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Samuels Swims Triple Crown

Ridgewood swimmer sets open-water world record.

Brianna Patek
staff writer

Marathon swimming takes a particular mental and physical toughness that many people can only dream of. Junior Charlotte Samuels, outgoing and friendly with a warm smile and great personality, shows the world that girls and women are extremely tough and can achieve anything they set their minds to. Charlotte, at just 16 years old, is the youngest person to complete the open-water swimming Triple Crown. On October 2, Samuels was honored during the football game against Kennedy High School for her accomplishment.

In order to become a member of the Triple Crown, one has to successfully swim 28.5 miles circumnavigating New York City, 21 miles across the Catalina Channel between mainland southern California and South Catalina Island, and 21 miles across the English Channel between England and France. Despite having only just completed the Triple Crown, the star athlete looks ahead to more challenges in the future.

Charlotte started swimming at an early age, beginning to compete when she was 6 years old. She entered the world of open-water swimming at age 12 and finished her first marathon swim last summer when she was 15. She considers herself fortunate to have such a supportive family and large group of friends; especially her parents, who spent three weeks in England with



Charlotte Samuels is greeted by her parents after completing the final challenge in the Triple Crown- swimming across the English Channel.

her in preparation for her swim, she is grateful for her open-water swimming friends, many of whom traveled from all over the world to come cheer her. When asked what she enjoyed most about swimming, Samuels said, "I really feel a connection to the water and nature, and it's really cool to push yourself to the extremes and see how you can be in harmony with nature."

According to Charlotte, being out there alone in the water not only can feel free and open, but it can also be lonely and scary at times too. She pushes herself to persevere and not to give up, so that she can move past

the dark moments and reach her goal. After a long, and grueling swim across the Catalina Channel teeming with strong currents and jellyfish bites in the darkness, Charlotte was a bit hesitant in embarking on the final leg of the Triple Crown. Through her amazing determination and ability to keep going, she soon changed her mind and set about conquering the English Channel.

Charlotte Samuels is an inspiration and a role model to anyone, young or old. In Mrs. Ross' 5th grade class at Somerville Elementary, Charlotte and her story are commonly used as examples to motivate the young kids

to push themselves to try to achieve the seemingly impossible. Despite the fact that "Charlotte Samuels" is becoming a household name, and she is getting a lot of media coverage (even Ellen wants an interview!), she does not let fame detract from her reasons for swimming. Charlotte uses the attention as an outlet for spreading her message to empower girls and women and to act as a role model for many young swimmers, something she will continue to do so throughout her life.

For now, Charlotte is focusing on getting through her junior year, but the next big thing she is going to do is swim across the Strait of Gibraltar, which is the gap of sea that separates Spain from Morocco. She aspires to take on the Ocean's Seven, which consists of swimming through channels in each of the seven continents, this challenge has only been done by six other people. Notable venues for the Ocean's Seven are Tsugaru Strait in Japan and the Molokai Strait in Hawaii. Wherever the challenge, Charlotte Samuels is ready.

If there is anyone who can conquer the Ocean's Seven, it is Charlotte, and her message of empowerment, dedication, and perseverance will go on to inspire many people now and in years to come. Her tireless diligence towards swimming and need to achieve new goals will only contribute to her athletic status. Charlotte brings pride to Ridgewood High School, and her accomplishment and perseverance inspires many students.

Flaws with the iPhone 6?

Tatiana Mehos
staff writer

On September 19, the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus were released. The two new larger versions of the phone were "the next big thing". It came with an app called "tips". It comes with thirteen tips and gives you the option to 'like' it. One new interesting feature is that you can favorite a photo which then appears in the Favorites Album.

Another feature that the new iPhone came with was the iMovie app. This app allows you to make video projects. There are many unique features for the new iPhone, but there are a few potential flaws. To exemplify, some claim the iPhone 6 Plus bends in your pocket. However, some say it only bends if you put around 70 pounds of weight on it. The reason for this controversy is easy to understand. The phone is so big and so thin that this argument is rather believable.

Another controversy regards the Samsung copyright. Some people say that Apple copied the Samsung Galaxy by making the iPhone bigger. These two



have been battling in court for the past three years all over the world.

The Samsung Galaxy S5 and iPhone 6 are two of the most talked about phones currently. Although often compared, these two phones have two different designs. The iPhone 6 is smooth and made of metal and glass. On the other hand, the Galaxy S5 is made of plastic and painted to look like metal. The iPhone 6 is much thinner and many think it has better features.

The iPhone 6 has its benefits and disadvantages, just as any other phone or product would have. Here's to Apple for bringing us another new generation of the iPhone!

New Club for STEM Education

Christian Jerkovich
staff writer

Towards the beginning of the school year, RHS students are met with the debut of numerous new extracurricular clubs. One club in particular emerges above others, with its unique work field opportunities. One of the STEM club's founding members, Izy Stern, a junior at RHS, invites students to immerse themselves in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. Izy Stern describes her personal experience, saying that "Because it's in its first year, and we are just starting off, it's been kind of hard to get a feel for how the club is going to run. But I know that creating the club has been such an interesting experience, and I have grown to learn a lot about STEM myself. I feel like it's going to be fun, and simultaneously helpful."

Izy says she created the STEM club because of her interest in the topic, "Personally I am very interested in STEM, and I know that a lot of other

people are too. I wanted to break away from the standard that STEM only focuses on intense math and programming science. People don't usually realize all of the topics STEM covers, and how important it is in our daily lives."

She describes what the STEM club hopes to accomplish, stating that "The goal of STEM club is to expose RHS students to various fields of STEM, introduce professionals who work in STEM-related fields, and have them share their experiences."

There are also many exciting events coming up in the future. "We have representatives from Steven's Institute of Technology and Manhattan College that will be speaking, as well as many STEM activities such as creating an artificial bicep."

Meetings are held every first and third Thursday of the month, in the science wing. For the many students wishing to explore the vast world of STEM, the club provides an opportunity for them to get involved in and learn about many important fields. It is truly a stand-out among the RHS extracurricular clubs.

News

Read about the much-anticipated and newly reborn Learning Commons.

Pg. 3



Features

Read about how education has evolved over the years.

Pgs. 6-7



A&E

See a preview of this year's New Player performances.

Pg. 9



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News

RHS Certamen

Anthony Tokarz
editorial editor

The summer months have passed and brought a new school year in their wake. Renewed college-related stress has once again brought to bear upon Ridgewood High School’s students the weight of curricular education and quantitative learning. As teachers roll out fresh red pens and computers churn out rotating schedules stuffed to bursting with show-boat classes, most students find themselves in a pitched battle for leisure time in the face of mounting responsibilities and expectations. A small group of Latin students have however found solace in an unusual pursuit, working themselves into the mind of an Ancient Roman. Outsiders call it weird, but the initiated call it “Certamen”.

“Certamen” means “contest” or “struggle” in Latin, and an outsider need only experience a few minutes of competitive play to testify to name’s accuracy. Three teams each composed of four active players sit facing one another in the sight of a judge and his panel of “spotters”, persons charged with the task of noting the order in which players ring in with the answer. Certamen players are a motley group. They crowd into the rooms of host institutions from places as diverse as Boston, San Antonio, and Alexandria, Virginia to assert their supremacy in classical scholarship.

Yet curiosity over one’s opponents’ hometown quickly sours into cold focus as play begins. The reader cracks open his packet of questions, twenty sets of toss-ups open to all teams and two bonus questions (boni) awarded to the team that answered each toss-up. The questions range, at the upper level, from Latin passages to Greco-Roman mythology to Latin grammar to Greco-Roman history to Greco-Roman literature. Players lean forward, eyes narrowed, buzzers primed, pens and legal pads at the ready.

So eager are contestants that rare and embarrassing is the moment when the question reader manages to reach the fifth word of a question before a team rings in, usually with the correct answer. A cacophony of sighs and facepalms erupts from those who had known the answer, but failed to recognize it first. Once the reader awards the points and proceeds to the next question, faces harden and the intensity in them threatens to render the air too heavy to breathe. And yet those buzzer-clutching few would not exchange that rush for the world.

Ridgewood High School’s Certamen

continued on page 3

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Roy Cho

Anya Sherman
staff writer

Roy Cho is facing a tough election. Scott Garrett has been in Congress for twelve years, essentially unopposed. However, in light of the government shutdown, economic recession, and general unemployment problems that have affected the country and New Jersey recently, The Democratic newcomer believes it is time for a change.

Roy Cho approaches thinks that he has what it takes to break the deadlock in congress, and believes in non-partisan functionality. Currently living in Hackensack, Cho lived his whole life in New Jersey, attended Brown University, and finished his education at Georgetown Law School. His is currently a lawyer by trade.

Among his many campaign stances, Cho believes in fighting for equal pay for equal work. He supports the rights of gay and lesbian Americans, and promises to repeal the remainder of the Defense of Marriage Act, and fight for the implementation of same-sex marriage.

Roy Cho has expressed firm supporter of Israel and the Jewish people, citing his South Korean heritage as one of the major factors behind his sympathy towards them. He also views the Iranian accumulation of nuclear supplies as a major concern, and believes that U.S. assistance must be continued in that region to combat the rising threat. Cho supports the idea of fighting on behalf of Israel and to quell the danger that Iran poses to its neighbors, and the Western world.

In regards to gun control, Cho is a supporter of background checks and laws limiting the size and power of guns that citizens are allowed to keep. As an example, a civilian should not have access to a M16 rifle, like those issued to the military.

Cho’s environmental policies include investments in clean energy industries. He believes that these will put not only our fuel consumption, but also our economic health on a more sustainable and competitive path.

His economic policies endorse public-private business partnerships that he believes will begin the process of creating more high-paying jobs for the middle class. He also supports raising the minimum wage, revising the tax policy that hurts businesses that ship overseas, and maintaining New Jersey’s infrastructure, transportation, and internet.

Roy Cho believes, he should be given a chance to represent the people of New Jersey in Congress, so that he might reform our government. However, with the fast approaching date of the midterm elections only time and the ballot box will tell.

This article is for informational purposes and does not express the opinions or views of the RHS High Times.



Roy Cho, a Democrat, is running against Scott Garrett for a congressional seat.

