



Campus construction: Ground has been broken on the new building between the 2000 and the 3000, but even more buildings are on the way. Flip to the News section to read all about the next few years of construction plans. Go to A3.

Environmental education: We live in a world where it is necessary to be conscious of the impact we make on the environment. Open up the Centerspread to read about the water crisis in Africa, find out how "green" you are, and more. Go to C10-C11.

Musical master: Pick a musical performance group at Heritage, and chances are, senior Armando Torrealba is involved in it. He even composes music himself as well. Head to the Entertainment section to read more. Go to D14.

Standing strong for Douglas



(Photo/Joanne Haner)

In the wake of the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High, students and administration are doing the most they can both on and off campus to ensure that an event like this will #NeverAgain happen.

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The news of the shooting in progress at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (MSD), a mere 20 miles away, greeted students as they exited their ninth period classes on Valentine's Day. The aftermath rendered many fearful as they awaited more confirmed information amid the rumors, pictures and videos spread through social media.

"We didn't know what was going on, where the shooter was or whether anyone got hurt," junior Sophia Viner said. Minutes after rumors began circulating, Viner received a call from her mother asking if she had heard from her brother who attended Westglades Middle School just minutes away from MSD. "It was terrifying. I was scared out of my mind."

A few hours later, the Broward County Sheriff's Department began making details available to the

public. Nikolas Cruz, a 19-year-old former student at MSD, entered the school just before 3 p.m. and opened fire inside one of the buildings, killing 17 people and wounding 14 others. Of the 17 casualties, 14 were students.

"We walked around Parkland for hours, trying to find a way through the chaos to get to my brother," Viner said. "It was surreal seeing Parkland, the small, safe suburban town I knew, turn into such a mess."

The massacre prompted students across the nation, spearheaded by MSD survivors, to advocate for legislators to pass stricter gun control regulations in light of the numerous mass shootings across the country in recent years, many dubbing the newly galvanized movement #NeverAgain.

School protest

Inspired after attending the Not One More rally for firearm safety legislation at the Federal Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale the Saturday after the shooting, seniors Faith Ward, Nicolas Fonseca and Sydnie Rathe decided to continue advocating for firearm legislation reform by organizing a protest at school to show solidarity with MSD.

"After listening to MSD student David Hogg speak at the rally and call for other schools to host protests on Presidents' Day because there was no school, we stopped and thought 'OK, we can do that,'" Ward said. "It comes from a place of anger and frustration with our government at the inaction we've seen through all these years."

Ward, Fonseca and Rathe began planning the protest on the Saturday evening after the rally, communicating with local police to secure Feb. 19 as the date and the school as the venue. Upon obtaining approval, the three students spent all Sunday gathering supplies for the event, corresponding with leaders of the #NeverAgain movement who attend MSD and contacting news stations to ensure the event received televised coverage to convey its message.

"We did everything in about 36 hours, but it was the passion of the students at our school and across the area that made this work," Fonseca said. "Without them and their active interest and willpower, none of this would have been possible."

On Feb. 19, the date of the protest, approximately 200 students, faculty members and advocates from other schools showed up at school between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. bearing signs with various

messages, coming together as they all called for the universal theme of tighter firearm safety regulations. Ward, Fonseca and Rathe also distributed maroon wristbands to symbolize MSD's school color, contributing to the protestors' vigor.

"I'm here because enough is enough," senior Emily Myers and protester at the event said. "School shouldn't be a place where you fear for your life. Of those 17 people who were killed, some were heroes and some were getting their lives started. It just as easily could have been us, and this will be the last mass shooting."

Ward, Fonseca and Rathe considered the protest successful in conveying its message and showing solidarity, especially as various news stations televised and reported about the event.

"As a community, I think we've all felt things changing. Students are tired of their voices being ignored on issues where our lives are at stake, and they're taking a stand," Rathe said. "This isn't just a school, a community or a state speaking. It's an entire nation of students mobilizing and demanding that our voices be heard."

AHS security measures

As the shooting took place at MSD 20 miles away, many students

have called into question our own school's ability to prevent a school shooting, believing that if it could happen at MSD, it could happen anywhere. However, Dr. Douglas Laurie, school vice president, and Mrs. Elise Blum, high school principal, have assured students that the school takes extensive security precautions to ensure our safety.

