few months I’ll be selling some of my drawings in a few conventions. Other than that I can’t say much about my accomplishments (other than that time when I won \$50 for drawing a fire truck for an art contest in elementary school), except that I’m working my hardest to achieve great things in the future!