Backwoods: Pink Out

Katherine Bonfiglio
staff writer

On October 17, the first Backwoods dance of the 2014-15 school year took place in Van Neste Square in downtown Ridgewood. This most recent event was a success, attracting over 960 Ridgewood High School students. Each of the semi-annual Backwoods dances have a theme, used to decorate the park and attendees dress accordingly.

This theme, Pink Out, was a particularly special one. In honor of October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Pink Out dance set out to raise awareness for breast cancer research. The Backwoods Committee also made the decision to donate about

\$2,500 from the proceeds of the dance to breast cancer foundations. Backwoods was also successful in accomplishing its original goal of being a place for all four grades of Ridgewood High School students to have fun.

The popular dance began because the Backwoods Committee believed students should have an event where they could all be together and have a good time in a safe environment. The Backwoods Committee will add new freshman members to the three seniors, two juniors, and four sophomores in the coming months. The Backwoods Committee is a student run organization sponsored by the Ridgewood Guild. The next Backwoods dance in Van Neste Square will be held in the spring.



Members of the Backwoods Committee at the Pink Out dance.

Common Core and the PARCC Test

Joseph O’Keefe
staff writer

Ridgewood High School students began the 2014-15 school year noticing an important change to the high school schedule. This year, instead of the typical spring HSPA testing for juniors and the much awaited sleep-in week for the rest of the school, all students are scheduled for ten days of PARCC Exam testing. PARCC exams are scheduled for five days in March, three testing days in April and two in May. This new testing schedule has left many RHS students wondering just what exactly PARCC exams are, how are they scored and how do these exams impact graduation requirements, course placement and college admissions.

In 2010, New Jersey joined 43 other states and Washington D.C., voluntarily adopting the Common Core State Standards which replace the previous New Jersey standards in Language Arts and Math. The other seven curricular areas (Visual and Performing Arts, Health and Phys Ed, World Languages, Science, Social Studies, 21st Century Life & Careers and Technology) continue to be covered by NJ Core Curriculum Standards.

The new Common Core for Language Arts and Math required new standardized testing to measure student and district success. The new tests replace the NJ ASK and HSPA. To develop Common Core testing New Jersey joined PARCC (The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers), a group of nineteen states working together to develop computer-based assessments in language arts and math linked to these new, more rigorous Common Core State Standards.

Ridgewood is required under New Jersey law to implement the Common Core standards and the PARCC tests. The new standards were fully implemented in the 2013-14 school year. This school year is the first year of the new standardized tests.

Concern about the implication of the new PARCC tests is shared by many

RHS students. In particular students are concerned that PARCC results be used for class placement in the high school. Since the PARCC program itself is designed to measure college readiness and many colleges and universities are discussing using these tests for placement purposes, students are concerned about whether or not PARCC results be sent to colleges and if they have any control over this. In addition, worries exist about PARCC impacting college admissions. The PARCC website indicates that New Jersey’s college and universities will use PARCC assessments as one of the indicators of a student’s readiness for entry-level, credit-bearing college courses.

Teachers are worried about the use of PARCC results for teacher evaluations. Mr. Michael Yannone, REA President and RHS social studies teacher, explained that apart from a new system of evaluation, the Common Core is also responsible for a number of changes at Ridgewood High School, including additional state mandated training, the 1:1 Chromebook initiative, as well as a new Language arts and Spanish curriculum in the elementary schools. Mr. Yannone shared his personal concerns about the Common Core, “This is a lot of change in a very short period of time and I would prefer if everything just slowed down so we could get one thing down before moving on to another.”

The Board of Education however is far less hesitant about the new standards associated with the Common Core. Superintendent Daniel Fishbein feels that, “teachers or students will feel the impact directly in the classroom” and is confident about the abilities of Ridgewood students to do well on PARCC tests, but still says that its important that students educate themselves on this issue, “students, especially in communities like Ridgewood, should understand and appreciate the education they receive.”

Regardless of the results of the PARCC tests, they will eventually be integrated as a feature to measure students’ academic growth and abilities.

Certamen Team

continued from page 2

-men team, especially its Upper-Level or Advanced team, has proved itself in such a setting for years, especially at the National Level. Each year, the National Junior Classical League organizes a week-long Convention at a host university somewhere in the country. The centerpiece: Certamen. Three years ago, the RHS team (Megan Felder, Zoe Blecher-Cohen, Vidushi Sharma, and Akari Armatas) took 13th. Last summer, the team (Britta Potter, Charlotte Kahan, Peter Psathas, and Anthony Tokarz) took 8th, breaking into the semi-finals for the first time in NJ history. This latter accomplishment surprised the community of Latin enthusiasts and teachers who watch the event every year, especially given the premise that New Jersey counts itself as one of the few teams that selects its team by school, and not by a series of tests designed to determine the experts on every subject. Your correspondent overheard several spectators marvelling at NJ's victorious entrance into the semifinals, and offering a variety of comments ranging from the admiratory to the vitriolic.

The frenetic Certamen subculture has its own lore and legends, which loom over the game as does Trajan over Rome from atop his column in the Roman Forum. Certamen players know of Amol Punjabi, the Latin wizard from Boston whose three-time induction into the Certamen Hall of Fame has spawned a verb, 'to punjabi', which encapsulates in all its devastating splendor defeat in Certamen at the hands of Amol Punjabi (e.g. "My team was eliminated from the semifinals after a thorough Punjabi-ing"). The story of Jeffrey Dubuissou, another Advanced-Level Massachusetts player, echoes the ambitions of the neophyte Certamen player, from classical obscurity in an out-of-the-way middle school Latin program, to his meteoric rise to NJCL fame, summited and commemorated in his 2013 induction into the Certamen Hall of Fame. All teams dread the Massachusetts delegation, which has dominated competitive Certamen for several years now.

The same subculture promotes a bizarre and sometimes stupefying form of cheerleading. For instance, supporters of the Virginia delegation's lend expressive tangibility to their enthusiasm by pressing their elbows together while spreading their hands, then pressing their hands together while spreading their elbows in rapid succession as they cheer "V A, V A" repeatedly until the reader silences them in frustration.

What compels kids, already burdened by schoolwork and extracurriculars, to tease out obscure classical knowledge from thousand-page

tomes and dusty anthologies? What makes a sodalis factionis certaminis - a member of the Certamen team - tick?

"It [Certamen] means immersing myself in a whole different world that lets me think like a Roman," says

Certamen means contest or struggle in Latin.

Peter Psathas, the Advanced Team's resident grammarian and generalist, whose speedy verb conversions dazzle even the most seasoned veterans.

"[I do it] Because there's something so rewarding about deeply investigating such a developed and influential culture-and slamming that table or buzzer," adds Charlotte Kahan, whose knowledge of Roman culture at its most esoteric rivals that of the most cultured Ancient Roman, and whose familiarity with Roman breads nonpareil arguably secured NJ's spot in the semi's.

The team universally enjoys the strange satisfaction felt upon buzzing in first with the correct answer.

Magistra Venturini took over the RHS Certamen team 15 years ago, and until 5 years ago it was a "local sport", until higher level play was introduced. "It has been a hit ever since," she says. Magistra is proud of the team's dedication and achievement, "but the fact that every player loves the game means more to me than the successes, because it reflects their enthusiasm for classical studies. You simply can't acquire the knowledge needed to compete nationally at the advanced level without an extraordinary time commitment, and the players make that commitment because they love to explore ancient civilizations. From my point of view, the players are winners not simply because they placed 8th nationally, impressive as that is, but because they are following their passion, and that makes coaching a real treat."

As to the team's future prospects, Magistra notes that "the team is a Latin language and Roman life powerhouse and that catapulted RHS into the national limelight." However, the team has a long way to go toward realizing its dreams of winning Nationals. "The next goal is to achieve similar expertise in mythology, history and literature. Because the advanced team members are currently taking either Latin IV poetry or Latin V AP Latin Literature, both of which have a heavy mythology and literature component, they should be very well positioned to compete at nationals in Texas in July 2015 with numerous competitions during the course of the year to hone their game."



The New Jersey Certamen team meets with the rest of the state's delegation at Emory University in Georgia.

Learning Commons

Elizabeth O'Keefe
news editor

Students of Ridgewood High School have been eagerly awaiting the opening of the Learning Commons. Between classes it wasn't unusual to see students stopping in front of the new windows into the space to watch the construction for a minute before heading on to their classes.

The final design of the Learning Commons has transformed the entire space. The old bookshelves which divided the old library into crowded slivers have been replaced with new bookshelves that come up to mid-waist, opening up the room to light and air flow. The Learning Commons also features a markedly increased number of lighting fixtures, and windows into the hallway. Librarian Mrs. Capetola says that this change is one of her favorite parts of the renovation, "I just love the light, even on a dreary day it looks so much brighter."

Perhaps the most obvious change in the Learning Commons is the exclusion of desktop computers, a feature of the old library which occupied about 1/3 of the Library's total space. However, this change is one that had been welcomed by students, Liz Branca, a Junior, said she felt that the change was needed, "The desktop computers are really unnecessary now, especially with the Chromebooks."

This area of the Learning Commons has been the one most dramatically changed in renovations, featuring new comfy chairs arranged in groups, perfect for projects and group work. One wall of this section is lined with study carrels and the other with a counter and higher chairs, two new kinds of study spaces in the library.

Apart from this, the most major change in the Learning Commons is four conference rooms, it is this feature that Mrs. Weil, 2012-2013 HSA President, current member of the HSA board, and Development Chair of the Learning Commons project is excited to see used by students. "The Learning Commons definitely provides students with a lot of places to collaborate."

It is certainly true that the design of the Learning Commons fosters a more social environment than that of the old library. RHS students have expressed concern about it in the lead up to the ribbon cutting ceremony, tentatively set to take place on November 11. Many students site worries that the Learning Commons will become a primarily rowdy social space instead of a place where they can study and get work done. However Mrs. Capetola addressed these concerns, with great faith in the RHS Community, "This school is full of mature students, I really don't think it will be a problem," in fact Capetola said that "it was students who wanted to make sure that this was a study space, even more than me."



The new Learning Commons is set for completion on November 11 with a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony.

What is High Times?