A former Sheriff's Department SWAT Lieutenant and a former FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force leader train all faculty in security procedures and protocols to follow should an emergency such as a school shooting arise. Additionally, all security staff complete 20 hours of training annually, and 200 cameras are located strategically throughout campus and constantly monitored.

The school employs SilverShield, a visitor management system that screens all visitors and cross references them against various watchlists as well as allows all faculty to initiate a school lockdown through their mobile devices should the need arise. Local law enforcement has scrutinized and approved all precautionary security measures taken by the school. As of Feb. 21, two armed and uniformed police officers will also patrol school grounds as an additional safety measure. Administration asks that students do what they can as well.

"If you come across anything that makes you think twice, if you're concerned about someone's social media posts, tell someone. Tell an adult," Mrs. Blum said. "Just because you report someone doesn't automatically mean they'll get in trouble. We will conduct an investigation, assess the situation and ultimately do the best we can for the safety of the students."

What can you do now?

- Call your representatives in Congress and advocate for change. Dial (202) 224-3041 for senator Marco Rubio's office or (202) 224-5274 for senator Bill Nelson's office.
- Contribute to the victims' relief fund. The Broward Education Foundation, a nonprofit that raises money for Broward Public Schools, has organized the fund at its official GoFundMe page.
- Donate blood. Hospitals housing recovering victims need to replenish their supply. Potential donors can find the nearest OneBlood Big Red Bus or

donation center at oneblood.org/donate-now.

- For those students ages 16 and older, pre-register to vote to make your voice heard.
- Follow @NeverAgainMSD on social media to keep up with what Douglas students are doing to push for change.
- Attend the March for Our Lives, a march to support legislation for ending gun violence, on March 24. The primary march will take place in Washington D.C., but many satellite marches will also take place across the country.



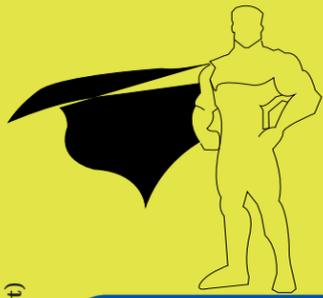
#NEVERAGAIN: Junior Yasmine Charles-Harris marches with other Heritage students in the protest for gun safety legislation Feb. 19 on Broward Boulevard in front of the Heritage football field. "I'm angry that so many innocent lives have been lost. I want to be a part of the movement to start change," Charles-Harris said. (Photo/Joanne Haner)

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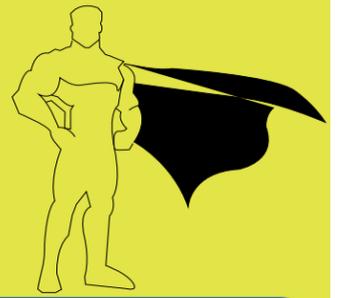


Superheroes



"Mrs. Estevez is my hero because she continues to come to school and is a ray of positivity, despite what is going on in her personal life."
-freshman Justin Folks on Mrs. Jennifer Estevez

"Mark Kava is my superhero because he got a 31 percent on his math test, and he still managed to get a B- in the class."
-junior Robert Gillespie on Mark Kava



"We had downtime in AP World History and three of my friends and I were drawing out our love lives on Notability with Mr. Tavernia. We were complaining about how none of the boys we liked liked us back, and then he said none of them were good enough for us."
-sophomore Aarohi Talati on Mr. Michael Tavernia

WHO IS YOUR SUPERHERO ON CAMPUS?

"Alyssa is so kind hearted that for her birthday she asked everyone to bring money for her favorite charity instead of getting presents for herself. She always thinks about others."
-sophomore Marissa Pendas on Alyssa Herzbrun

(Graphics/Sloane Kapit)

Are you a superhero?

1. Have you ever skipped other people in the lunch line?

- A) No, I wait in line every time, even if my friends are ahead of me.
B) I cut the line every now and then when I see some of my friends are ahead of me.
C) There are lines? I always skip to the front.

2. Do you ever walk while checking your phone without looking up?

- A) No, I usually don't even have my phone out when I walk because I enjoy having face-to-face conversations with others around me.
B) I do this often, but I've developed a special skill to sense when I'm about to run into people or objects while I simultaneously respond to text messages.
C) I always do this. I secretly enjoy running into other people and seeing their mad faces.