Minha Lee
editorial editor

The Ridgewood High School High Times was established in 1933 by a small group of students and continues to be a student run organization. On the first Monday of every month students meet in room 217 to discuss the most interesting events and issues pertaining to the high school and Ridgewood as a whole and decide what the student body needs to know about. These students are highly committed to their task of informing the student body.

There are twelve section editors of the High Times, three for News, and two for each Editorial, Arts and Entertainment, Features, and Sports. The staff also includes for the first time a media specialist whose job is to acquire art and accompanying visuals for every article. The group is led by three chief editors, and advisor Mr. Brunner; this year's chief editors are seniors Steven Lee, Daniel Park, and Sumita Rajpurohit.

While past meetings were usually very well attended, chief editor Daniel Park says that many people don't fol-

low through on the articles that they sign up to write, "This definitely complicates the jobs of section editors, as they are often forced to either find a new person to write the article or write it themselves, leading to panicked last minute editing sections that spiral endlessly into multiple weeks."

The High Times staff includes students from all grades, something that can be both a strength and weakness of the paper. Faculty supervisor Mr. Brunner says that this reality has lead to inconsistencies in the quality of writing submitted monthly, but also allows for the integration of the perspectives of Ridgewood High Students students as a whole.

Another problem the paper faces is the length and promptness of final drafts, "Of course we know that all of our writers are very busy, but with some of the articles we get it easy to tell they were written last minute. We are definitely looking for committed writers" said Sumita.

The High Times is having a general staff meeting for the Decmeber issue today, November 3, in room 217 during unit lunch for any interested in writing. All are welcome.

Spotlight Shines on New Players Main Stage Season

Cathy Campo
staff writer

The New Players main stage productions are at it again with an intriguing 2014-2015 year. The season kicked off with the hilarious 1940's play, *Light Up the Sky*, written by Moss Hart. It was performed the weekend of October 24, and was a huge success. Here is what's to come next for New Players.

The next production will be a dark version of *A Christmas Carol* directed by Nate Hamm and stage-managed by seniors Katy Feldhahn and Erin Meyer. The classic Christmas tale follows the story of the old miser, Ebenezer Scrooge (Patrick Meyer - sophomore). In result of Scrooge's mean spirit, the Ghosts of Christmas Past (Julia Goodgold - senior), Present (Cormac Bohan - senior) and Future (Wes Dunn - senior) all pay visits to Scrooge to teach him the value of Christmas and to be a better person. *A Christmas Carol* will take place on Thursday, December 11th at 7PM and Friday and Saturday, December 12th and 13th at 8PM in the Little Theatre.

This year's musical is *Shrek the Musical* (music by Jeanine Tesori and book and lyrics by David Lindsay-Abaire) to be directed by New Players alum Kelly VanZile. Based off the



A picture from last year's New Players in Concert

classic Dreamworks animated film, *Shrek the Musical* is the comedic story of an ogre who, after being mocked and feared his entire life by anything that crosses his path, retreats to a swamp to exist in happy isolation. But soon enough, mayhem occurs as gangs of homeless people raid his sanctuary, shouting that Lord Farquaad has evicted them. In result, Shrek promises to get their homes back, if they give him his home back. When Shrek and Farquaad meet, the Lord strikes a deal of his own: He'll give the homeless people their homes back, if Shrek

rescues Princess Fiona. Shrek obliges, yet finds that soon enough, he has fallen in love with the Princess. But there's something quite strange about her... To find out what it is, come see the New Players Production March 19-22 or audition for it on Monday, November 10th in the Little Theatre.

The season will close with William Shakespeare's classic and hilarious *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by both freshman grade administrator, Dr. Schaefer, and Tony Capone. The New Players will perform the show in Scotland at the large-

est theatre festival in the world, the Fringe Festival, on August 1st-14th.

Unlike the typical New Players production, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will have two different casts. Most popular of Shakespeare's comedies, the play follows the adventures of four young lovers (Helena, Hermia, Demetrius, and Lysander) and a group of amateur actors and their interactions with chaos-inducing fairies (Oberon, Puck, and Titania). Complete with an enchanted forest, a handsome fairy king, a misguided parent, star-crossed lovers, and a weaver who's transformed into a half-donkey, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is mysteriously wonderful. Be sure to audition for this play on Monday, November 17th in the Little Theatre, or come see it on May 7th, 8th, and 9th, also in the Little Theatre.

Between the successful performance of *Light Up the Sky*, and the soon to come *A Christmas Carol*, *Shrek the Musical*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the New Players have really outdone themselves once again this year. Their main stage productions are inevitably always hits, but be sure to see or even try and audition for the other New Players productions - the student-directed and produced *One Acts* (Saturday, June 6th in the Little Theatre) and *New Players in Concert* (January 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th in the Little Theatre).

The Maze Runner - A Closer Look at the Hit Film

Shrea Mitra & Courtney Wright
staff writers

Thomas (Dylan O'Brien), wakes up in the middle of a labyrinth. He finds himself surrounded by other adolescents who have been put in midst of a giant glade ringed by a deadly maze: but they cannot remember why or how. At first, Thomas feels confused and perplexed amongst the other boys, but soon adjusts to their structured lifestyle as he realizes that the only way home was to work together.

Thomas, like the rest of the boys, has little memory of his past. After making courageous moves and impressing the Gladers, Thomas is promoted to becoming a runner: one of the most important positions in their society that is essential for their escape.

Through time, he regains memory of his past and discovers that he may be more important to the situation than many have ever be-

lieved. However, unlike the rest of the boys, his memory reappears in his dreams where he discovers vital clues that not only reveal his past, but clues to everyone's journey home.

James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* is an action packed sci-fi story that became a hit on and off the screen. Having been released in theatres on September 14th, the movie has already made \$32.5M in the box office in its first three weekends, and soon to be one of the top watched movies in September, the sixth of all time for the month.

Although the movie was a success, many viewers agree that it contains many similar ideas to the popular film, *The Hunger Games*. For example, the movie takes place in a dystopian time period where the world is completely demolished. A group of teenagers are placed in an enclosed arena where they are forced to fight for their lives and battle against both technologically built obstacles and others such as armed gun-



A promotional poster for "The Maze Runner" featuring the main characters.

men. In addition, one character is destined to change civilization and begin a "revolution," just like Katniss does in *The Hunger Games* and Thomas does in *The Maze Runner*. Furthermore, the two films portray themes of trust, leadership, friendship, and the relationship between society and government.

While watching this movie, the audience was easily able to relate to the character's qualities and behaviors while the characters struggle to survive. Thomas is one of the individuals who we are most able to recognize and understand. We are able to identify why Thomas acts the way he does, and how he changes for the duration of motion picture.

After the film ended, it was not hard to fall in love with the story, along with the cast who really were able to pull the entire movie together. Granted, it is very similar in certain ways to other movies recently released, but it is still one where you would not be able to help yourself.

Throughout the film, the intensity of the actors is continuously fulfilled and never weak. Especially since the characters in the story depict adolescents, these young actors are able to fulfill the positions of playing these difficult roles based off a book that

most all dystopian lovers had read.

Not only do the actors put on a mesmerizing performance, but the cinematography and the soundtrack adds an additional impact on the way the film is depicted. The settings of the film also influences the audience to be enthralled, as the glade and futuristic technology allows fans the ability to view the perspective as mentioned in the novel.

The Maze Runner very closely relates to the book which pleases many of the young adult runners. Notably, the actors: Dylan O'Brien, Will Poulter, Kaya Scodelario and Thomas-Brodie Sangster, take on the roles of the main characters. Wes Ball's directing skills were most certainly put to the test with this production. The result attests to his ability to interpret the novel to the best of his ability in order to please both movie lovers and *Maze Runner* fans. His successful film makes the audience wanting more of this trilogy, and leaves them wanting to see the movie again and again.

The sequel, *The Scorch Trials*, is expected to arrive in theatres on September 15, 2015. In the meantime, it gives everyone enough time to finish the three books before each film comes out. So, what are you waiting for? They'll be just as amazing as the first.



The famous maze from the book, which was visually brought to life on screen.

Arts & Entertainment

Tri-M Music Honors Society Gives Back to the Village

Kristen Schretter
staff writer

There are many different ways to give service to the community to help others out. Some of these ways are obvious, such as working at a soup kitchen or building houses for those in need. While these ways to make an impact are certainly important and large, sometimes the little things can help others in ways that are overlooked. Sometimes, these little things can even stem from a person's own hobbies.

This is the idea that embodied the Tri-M Music Honors society club on their last trip, which took place on Friday, October 3rd. The Tri-M Music Honors Society is an international organization for outstanding high school musicians. The organization recognizes the achievements of these young musicians and provides opportunities for them to perform and play for others. Students who are in the group must be enrolled in a music course at the school, unless their instrument is not offered in a class. They also must maintain a B average, and they have to be recommended for membership by a teacher.

Due to all of these qualifications, there was an extremely talented group of students on the field trip, performing a diverse selection of instruments, from the saxophone to the flute to voice. The participat-



Shoko Nagami plays the saxophone as part of the Tri-M Music Honors Society.

ing students were in the RHS music program, plus a few pianists. These students could have been playing in a concert hall in front of a huge audience. In fact, many of them have already been doing so for years. Instead, they spent their Friday afternoon playing at the Van Dyk nursing home in town for the elderly.

They managed to give the subtle form of community service through music. Although they were not donating to the home or helping the residents in an overt way, many were



Morgan Mastrangelo sings at the Van Dyk nursing home.

positively affected by the music. One woman listened to the music, silently singing to every note played, as others enjoyed the mini concert. It really was quite an event there; many people showed up for this change in their usual routine. Not only did the residents living in the home enjoy the music, but so did their visiting relatives. Even a visiting pet (an adorable golden retriever) got to sit in as well.

There are few things more gratifying than hearing a compliment after playing, especially from some-

one who has lived a long life and heard many songs along the way. It's also something that was not really expected going in, making it even more gratifying. Frequently, there is a disconnect between the old and the young, due to generational and social differences, but during this trip, the gap between them was bridged by a shared love for music, even if it was finding it the most soothing thing to fall asleep to.

The students who have been in the club for many years are very inspiring because they've been taking time out of their Friday afternoons for a while now just to give a concert to those who can no longer go out to see them. Not only that, but the level of the concert truly seemed professional, given the incredible talent of the students who participated. Someday, when they are playing for thousands of people who are paying thousands of dollars to see them, they will look back fondly on the times when they gave some of their first solo performances for an elderly audience, for free.

The trip was beneficial and meaningful not only to the old, but also to the young; the performance gave happiness to both the students performing and those listening. Through their music, the members of the Tri-M Music Honors Society decided to give back to the community, and it worked.

RHS Dance Team: Jazz Style with a Competitive Flair

Olivia Szymanski
entertainment editor

As the winter sports season draws closer, not only do the basketball and wrestling teams begin to practice, but so does another team; the Ridgewood High School dance team. The dance team performs during half time at basketball games, and their dances are choreographed in a "jazz style with a competitive flair." Some of the specialties of the dance team include synchronized turns and other stunts, like jumps.

The team not only performs at sporting events, but they also attend multiple dance competitions each year. Last year, they visited four different competitions, and this year they hope to make it to five. "Dance competitions are really fun and rewarding because everyone attending has an appreciation for dance, and it's cool to watch other high school teams compete there as well," says senior captain Hailey Smith.

For the past few years, the team has been coached by Mrs. Mele. However, this year the team is under the direction of a new coach, Ms. Musso, who used to dance on her own high school dance team, and also has experience coaching the Pascack Valley team. Members of the team, including senior captains Hailey Smith and Bella Rosati agree that although Mrs. Mele has been the coach for several seasons and that many of the girls have been coached



The 2013-2014 RHS dance team, with their coach, poses for a group photo.

by her since their freshman year, they are confident in their new coach and positive that the upcoming season is going to be extremely successful.

Dance team is not only an opportunity for dancers to perform and share their love of dance with others, but it also integrates school spirit and a sense of community.

Most members on the team already take classes at various dance studios, but the dance team has a style that differs greatly in contrast to the typical studio dance style. The style they perform in is slightly more geared toward winning competitions, so it includes more impressive tricks and stunts. Most dance studios offer a variety of styles of dance, from ballet to contemporary to hip hop. The dance team is exclusively a competitive jazz style, so it can be useful to be able to focus on only one type of dance. By only focusing on one style, they have more potential of winning a competition.

However, it's not the type of dance that makes the difference to the members. Dance team is not only an opportunity for dancers to perform and share their love of dance with others, but it also integrates school spirit and a sense of community. Having a shared affinity for dance and performing brings the team together. Not only that, it's also a way for people who don't play traditional school sports to participate in a school activity and show school spirit. "One of the best parts of dance team is that you get the chance to perform while still getting the sense of being a team player," Hailey Smith says.

In addition to the regular dance

team performances at basketball games and competitions, some members of the team have also performed in the Maroon and White recitals that take place throughout the school year. In fact, there are a variety of opportunities for dancers to join activities and perform at the high school. Such opportunities include the Ridgewood High School Dance Company, the Celebration of the Arts, dance classes taught during the school day by Mrs. Landa, and, of course, the dance team. Each activity or event offers a different quality of dance, which is entertaining and interesting for both dancers and audiences.

The dance team will begin performing at both boys' and girls' varsity basketball games. Everyone should make sure to stop by during the games' half-time shows to watch the team perform this year's competition piece. After the end of the season, they will have a final performance in the spring during Celebration of the Arts, and the team is looking forward to sharing their talent and love of dance with the rest of the school in their upcoming season. This performance is always their chance to show the entire school what they have been working so hard on all year, so make sure you don't miss it.

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References available.

A portrait of a woman with dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored top. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

Features

The Canon of the West

Daniel Park
Chief Editor

Long before Ridgewood High School’s tradition of excellence was first promised back in 1919, educational standards had been instituted for a large part of recorded history. This is quite evident in the multiple compilations of the Western Canon, a corpus of literature deemed scholarly and necessary in order to comprehend how Western culture has been influenced and molded over the course of human history. Exemplary works include Plato’s *The Republic*, Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, alongside comparatively recent works such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. All these authoritative and compelling works are not only significant for influencing Western society, but also for being “aesthetically valuable.” Although Western canons might only be considered one of innumerable lists of notable books, they are notable for compilations by notable literary critics such as Harold Bloom, and for having specific literary projects such as *Great Books of the Western World*, devoted to educating its readers about these integral books. As a matter of fact, several Western canon books feature in our RHS

curriculum. Many RHS students may remember covering *Gilgamesh* and *The Odyssey* as freshmen, Edith Wharton’s *Ethan Frome* as sophomores, tackling *The Great Gatsby* as juniors, and of course, analyzing many Shakespearean plays throughout their time at Ridgewood High School. When one examines the Ridgewood High School curriculum, and compares it to a curriculum of old, there are disparities in both choice of literature and themes taught in the schools, then and now. To illustrate, *The Republic* discusses the dominant power’s use of justice to its advantage. Nowadays, in contrast, the current curriculum seems to focus on power’s corrupting nature and the lack of justice by dominant powers, as discussed in Orwell’s *1984*. Moreover, one should also note that modern-day literature seems to focus more of affecting social change, as Harold Bloom bemoaned in his own Western canon compilation, as seen in comparing non-Canon novel *The Jungle* with Voltaire’s *Candide*, as one is solely devoted to the promotion of American socialism while the other is stylistically created to serve as both a work of fiction, and to provide insight into the French society of its time.



Knowledge Over Scores

Steven Eliya and Brian Noh
staff writers

Education is more important now than ever before. With the center of focus leaning towards earning a higher GPA and getting accepted into colleges, rather than valuing education for its own being and importance in students’ lives, a teacher’s opinion on the topic seemed vital. Thus, Mr. Turkington, a math teacher who has been teaching at RHS for twelve years, was interviewed in order to gain perspective on the viewpoint of a teacher upon the transformation of an educational environment. When asked how the standard of education has changed since he began teaching, Mr. Turkington replied, “Students are more grade conscious and less learning focused than before.” Although getting an A in AP Physics is important, being more interested and involved while learning Quantum Mechanics would assist a student much more substantially in the future. Mr. Turkington emphasizes this point greatly, and works to change his students’ mindsets by being constantly available and supportive for his students to ask questions and learn. Another common question that students have is how the subject matter they learn in class will help them in real life. Many have given up on the idea that what they learn in school will actually help them in real life, and ap-

proach school with less passion for the knowledge they are given daily. However, Mr. Turkington has seen math affect his students for years and says, “A moderate percentage of my students continue to become engineers or scientists, so for some of them it’s true that they will need and use this knowledge in the future. Everything you learn opens a door, but everything you don’t learn closes a door. Take every opportunity you get. After you leave RHS, many of the opportunities are like ‘closed doors’ that cannot be opened again.” Although Mr. Turkington believes that the material students learn now may not help many of them in the future, he believes that problem solving and understanding how to get an answer to a tough problem is one of the most important things about the classes students take here. For example, Mr. Turkington has problem sets that he puts on his website for practice. Amongst the classwork and review problems, there are always challenge problems and fun applications students can try- such as writing the equations of a graph of a smiley face- that keep them interested and engaged. His attempts to truly engage his students have been incredibly successful, as seen by the crowds of students that go to him after school daily, often staying for hours to grasp concepts. Mr. Turkington also realizes that education is changing rapidly; when asking what he would change about

The average pencil writes 45,000 words in its lifetime

Literature Through the Years

Jamie Lim
staff writer

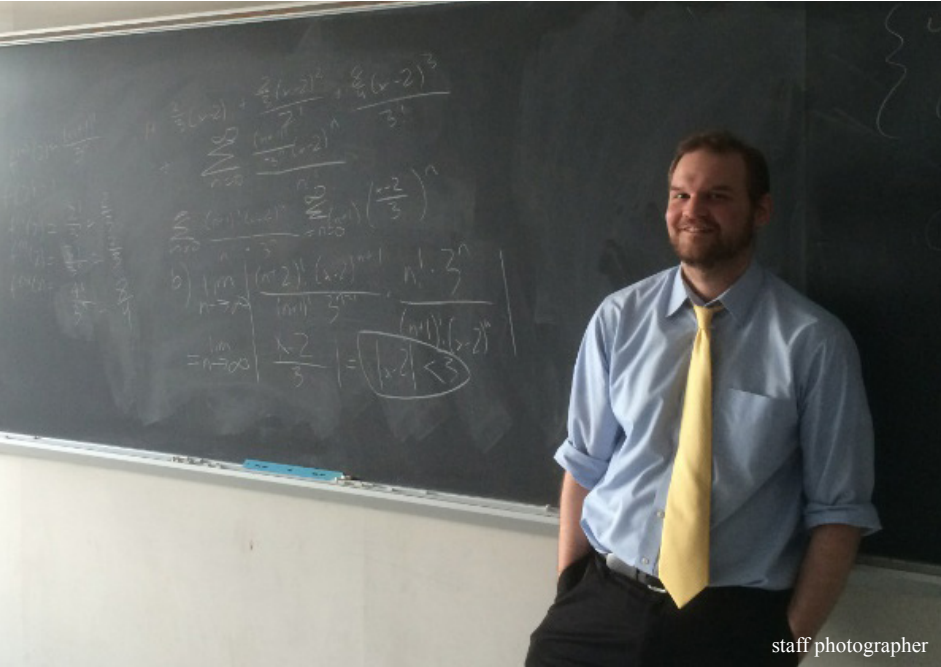
Non-fiction, fiction, mystery, classics, science fiction, horror, romance, and comedy. These are just a few of the countless genres in the boundless universe of books. The choices are endless. The question is, which of these genres should have the privilege of being taught in schools? For many years of a student’s career, the choice of what kind of book to read is made by the teacher or school curriculum. However, at a certain point, this choice becomes solely the student’s to make. At this point, what direction should students take in choosing books? Some readings are guided by a student’s desire to learn about what is happening in the world, but some are also driven by an impulse to understand oneself better and gain new perspectives about the world. The most well-known battle among genres is between fiction and non-fiction. Which is really more informational, and which is more capable of expanding a student’s view of the continuously transforming world? Is fiction only about an entirely imaginary world, or does it help teach what non-fiction never can? Does non-fiction completely cut out the creative side to thinking? To start, fiction is a widely popular genre among students of all ages. The majority of students start with reading fiction before they even glance at non-fiction. Fiction is a very fluid genre. It can start from anywhere and go where the author decides to take it. Maybe point A is actually point Z. Or maybe there is no point A. Maybe that point was thought to be point A, but it was actually point