3. You found a student I.D. on the ground. You respond by...

- A) Picking it up and handing it to the deans or turning it into the Upper School Office so the student can pick it up later.
B) Ignoring it. Sorry, too busy right now.
C) Flinging it into the canal for fun.

If you answered A the most...

You truly are an American Heritage superhero. Continue to spread positivity and kindness around school. You help make this school feel like a family.

If you answered B the most...

You are a nice person and very close to becoming a superhero. Continue to work on being more thoughtful and considerate.

If you answered C the most...

It will take a lot of work for you to become an American Heritage superhero. Try to focus on improving the lives of other people rather than your own.

Heritage supergirl

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As we scramble from class to class, cramming unimaginable amounts of information into our brains five minutes before a test with a heart rate of about 120 beats per minute, we generally have just a few things on our minds: the never-ending search for college and academic competition among them. We look for a silver lining, but rarely find it. Luckily, some students find that light in their on-campus superhero: junior Gabriela (Gabi) Coutinho.

In our world of endless anxiety and activity, many can agree that a few elements that constitute a "superhero" around campus may include a willingness to help others, unconditional composure and a kindness that manages to lift one's spirits when very little else can.

"I feel a sense of responsibility to be empathetic toward those around me and strive to make a positive impact in small and large ways every day," Coutinho said. She is president of the on-campus poetry club Dead Poets Society (DPS), Thespians vice

president and English Honor Society (EHS) secretary. Aside from these pursuits, Coutinho enjoys traveling and spending as much time as possible with her family. Coutinho is in large part inspired by her brother, Miguel, who has a severe intellectual disability and cannot speak.

"He teaches me so much about unconditional love and human worth. Growing up, I have seen how even the most nuanced expression of ingrained judgment can affect my brother and our family," Coutinho said.

"I know how important it is to value people for who they are instead of material achievements and seek to facilitate harmonious, helpful collaboration instead of competition. I try to make the best of every day and moment I have with my friends and family."

Next time you have a rough day, remember that people like Coutinho will always be there to help you, as there are many more superheroes on campus than her alone; there is no one better to save your day than your personal "superhero."

The superheroes of Marjory Stoneman Douglas

ANTHONY BORGES, 15

Anthony Borges, a freshman at Marjory Stoneman Douglas, saved the lives of at least 20 students while risking his life to close and lock a classroom door. Borges was shot five times in both legs and his back. There is a GoFundMe page set up to help his family pay for his medical bills. To donate, go to www.gofundme.com/anthonyborges.

SCOTT BEIGEL, 35

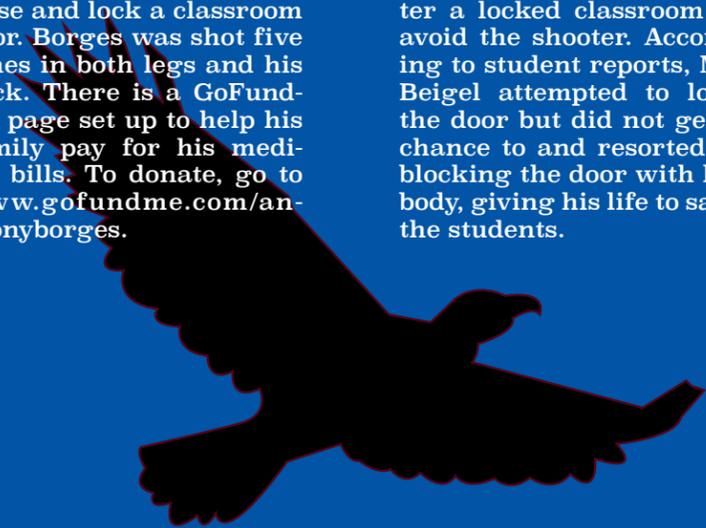
Mr. Scott Beigel, geography teacher and cross-country coach at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, helped students enter a locked classroom to avoid the shooter. According to student reports, Mr. Beigel attempted to lock the door but did not get a chance to and resorted to blocking the door with his body, giving his life to save the students.

AARON FEIS, 37

Mr. Aaron Feis gave his life as he shielded students from the bullets with his body. Feis, assistant football coach and security guard at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, responded to a call via walkie-talkie of an active shooter and went to the 1200 building to save students. Feis will be remembered as the hero he was, putting the lives of others before his own.