R. The author’s imagination is the only limit to where the story can go, and imagination simply has no limits. There are so many things to learn from every writer’s distinct voice and style. In fact, fiction is full of “grey” areas. The reader is left to wrestle with a variety of opinions regarding philosophy, morality, and spirituality. That is why, for example, a student may prefer reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* over a book about the existence of social inequality. Fiction is a world of creativity in which the writer starts with nothing, and yet, the reader is left with everything. On the other hand, non-fiction is full of surprises as well. Unlike fiction, it is fact-based, black and white. Students are encouraged to read non-fiction in order to learn from a more objective perspective. The biography of Martin Luther King or a book about the Civil War may be regarded as a more intellectual read than the *Harry Potter* series or *The Fault in Our Stars*, two widely known works of fiction. Non-fiction books have a great amount of information to offer, especially for those looking to expand their knowledge of the factual realm. Non-fiction is also a great guide for students to develop critical thinking skills and the ability to read and comprehend complex texts. Fiction books may satisfy a drive for creativity while non-fiction is able to provide a clear view of clean-cut facts. There is no right or wrong answer as to whether students should read fiction or non-fiction. Both genres provide information in their own unique ways. Who is to judge that one genre is better than the other? Students should be encouraged to read and integrate an equal amount of each genre into their bases of knowledge.

Crayons rank 18th on worlds most recognizable scents and by the time one is 10 years old they will have gone through approximately 730

Ridgewood High School and education as a whole, he commented “I would primarily focus on reducing the amount of work students have in their day-to-day schedules.” Rather than making kids overly conscious about their GPAs and aimed towards their future resume, Mr. Turkington would focus on getting RHS students to understand and apprehend concepts and really learn about the material. By lowering the overall difficulty of students’ workload and schedules, Mr. Turkington seeks to help students fully absorb information and have them concentrate fully on their current education. When asked about his teaching experience, Mr. Turkington said “Ridgewood High School was the

first school that I taught at. I started 12 years ago and ever since, I have grown to love working with high schoolers, watching people learn, and expanding their view of their capabilities.” All in all, Mr. Turkington’s insight on education and his experiences at RHS have displayed the truth of modern education. Kids have become unwillingly devoted to the improvement of their personal grades, rather than their overall education that will carry on with them for the rest of their life. One student right before the interview had spoken to Mr. Turkington, and he had asked, “What was my grade on it?” Ironically, that occurrence proved the somber truth of today’s education; the GPA outweighs the knowledge.



staff photographer

Didaskaleinophobia is the fear of going to school

Features

The Common Core- What's Changing?

Cammie Hong
staff writer

Our world is becoming increasingly fast paced. In the last few years, the United States has been falling behind considerably in terms of developments in science, technology, and education. Students in Asia, Europe and South America are ahead of American students in math and science. Educators have been trying to accelerate the United States' education system, only to find no good solution. The Common Core, however, may be the first step in the right direction to making the United States formidable competition on the international stage.

The Common Core is a set of standards that is amplifying the English and Mathematics curricula for public schools in 48 of the 50 states. These standards are meant to prepare students for life after high school. Many parents feared that the new standards would hold their children back. At the same time, colleges noticed that students were not suitably prepared for standard introductory classes. Therefore, schools are preparing students for their futures by making

ing high school classes more difficult. For some students, the changes will not affect them very much; however, a large population of kids will dramatically feel the pressure by the added change for their educational careers.

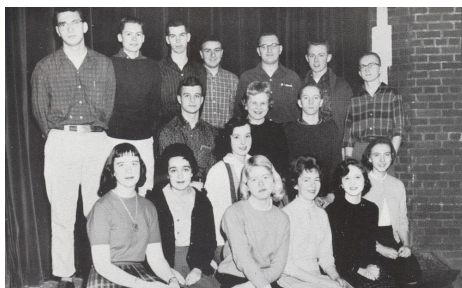
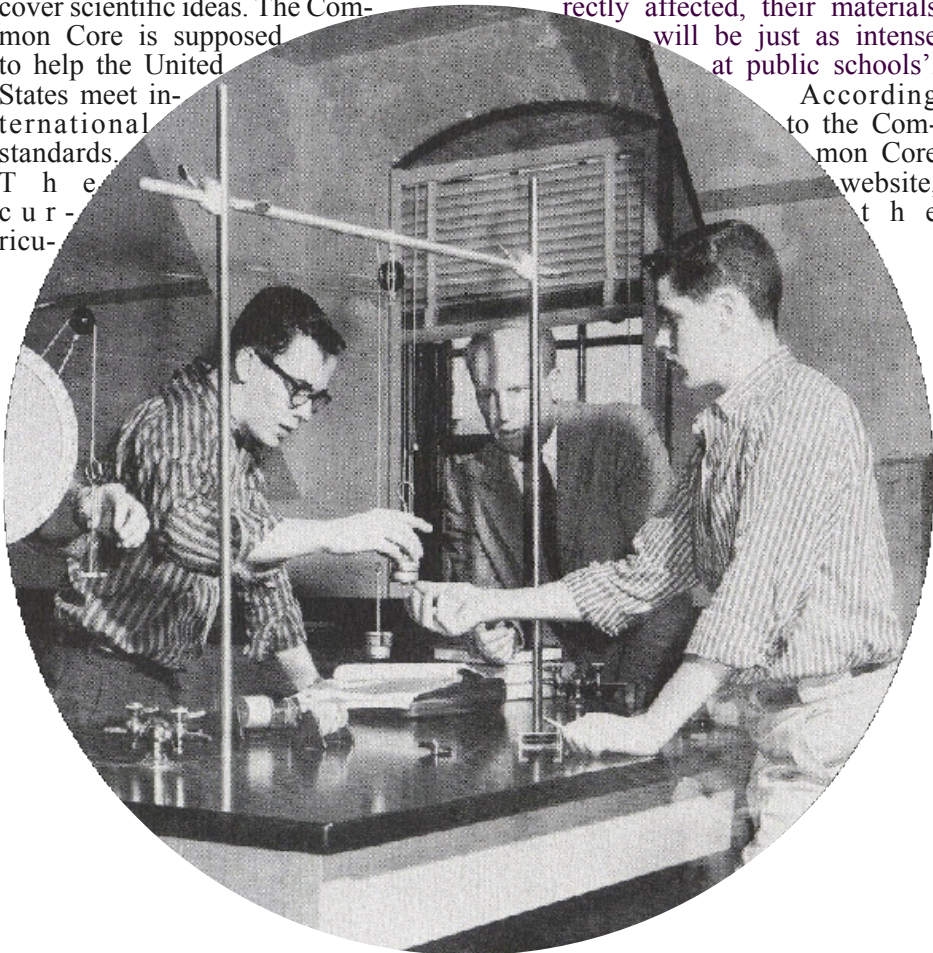
Classes will be more challenging and move at a significantly faster pace in order to keep up with the new standards, but program encourages critical reading, real-world math applications, and extensive writing. In addition to this, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), is helping students gain more knowledge in various subjects. Students will learn to better analyze statistics, and rationally discover scientific ideas. The Common Core is supposed to help the United States meet international standards. The new curriculum is not

not nationally mandatory. In fact, state leaders can withdraw their state from the standards whenever they choose to. The Common Core is a state by state decision, not a federal decision. In some schools, the change has been more noticeable than in others. Homeschooled students, for instance, are not directly affected by the change. Although they are not exposed to the change in a public school setting, their learning style will also change. Textbook companies are trying to correlate their information with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Therefore, even though homeschooled students' education will not be directly affected, their materials will be just as intense at public schools'.

According to the Common Core website, the change

Common Core is supposed to "accommodate and prepare students for Algebra 1 in eighth grade." The idea of the CCSS is to better prepare students for college. In Ridgewood, the new "higher" standard is the track that most students will take. Ridgewood High School is ahead of the curve, and well prepared, but how will other students around the country fare?

The largest school in the world (in terms of pupils) is the City Montessori School in Lucknow, India which has over 32,000 students!



Education All Around the World

Poyani Bavishi
features editor

In an attempt to bring America up to the international standard of education, the Common Core has been created to quick start the country and bring up performance in schools. But what are other countries doing in education that America is not?

It is no secret that most countries that are ahead of America worldwide in mathematics, critical reading, writing, and science rankings often spend less money on average than the American government does. In fact, many schools from top performing countries and school districts such as Korea, Singapore, and Finland all say the same thing- their classrooms, save for the highest level math classes, remain free of calculators and unnecessary gadgetry for the majority of their schooling.

Another evident difference between America's educational system and that of Finland, the country with 2002's highest worldwide reading, math, and writing scores is that their school districts are equally funded and are not ranked. This mindset makes it so the entire country is motivated to improve, and forces school districts to work together to elevate standards as a whole.

Yet another underlying truth is that teachers in foreign countries are held in greater esteem than in the United States. In a report by McKinsey & Company, researchers found

that teachers in many foreign countries are recruited from the top of academically successful pools of students, chosen from the top third of graduating classes to creating prestigious titles for the entire profession. However, America has only twenty-three percent of its teachers coming from the top third of their college classes; even worse, high poverty schools attract only fourteen percent of America's top. Teachers are no longer viewed as the top tier of professions in America, and talent is fleeing from the field to go to more respected and esteemed jobs.

Ultimately, American standards have a while to go before they catch up to the rest of the world. While the Common Core sets many solid standards to reach for, the country as a whole must reinvent the education system in its teaching methodology and student mindset to truly change for the good.

In Chile, summer vacation lasts from mid-December to early March (12 weeks) while Ethiopia has vacations that range from 12 to 15 weeks; meanwhile, Germany has only a 6 week vacation.

Perspectives on Changes in Education

Emily Kopec
features editor

Education has drastically evolved over time. With ambitions and expectations set higher, students are taking on more educational responsibilities. Mr. Brown, an RHS health teacher was interviewed to compare and reflect on the changes of education since 1971. As the coach of girl's cross-country and track, he has experienced many aspects of the Ridgewood High School community. Specifically, Mr. Brown has contributed to the positive learning environment that students are daily immersed in.

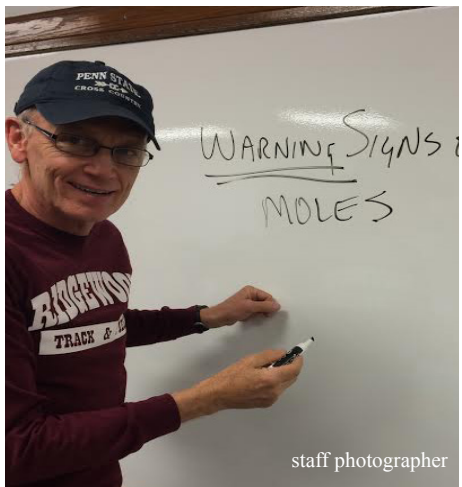
Standards of education have significantly changed over the past years. Especially with the addition of the Common Core, the level of difficulty and the pace of classes have increased. To contrast, the ambitions and goals of high school students have not been impacted. The change in "the standard of education is so multifaceted that it's hard to answer that. Forty-three years ago the Ridgewood students wanted to go to Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. Some things have not changed."

Additionally, most high school students put a lot of effort into their schoolwork. College pressure, and demands of homework has also contributed to educational change. Although students might not remember specifics of a particular lesson in twenty years, "the work that the RHS students do, will pay off for them in terms of work ethic. Will they learn this specific skill again? Probably not." Mr. Brown believes that the habits and

quality of work that high school students have will affect their futures.

Although curricula are changing, the rewarding elements of teaching have not changed. Mr. Brown's favorite thing about teaching high school students is their "positive energy." There are "countless days where things aren't going well, at the end of the day I am elevated, optimistic." Young people "feel the world is open." With their futures ahead of them, aspirations create an inspiring learning environment. The energy that students express adds to RHS's positive educational atmosphere.

In some ways, schools have never changed. Young people still have similar goals for their futures and dedication to work hard at this point in their lives. Despite the enforcement of testing and elevated pressure of grades, RHS has always been a place for students, and teachers to learn.



staff photographer

Editorial

A Case About Chromebooks: A Step Forward or Back?

Kristina De Mora
staff writer

Recently, Ridgewood High School students received Chromebooks as part of an initiative to help students become more prepared to live and work in the 21st century.

Chromebooks, firstly, are a great way for students to learn organizational skills, which is closely related to their high academic success. When a student has a heavy workload, it's easy to lose a worksheet or forget about important projects due the next day; if teachers implement this technology to give students those same worksheets, notes, and projects, pupils can more easily review their work in one neat, tidy, and de-cluttered place. The Chromebook Initiative will also help to improve students' abilities to work in a group. The Google Drive application on each Chromebook encourages students collaboration more efficiently. For instance, rather than figuring out when to meet in person, students can collaborate on a Google Doc from the comfort of their homes. The built-in chat function allows students to share ideas and improve the quality of their projects. Because Google Docs is readily accessible, it makes completing group tasks more efficient. This can also make the teachers' jobs easier; by having students hand in work via email or Google Classroom, teachers won't have to collect and labor through stacks of physical paper.

Chromebooks in the Ridgewood Public Schools system will revolutionize the way students approach their education.

Allowing Chromebooks in the classroom also reinforces computer skills and can allow students to learn how to use these devices naturally, without having to take an elective pertaining to computer skills and waste time that could be spent on other academic subjects. Being computer-savvy is one of the skills that students need in order to gain the experience they need to ensure college and career readiness. Students that know the rudiments of using common software such as Microsoft Office, email, and the Internet have a significant advantage over students that have limited knowledge of computers.

In addition, utilizing Chromebooks in school will make learning more enjoyable for students. By integrating technology in the classroom, Chromebooks will motivate students to

feel an increased enthusiasm towards their school work. When students are bored, they are less likely to pay attention to important information that the teacher presents to them; using computers is far more fun for students than simply sitting at their desk and taking notes using pencil and paper for an entire class period. Students learn best when provided with fun classroom activities and with the Chromebooks, teachers will be able to better engage students in that way. For example, a teacher could challenge students to answer a question relating to the current class work using their Chromebooks and the Internet. This would enable students to hone their research and problem solving skills to find the answer. When students are motivated to complete their assignments through engaging activities, they have a better opportunity to enrich their academic careers and increase their chance of success.

The recent implementation of Chromebooks in the Ridgewood Public Schools system will revolutionize the way students approach their education. Not only will this initiative prepare students for the real world skills they will need for future careers, but it will make them better creative thinkers and problem solvers. Using Chromebooks will better organizational skills and increase the love for learning, making it one of the best educational tool provided by the school district.

Desiree Bottigliero
staff writer

Though most students agree that the Chromebook initiative is a positive benefit to education at RHS, several drawbacks of their usage should be addressed.

Not only must the Chromebook be linked to wifi to complete homework, but the school's connection speed has been reduced considerably. In addition, those who participate in extracurriculars and sports that meet outside of wifi range, can't start homework until they are home. In Freshman Focus, students are told to form a time management plan; one of the suggestions is to use any free time, no matter how small, to work on homework. Those small increments of time are crucial to complete homework efficiently. Some may say that the homework can be printed ahead of time, but if the homework isn't assigned until after the school day has concluded, or is a video/online assignment that involves computer interaction, this isn't possible. Because of the wavering wifi signal, doing the homework in school is not as easy as it may seem because of the network's inability to manage the significant addition of electronic devices connected to it. This causes technical glitches that take time away from homework and the weak signal slows browsers, almost making it faster to just use a textbook. The slower network has

been frustrating to the faculty as well; Mr. Nyhuis, stated that the increase in wifi traffic has slowed the system, making managing college transcripts more time intensive and difficult.

Another factor to take into consideration is that students can't just put down electronic devices over the weekend to enjoy quality, device-free social time. Chromebooks interfere with some students' religious requirement that all electronics to be turned off during a certain day or period of time by the need to stay connected. During the Principal Advisors meeting on October 16th, students discussed how teachers would post assignments online at any given time without telling them, one even saying that teachers posted homework at night, even as late as 10 p.m. In such circumstances, students will not be able to know if other assignments were given if they have stepped away from the computer. Another student stated that a lab had been assigned for turn in on a Saturday. If the assignment is due on the weekend, students will need the computer to complete the homework and to submit it. According to Mr. Nyhuis, "homework should not be assigned after the school day. Students should know before leaving class what their homework is." He further explained that teachers should not assign double homework or homework that is due when the class rotates out of the student's schedule.

The world already knows that being on the computer 24/7 can cause eye damage, and yet computers are being used throughout the school day as well as the many hours thereafter to complete homework. Computer Vision Syndrome is a negative consequence of overusing a computer, including blurry vision, headaches, red and itchy eyes, etc. This could lead to future, permanent damage and speed up its degeneration as the person reaches the age of 40. The body's visual capacity begins to decline at 40. Excessive eye strain from a computer screen glare for extended periods of time can also cause nearsightedness. Furthermore, students need sleep and the blue light emitted from the screen interrupts the body's natural clock by stimulating melatonin production in the brain, even hours after they have walked away from the computer.

Chromebooks have definite negative impacts on students at RHS. By interfering with their ability to do homework due to dependence on Wifi and the school's inability to provide it, creating vision problems from excessive screen exposure, and preventing student compliance with religious or family rules, school administrators should revise their Chromebook policy. The problems presented herein pertain to the way in which the Chromebooks are used, how often they are used, as well what is necessary to complete the assignments involving Chromebook usage.



Kiwon Lee

Your Wearable Future Won't be that Weird

Minha Lee
Editorial editor

Twenty first century advances in technology can sometimes appear to outpace the adaptability of even the most indulging millennial: take the product notorious in recent years for being too ahead of its time, the Google Glass. At least with robots, we can get away from technology when we feel like it (for now anyway). Now, with the push for a wearable technology revolution, we are increasingly finding ourselves tethered to an unreality, and for the first time ever, beginning to blend two realities for convenience. The situa-

tion recalls an image of a technological takeover, starting with our bodies – dust off that apocalypse shelter, the human race is doomed. Or are we?

While the history of wearable technology has been a slow trickle of innovation, peaking at times during its evolutionary timeline with products like the Google Glass, the Pebble, and the Oculus Rift, new initiatives like Intel's Make it Wearable competition and most recently, the arrival of the Apple Watch is finally bringing the subcategory of technology once shelved and tucked away with teleportation and flying cars into reality and more importantly, into a greater mainstream. And

it shows: economists project this growing niche market to expand to nearly 12.6 billion dollars; smartwatches will account for a hefty chunk of it, 9.2 billion dollars by 2018. While eager consumers will inevitably treat this new generation of technology as little more than a direct connection to the internet, people tend to forget that other 4.4 billion dollars lurking in its shadow.

Contrary to public opinion, wearable technology isn't just more notifications on your wrist and in your face, providing yet another source of distraction for an already self-absorbed generation; it's a new genre of

continued on page 8



grandyouth.org

Editorial



Feminism: A Phenomenon of First-World Privilege?