PETER WANG, 15

Freshman Peter Wang was a member of the school's Junior ROTC program and wore his uniform the day of the shooting. He was to be promoted to cadet the week following the shooting. Wang helped students escape the gunfire by holding the door open for his peers. Wang dreamed to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and the academy admitted him posthumously to the Class of 2025. Governor Rick Scott ordered the state's National Guard to honor him at his funeral, and a petition has been made pushing for him to be buried with full military honors.



DOUGLAS STRONG

Compiled by: Sloane Kapit, Yasmeen Altaji, Katherine Quesada and Carrie Kuecks

NEWS

Behind the big plans

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If you have recently walked by the side of the 3000 building nearest to the 2000 building, you may have noticed the fence surrounding construction machines and materials. Construction projects began the end of December with the demolition of the mulch playground and outdoor basketball courts.

In the current construction area, a new gymnasium building, known as the 2750 building, is in the works. The new building, which will consist of three stories, will contain new practice courts, coaches' offices, the athletics office, a new weight training room and 16 classrooms.

The first floor of the building will house the offices, shower and locker rooms and soon-to-be main basketball courts. "I think it's going to be really great for the school to have a gymnasium that will seat 2,400 instead of 400. We've outgrown the gym that I built in 1986 quite some time ago," President Mr. William Laurie said.

Behind the exterior of the bottom floor of the building will be a new snack bar. Similar to the existing snack bar in the 3000 building, the new snack bar will have windows to allow the sale of food to hungry students.

The second floor of the new 3000 building will have eight high school classrooms on the north side of the building and the weight training room on the south end. The third floor of the building, like the second, will host eight classrooms on the north side of the building, but the south side will have a new water chiller system. Currently, all of the buildings on campus are cooled via

air conditioning; this new system will cool the new buildings and existing 3000 building through the use of a water chiller.

Along with the construction of a new 3000 building will come another building: the 2500 building. The 2500 building will serve mainly as a practice area for the Heritage robotics team, the Ninjaneers.

This new building will contain a standard sized robotics competition field, areas and cabinetry for robot repair and areas for spectators and club members. The existing engineering lab and classrooms in the 7000 building will remain, as the new building is more for the use of the after-school robotics team and engineering summer programs.

"We couldn't find an appropriate place for practice robotics large enough by the Engineering Department," Mr. Laurie said. "It requires a clear span of 14 feet in height."

The second and third floors of the 2500 building will also house softball and baseball batting cages.

Behind the 2500 building, students will have access to an area with tables and umbrellas to enjoy their lunches from the new snack bar.

After the construction of the new 2750 building and robotics practice lab are complete, the construction of a new 50 meter pool and another three-story building will start behind the current 3000 building and next to the tennis courts. The new 50-meter pool will replace the current pool located by the existing gymnasium.

The first story of this three-story building will be home to showers, locker rooms and coaches' offices for swimming and tennis.



THE GROUND PLAN: The construction site of the new 2500 building located behind the 2000 building and to the right of the 3000 building where the basketball courts used to be. (Photo/Kelly Taylor)

The second and third floor will become what so many students have been waiting for: a dining hall. The dining hall is planned to fit about 1,200 students.

This raises the question: what will happen to the pool and gym we have now? The current pool will be filled and become a verdurous area for students to relax in between classes and during lunch, much like the quad or the courtyard. The kitchen behind the gymnasium will remain and serve as a source of food for those wishing to sit in the nearby eating area.

The existing gym will become an elementary gymnasium and library for the Lower School. The existing Lower School library will soon call itself home to college admissions and guidance offices, which are currently dispersed throughout campus.

With more teachers than classrooms, a new business track in the works and a need for space, departments will be moved around. Math and science classes will eventually change locations so they are in the same building, the business track will need a home, foreign language will move from the upstairs 7000 and the English department will also move from the downstairs 9000.

"I'm pleased with all of the new buildings we're going to put on the campus," Mr. Laurie said. "I think all of the changes we've made have been an improvement to one education environment."

In an ideal situation, existing freshmen would see all the new buildings by their senior year. The rest of us will have to come back to visit and see the progress AHS has made.