Douglas Lampone
staff writer

No valid proposition exists that can argue for one gender’s being above another for any reason. Men are not superior to women, women are not superior to men, and neither group should conform to meet the standards which the other sets for it. However, individuals still have the choice to meet such standards, should they so choose or not choose, and they should not be harassed or ostracized for their decision. This brings us to the controversial topic of feminism. Feminist is the label given to women who believe that there is an oppressive inequality between the genders, which places men in a higher social standing than women and that thus prevents women from rising in rank. That group of women refer to this system as the patriarchy. Feminists lobby for greater female rights and often back their statements with cherry-picked statistics that vilify men. However, one can argue that these statistics are inconsistent, as they are based on a variety of conflicting surveys and studies. For example, it is true that most domestic violence cases, rape cases, and sexual harassment cases involve a male aggressor and a female victim. These are both of course horrible and indefensible acts, perpetrated by unconscionable offenders. However, it is

a common feminist approach to place unilateral blame for these acts on all men. In feminist eyes, men are at the root of the problem, and women are innocent victims who are tired of accepting whatever comes their way. Yet it is unfair to group all men with the few who commit those horrible crimes. Blame should lie with the specific perpetrators rather than the male gender as a whole. Additionally, the feminist tendency to view women as the victim does no more justice to their gender than do the views of those whom they protest against. People’s motives for crimes are seeded in individual issues which supersede their gender. A higher incidence of sexual crimes committed by men does not mean that men should be ashamed every time a crime of that nature occurs. This idea that men are the root cause of many issues which modern women face is largely seeded in the minds of the American feminists. Yet, such a mindset may serve a purpose, especially overseas. For instance, in Pakistan, women are often abused and treated as nothing more than property. These gender-based crimes are more worthy of large-scale feminist outlash, but many will never hear about them. In many ways feminism is a luxury of the privileged. If women believe so strongly in feminism, it would be in their best interest to support those who face issues far greater than their own, rather than become focused on their own benefit.

Your Wearable Future Won’t Be That Weird

continued from pg. 8

efficiency unmatched by any other tool that mankind has created before. For the first time, we are able to carry over processes that the computer traditionally handles alone into a more interactive, almost collaborative effort of data collection and application. In an era where every depiction of the distant future portrays competition between the living and the artificial, we are, in a sense, taking a step forward by taking a step back by deviating away from that technological uprising of self-sufficient AI’s, and putting control of what they made back into the hands of humans. Take for instance Enable Talk, which translates the complex hand motions of sign language in real time to

any language in the world. There is also a bracelet that gives rapid control over your body temperature using thermoelectric sensors and materials instead of you having to turn up the AC? For this budding generation of helping hands, there’s no creative limit as to what can be achieved through appropriation of already existing technology. And its first generation is already beginning to integrate itself into the health field, the military and blue collared jobs where hands on work could significantly benefit from the precision and accuracy of wearables in the future of clean cuts and greater perfection. From exoskeleton armors, to responsive hospital gowns, the dawn of the more intimate relationship with technology – whether one likes it or not – has already begun.

The United States vs. The Islamic State

Anthony Tokarz
Editorial Editor

The ongoing airstrikes against the Islamic State exemplify half-baked foreign policy and a shallow understanding of its implications in the Middle East. The recent bipartisan support for such came as an affirmation of the worst, that the egotism of the United States has blinded it to its best interests. The US’s fatal error lay in its inability to define clear, attainable goals for itself. The current backlash against remote militant brutality reveals the US as a reactionary element in a complex game of cat-and-mouse. ISIL represents the best-connected and best-organized militant Islamist group in recent history, and is doing all it can to lure the United States into an armed conflict. Why? ISIL makes millions of dollars from its network of illegal activities and the commercial retail of crude oil. It possesses a weapons stockpile collected from the remnants of United States and NATO aid packages to various regional groups over the years, and benefits from a steady supply of armaments and admiring recruits. However, it lacks that which most it needs, the support of its people.

To secure the support and loyalty of its neighbors and opponents, ISIL seeks to unite them against a common enemy. At present, ISIL’s brutality has either matched or exceeded that of the United States and its allies over the past three decades, which fact has led popular opinion in the region to favor the West over the fledgling extremist group. The most prudent decision left to the United States had once been to leave it at that and focus on domestic affairs. Yet both Democrats and Republicans have taken the bait so fastidiously laid out by ISIL in a precise propaganda campaign, and led the United States past the point of no return.

The West has no explicit purpose in the Middle East. The war against the Islamic State proves no more than an attempt at maintaining the illusion of American infallibility. None can deny the brutality of ISIS’s execution of James Foley, Steven Sotloff, and Alan Henning. Yet few can control themselves enough to see the executions for the bait they were. The Islamic State knows that the West will be reluctant to take on an active role in fighting it, that airstrikes have become the preferred method of remote warfare, and that airstrikes kill civilians as well as they do their targets. Musa al-Gharbi, in a special report for Al-Jazeera, presents the following, compelling truth about US airstrikes thus far. “Despite initial White House denials of collateral damage, the first raids on ISIL killed 70 of its fighters and eight noncombatants; contemporaneous attacks on Khorasan, a group of Al-Qaeda veterans, killed 30 militants and at least 11 noncombatants. On Sept. 24, strikes on ISIL’s Syrian oil refineries killed 14 terrorists and five noncombatants. In the first week since the Syrian campaign began, roughly 17 percent (more than 1 out

of 6) of the casualties have been civilians, including children. And these strikes were against easier-to-identify hard targets, meaning the ratio of civilians to militants killed is likely to get worse as the campaign deepens and ISIL fighters integrate themselves more heavily into civilian areas.” These statistics prove the foolishness of rushing into yet another conflict in the Middle East without careful consideration of the long-term consequences. Chuck Hagel and his administration see the immediate effects, i.e. the deaths of some middle-ranking terrorists, but fail to see that ISIL has now been handed on a shiny iron platter the propaganda fodder so integral to the expansion of its power. Every action taken against the Islamic State affirms its potency and legitimacy. Damages sustained by the Islamic State will only strengthen it. The Islamic State’s strategy and philosophy, both built around ideological fetishism, have evolved into what is called an “anti-fragile” system. Like the Hydra, it gains from disorder and damage. The United States and its allies are happy to take turns cutting off heads and displaying them to garner attention and praise, but they remain blind to the fresh new heads sprouting from the

*Chuck Hagel
and his administration... fail to see that ISIL has now been handed on a shiny iron platter the propaganda fodder so integral to the expansion of its power.*

necks which once held those trophies. The US has taken steps to offset the horrors taking place at the bloodied hands of al-Baghdadi’s storm troops. Now it must act with the utmost precision and care. The US cannot defeat ISIL by conventional military means, and can do no better than to accept subtler methods of warfare. That means cutting off the Islamic State from its resources, and leaving it without any means of recovery. Extremism, terrorism, and militancy are sociological problems and must be treated as such. The US has no place forcing a bureaucratic solution as lasting change can only proceed from the people of Iraq and Syria. The United States cannot win a war of attrition against the Islamic State. The Islamic State has very little to lose and everything to gain, whereas the United States, its vilified foreign aggressor, has very much to lose and very little to gain. Before taking further drastic measures to protect its national ego, the US must reckon with the long-term consequences. The US must stop taking the bait, the US must refuse to play ISIL’s games, and above all, the US must keep clear of conflicts that can only end in defeat.



Sports

Another Victory for Girls’ Varsity Tennis

Alex Absey, Kolby Erskine, Charles Sheu, & Jay Syz
staff writers

The Girl’s Varsity Tennis team has had a rigorous year so far with a record of 10-3. After placing second in the large schools division at the Bergen County Tournament, their best finish since 2000, the girls carried their success through to the state sectional tournament where they emerged as champions after the finals against Bergen Tech. Led by vivacious Coach Medha Kirtane, who was awarded with the Coach of the Year title last season, the Ridgewood team achieved their second straight states sectional title.

Early in the season, the girls went to the “September Smash,” also known as the Livingston tournament. However, at this time, the team was still new and developing. The girls lost in the second round, coming in third. This was an awakening call for each of the players. Then, a few weekends ago, the varsity team travelled to the county tournament held at Old Tappan High School. The tournament consisted of numerous teams and players all looking to win first place for their position.

First, doubles met Ridgewood’s rival, Northern Highlands in the semi-finals and had a tough match against IHA in the finals. Ridgewood’s first doubles team, Elizabeth O’Keefe and Sara Canilang, was able win the match and clinch the title as county champions. Collectively, the girls were able to come in second place. This was a great accomplishment not only for first doubles, but the whole team.

Coming into the state tournament, Ridgewood was placed as the first seed and was granted the home court advantage for all of their state sectional matches.

Monica Vitting, third singles on the team, said, “I am excited for the state sectional final. I know that we do well based on what we have been able to accomplish this season.”

With many matches remaining, the team had to work hard and focus. Coming off of their only win against Livingston in last year’s finals of the state sectionals, they continued to succeed by winning again in their penultimate match.

In their last match of the tournament, the state sectional finals, on Tuesday, October 14 there was a lively turnout. Students and parents alike crowded around the Ridgewood High School tennis courts to cheer on their players.

In the first singles match, freshman Julia Yoon won her match in two sets with a score of 6-4, 6-0. Senior Monica Vitting also succeeded in her second singles match after a fierce battle with an unrelenting opponent. Monica came out victorious from a tight second set to seal the match with a score of 6-2, 6-4.

Although Ridgewood suffered losses at the third singles and first double matches, the duo of senior Swathi Ragulan and sophomore Brianna Patek shut down the opposition impressively in two quick sets of 6-2, 6-2 score.

With this victory in hand, the Ridgewood girls’ tennis team advanced to the Tournament of Champions at Mercer County Park in Princeton, New Jersey. The tournament would be the team’s most competitive challenge yet. In their first match, Ridgewood faced-off against West Windsor who are ranked second in the state, and are undefeated. At second singles, Julia’s match was stopped short, and she earned half a point for Ridgewood.

I am excited for the state sectional final. I know that we do well based on what we have been able to accomplish this season.

- Monica Vitting, senior

Alongside Julia, Monica won her match, giving the Ridgewood team their only victory and whole point of the day with a score of 7-5, 1-6, and 10-5 in a tiebreaker. Despite these gains, Ridgewood suffered more losses and were eliminated from the tournament.

The Ridgewood girls’ tennis team has had an impressive run this season. Although their goals were cut short in the Tournament of Champions, their performance continues to improve with fluidity throughout the years.

When reflecting upon their successful season, Swathi Ragulan, a senior co-captain, was optimistic and enthusiastic for the team’s future. “This is one of the best seasons we’ve had in a while. We worked hard to continue and build off of our successes from last year. Even though we weren’t able to go deeper into the tournament, this program looks to improve each of its players every year. There’s a lot of depth and talent on this team, which is something that can carry this team far in the years to come.”



Members of the girls’ Varsity Tennis team pose together after their recent win at the State Sectional Tournament.

The Undefeated Freshman Football Season

Jihan Vaghashiya & Megan Collier
staff writer, editor

The freshman football team is so far undefeated in their past six out of nine games. On Monday, October 6, Coach AJ Johnson led the team to another shutout game this season against Kennedy High School, 28-0. They have played Eastside, Fair Lawn, Passaic, John F. Kennedy, Paramus, and Clifton.

During the game against Paramus, the first play was a touchdown made by Joe Rahaim. With Ridgewood’s strong offense and relentless defense, Paramus was unable to score and the Maroons were victorious. Player Patrick Collier said, “Paramus is usually a tough competitor, but our team came out strong and played our best.”

During the junior varsity game against Paramus, the freshman team was able to contribute due to a lack of JV players. Unfortunately, Ridgewood JV was unable to win the game as Paramus put up a strong fight. Despite the loss, the freshmen were excited to gain this experience of playing football at a higher level.

The team consists of many key athletes who have done a great job of leading their team to success. Coleston Smith, the fullback, has scored fourteen touchdowns so far this season; the most touchdowns that anyone on the team has scored. His teammates describe him as a “great, reliable player,” according to Collier. Parker Scott and Gabe Milstein are two of Ridgewood’s quarterbacks who have contributed to the team’s continuous scoring.

The coaches of this team should also be credited for the success thus far. The head coach is AJ Johnson, along with Assistant Coaches Lucchesi and Fabish. With a total of forty-three players and a talented coaching staff, the Maroons form a very successful team.

The freshman defense has been doing an incredible job keeping the opposing team from scoring any more than ten points in a single game. Meanwhile, the offense has been outstanding, regularly scoring more than four touchdowns a game.



A member of the freshman football team makes a play during their recent game against Paramus.

Because of this, the Ridgewood team has been able to maintain its winning streak this season, which they are looking forward to sustaining. In a brief talk with Smith, he said, “The team looks great, plays hard, and progresses. We hope to continue being undefeated.”

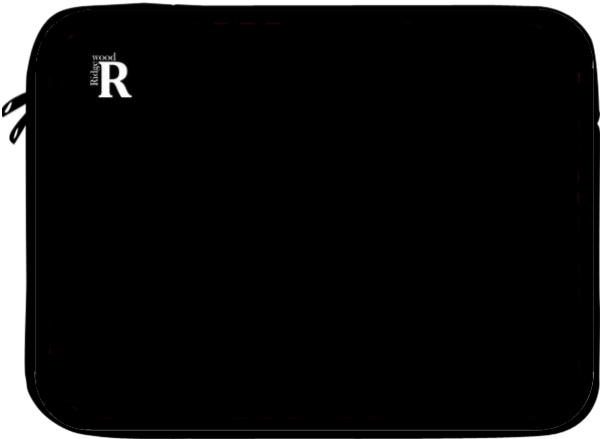
The Ridgewood freshman will play a total of nine games throughout the season and they practice every weekday. Their games are usually held over the weekend.

The Maroons have their two toughest games against Passaic County Tech and Bergen Catholic coming up to end the season. These two tenacious teams are capable of earning a win, pushing Ridgewood to fight for the continuation of its undefeated record.

As both of these are away games, Ridgewood must stay calm and play at their best. “As we progress through the first few able play-games, we, as a team, hope to remain undefeated and progress,” said Patrick McGinley, playing guard. With all of the team-members’ determination, Ridgewood freshman football hopes to see another bright performance as they near the end of their season.

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Sports

Boys’ Varsity Cross Country Runs its Way to the Top

Jamie Inlander
staff writer

Ridgewood Boys Cross Country has been focusing on rebuilding itself, and growing as a team. As of now, the team record stands at a mighty 4-1, within

the dual meets. Their only loss was to Indian Hills, which is one of the best teams in the county. The team has won its most recent race at the Shore Coach Invitational. Some of the teams that appeared at this race were Cherry Hill West, and Ridge. The top seven run-

ners competed for Ridgewood, including Sophomore Kenneth Marshall. According to Kenneth, the team’s main goals, as of now, are ultimately to make it to the state Meet of Champions at Holmdel Park. In addition to this, they hope to win their sectional

race at Garrett Mountain Park in Paterson, and would like to come within the top five teams at their group meet at Holmdel Park in Monmouth County. After already completing what was anticipated to be one of their toughest races, the boy’s cross-country team will face Indian Hills yet again on Tuesday, October 14, at the Elite Championship. Aside from Indian Hills, versing Morristown at sections is expected to be a tight race.

Varsity runner Kenneth Marshall says, “they’re a pretty formidable team”. Marshall thinks that the team as a whole will accomplish its goals, and make it to states. Marshall says that the team “didn’t start off at its strongest, but will continue to improve”, recovering from the loss of three key graduates, David Frering, Ryan Neville, and Luke Dublier. According to Marshall, sophomore Billy Byrne is expected to be a great contributor to the team, and is their “fourth man”. Marshall referred to him as a “dark horse, and a real surprise who will definitely be a great help to the team in the future.”

Personally, Marshall enjoyed the short coach invitational. He said this was the first time they ran well as a team, and the course was muddy and wet full of puddles and little rivers, which was “fun to just run through.” Marshall expects to make it to the State Meet of Champions, and has high hopes for the team as a whole.



Members of the Ridgewood boys’ Varsity Cross Country team display intensity, during their final moments of relaxation before the race begins.

Volleyball Lends a Hand

Jessi Schlicht
staff writer

The varsity volleyball team has had a battle of a season so far with a record of 11-7. This record was fought with the help of the three co-captains; Elyssa Gould, Erica Schultz, and Nicole Walker who have lead the team to overall success. The first game of the season was away against Ramapo, resulting in a tough loss for the Maroons in two games. The score of the first game was a close 26-24, in favor of Ramapo. The next game was also close with a score of 25-18, but in favor of Ramapo. But with this loss, Ridgewood was not discouraged. In the next week while playing Caldwell, Paramus, Indian Hills and Northern Highlands, the Maroons began to get on a winning streak. They beat Indian Hills in two games, and Northern Highlands in three. They later went onto beating Hackensack, Teaneck, Wayne Valley, Memorial, and Paramus Catholic. On Friday, October 10, the team made a comeback by beating Ramapo in two games. The score of the first game was 26-24, and the score of the second game was 26-24 proving it to be a hard battle. Later in the week the team beat Indian Hills, Northern Highlands for a second time, and Elmwood Park. Overall, it has been a great season for the varsity team as it comes to a close late this October. The varsity represents all four-grade levels.

It consists of five seniors; Elyssa Gould, Erica Schultz, Nicole Walker, Jade Long, and Simone Bontoux. The juniors include Christina d’Ecclesiis, Megan Collier, Brittany Gilbert, and Ashley Dyrhaug. There is one sophomore; Shea Darienzo, and one freshman; Caroline Elliot. Even though the ages differ, the team plays well together. The JV represents six juniors, ten sophomores, and one freshman. They have been doing extremely well this season with a record of 14-4. They were also the winners of the Clarkstown South tournament against over twenty teams in the New Jersey and New York area.

On October 15, Ridgewood hosted its annual “Block Out Cancer” game. This is an event where Ridgewood volleyball commits a day to help fight cancer. On this day, the team organizes a bake sale and a t-shirt sale where all of the proceeds go to Breast and Ovarian cancer research.

“It’s a fun-filled day, and I am happy we are playing for a good cause to help people with cancer,” player Amy Schlicht explains. The whole team seemed to agree, and were all especially determined on this game day. All three freshman, junior varsity, and varsity teams played rival Paramus. Even though only the junior varsity team pulled through with a win, all the players fought hard and enjoyed having the change to play together for such a great cause.



Members of the girl’s junior varsity Volleyball team pose together after a game.



The girls huddle for a pep talk on the field after winning their game at Tenafly, 1-0.

Girls’ Varsity Soccer Season

Jordin Tedesco
staff writer

So far the Ridgewood Girls Varsity soccer has had a successful season, having a record of 8-3 with twenty-three goals and fourteen assists. Although the team is mainly sophomores and seniors, all grades are represented. Starting freshman Mari Fernandez, for example, shares the field with her older sister, junior Adri Fernandez.

The team is not only supportive of one another, but they cheer on the boys’ varsity team as well. “We’re all really close on the field and off,” says Cate Shippee, a junior who has been on the team since her freshman year.

The team has been through its ups and downs with a recent loss against Pingry, ending the game 1-3. Although sophomore Riley Riccardi, who has the most goals of the season, was able to score, it was not enough to bring home a victory.

On a better note, the team had won five games in a row prior to Pingry. In Ridgewood’s brutal win against Teaneck, seniors Natalie Weil and Madison Philips each scored twice, bringing Ridgewood a 7-1 victory. Dayna Bussanich, Jennifer Luby, and Riley Ricciardi also contributed to the victory with a great goal each.

The team’s outstanding goalie, Colleen Berry, has had 67 saves this season and 78 saves in her high school

career. Well-liked by her teammates, she played extremely well against Northern Highlands, who have been undefeated for four years straight. Her astonishing eighteen saves kept the team in the game, and they played as true competitors. “It was our best game out of the whole season, everyone played so well, and worked really hard,” exclaimed Cate.

Collen’s talent has not gone unnoticed; she is committed to Scranton for soccer where she will be playing next fall. Although Ridgewood was not expected to win, each player competed hard and ultimately only let one goal in from the best team in the nation. “It was such a great game, because everyone else thought we would get demolished, but we ended up proving them wrong,” says Adri Fernandez.

This season the team has had to contend with a series of injuries, varying from concussions to ankle sprains and hip injuries. Although many key players have had to sit out because of injuries, the team has still managed to play hard and pick up the slack while they are healing. Cate Shippee explained, “It is hard being injured because obviously you would rather be out playing with your team then sitting on the sidelines, but I am glad I get to be part of each game regardless”.

The girls have a promising rest of the season ahead of them, and the school wishes them luck.

Michelle Kvetnoy



Michelle Kvetnoy, a sophomore, has been interested in art her whole life. She loves to draw from life and base her art on her own experiences. Her favorite artist is Salvador Dali because she finds his ability to blend the real and the surreal inspiring, and she hopes to continue art as a hobby for the rest of her life.