Changing speech

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Speech has been an integral part of every Heritage school year since the 1970s, motivating many students to practice their speaking skills in the hopes of winning the annual school contest. "We've always had the philosophy at American Heritage that we do the speech contest because teachers and administration feel very strongly that it helps our students both in the research aspect and getting in front of your class and having to persuade using a speech," Mrs. Maryanne Hurtado, head of the English Department, said.

This year, only junior high students and freshmen will have the chance to enter a speech competition. All sophomores and juniors in regular and honors English will still be required to give a speech, but there will be no progression to a contest. Junior high students will have a separate competition from freshmen. Freshmen will compete in a circuit of their own, allowing for more freshmen to qualify for the contest.

In the past, the progression of the speech contest began with each English teacher selecting the best student speeches out of their classes to be sent to runoffs. From runoffs, the judging teachers chose a certain number of students from each grade to continue on to the final speech contest,

which took place at night in the media center.

Recently, the English department pinpointed where students were speaking outside of the speech contest and recognized that with the extensive amount of presentation opportunities, such a large speech contest was no longer necessary. "We don't have the purpose for the speech contest anymore," Mrs. Hurtado said.

"We have a huge speech and debate department that expands all the way into Lower School, Mock Trial, Model UN, etcetera. Students also have to present their science fair projects, National History Day projects and group presentations in class."

With new developments in curriculum along with other circumstances, the English department recognized a change needed to occur. "What was happening was because of the caliber of the students we have, everyone was excellent and the only difference in whether one student would progress or not is maybe if someone said 'um' in the middle of their speech while someone else didn't," Mrs. Hurtado said.

This new system allows for a better speech experience for junior high students and ninth graders while not taking anything monumental away from other high school students with their plethora of other speaking opportunities.

High scoring scholars

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Literary and artistic scholars took on a "Scholastic" challenge and submitted their various works to the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards competition. Students from all extracurricular backgrounds entered in the competition, and many earned satisfactory results.

Entry into the competition is simple: one merely has to sign up by creating an account with Scholastic Art & Writing and send in his or her work. The creation of the piece takes a bit more effort.

Every year, students have the opportunity to compete in whatever their artistic hearts desire; with more than 25 different art and writing categories to compete in, students have a wide range of options to choose from—and, apparently, to win in: Heritage students brought home a number of awards in categories spanning from Critical Essays to

Dramatic Scripts. These results reflect the competition at the regional level. Students who earned a "Gold Key" are eligible to submit their entries again at the national level.

Scholastic Awards

Isabel Chamberlain: Silver Key poetry

Amber Bhutta: Gold Key, Personal Essay & Memoir

Gabriela Coutinho: Gold Key, Dramatic Script, Silver Key, Poetry

Olivia Lloyd: Silver Key, Short Story; Silver Key, Poetry, Silver Key, Dramatic Script Gold Key, Critical Essay

Flora Ranis: Gold Key, Poetry

Anna Yarashevich: Silver Key, Short Story

Rosie Zeiger, Honorable Mention, Poetry

News Brief

AP Art History

Advanced Placement Art History now counts as a Fine Arts credit toward graduation. Students looking to study art instead of creating it should look for it on the class registration lists. Anyone looking for more information should see Ms. Hughes in room 3218.

Shoe Drive

The Be The Change (BETCHA) club sponsored a donation drive of gently worn and new shoes in order to raise money for Project Alive.

The shoes collected in the bins around campus also benefit micro-enterprises and small businesses in developing countries. Anyone interested in more information or in joining the club should contact Dr. Mercedes Torres in room 7202.

Pre-Med 5K

The Pre-Med Society will host a 5K to raise money for the pediatric oncology unit for the Salah Foundation Children's Hospital in Fort Lauderdale Sunday, March 4. Beginning at 8 a.m. in Sunset Park on Cleary Boulevard, the event is open to everyone. Pets are allowed.

Butterfly Project Contest

The Butterfly Project invited students in grades K-12 to create visual or written artwork commemorating peace.

From the submitted entries, 10 winners will be chosen March 18 to receive a certificate of achievement at the Butterfly Project Remembrance Ceremony the week of April 9.

The winners can also paint their own ceramic butterfly for the permanent memorial mural in the Environmental Education Center.

Literary Fair

Students who placed in the school literary fair had their work showcased the week of Feb. 19 in the Upper School library. There was an Open House Feb. 20 from 6:30-8p.m. where parents are invited to attend.

Upper School students wrote prose and poetry pieces, ranging from formal essays to free verse poems and submitted their entries the week before Thanksgiving break.

Administrators, faculty and guidance counselors judged first, second, third place and honorable mentions for each category. Students who received first place will move on to the Broward County Literary Fair.



News

Project Alive talent show



Asa's Analysis

BY ASA ZARETSKY

Local Elections 2018: What to watch out for

Local elections are some of the most important elections that voters face, as the effects of what state senators, representatives, city councilmen and mayors do reverberate faster in our community than decisions in Washington, D.C. In light of this, many seats in Broward County will be up for elections this year, and it's important to know what positions exactly will be voted on, as information on local election is far scarcer than for state or federal elections. From state senate to city council, Heritage students of voting age will have to choose between many candidates this August and November.

Most of the State Senate and State House seats will not be in serious contention this year, as Broward is solidly Democratic and almost all of the incumbents are not term limited yet. However, House District 93, which stretches from Hollywood to Boca Raton, is facing a competitive election between Republican George Moraitis and Democrat Emma Collum. This district was a narrow Trump victory in 2016, and Democrats might have a chance of flipping it this November. In municipal elections, the cities of Cooper City, Coral Springs, Dania Beach, Davie, Hallandale Beach, Hollywood, Lauderdale Lakes, Lauderdale, Margate, North Lauderdale, Oakland Park, Parkland, Plantation, Pompano Beach, Southwest Ranches, Tamarac, Sunrise, West Park, Weston and Wilton Manors will be having elections. Some have all positions up for voters, some only have the mayor or city council. To learn more about the details on which candidates are running, check out your city's website. It's likely that there will also be primaries, or first rounds, for most of these municipal elections on Aug. 28, and given how low turnout these elections usually are, it's vital to vote. You don't know if an election will be decided by 2,000 or two votes sometimes, and making an informed vote can seriously change your area for the better. If you're too young to vote, you can still make a difference by learning about the election and informing people who can vote.

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At the Student Government Association's (SGA) annual student talent show Feb. 8, more than 10 acts captivated an audience of students, parents and faculty with a wide variety of musical talents.

Sophomore Valentina Eusse and junior Natalie Perez took home the first prize for their ukulele/vocal performance of "Waving Through a Window" from the play "Dear Evan Hansen."

"It was never about winning. It was about having fun," Eusse said of her ukulele/vocal performance with Perez.

"So when we did win, it was shocking. I'm going to miss everyone when I'm gone, and I'm so glad I was able to do something that I'll definitely remember for the rest of my life."

SGA has hosted the talent show annually for more than eight years, and this year's show, emceed by senior SGA presidents Dominique Cunningham and Nicolas Sweet, featured a wide variety of performances, including returning competitor junior Jiayong Lu on the traditional Chinese "zheng," freshman Cole Holifield with an original beatboxing routine, two electric guitar solos, a punk rock band performance and the classic piano-vocal duet, among others.

Cunningham even considered performing herself – singing Beyoncé's "I Was Here" as a tribute to the end of her four years at Heritage – but decided against it in favor of the emcee position. While Eusse and Perez came out on top, Holifield took second, and the punk rock band, consisting of juniors Eduardo Giralt and Ian Laor and sophomore Jayson Verebay, placed third.

Giralt coincidentally placed third in last year's show as well, albeit with different band members. This year, with Verebay on drums and Laor on backup

Students compete in South Florida piano competition

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Piano is more than just a hobby for students who take piano class at school. These Piano Honors students put in hours of practice to compete in the annual Florida Vocal Association Solo and Ensemble District Competition.

Seniors Andrew Kolondra Jr. and Cindy Jiuqing Yu and freshman Rita Paixao competed at the competition Feb. 10 at Dillard High School for the Arts.

Students first choose two pieces of piano repertoire from the Intermediate-Advanced level list in September. They practiced their pieces and received critique from Mr. Stratos Argyriou and Ms. Hannah Rariden on how to perfect their pieces almost every day. At the competition, students

guitar, the three played "Last Nite" by The Strokes.

"I actually laughed when I heard us called for third, because me and my previous band last year also won third place," Giralt said. "Destiny I suppose." Giralt and his band made good and quick use of their prize money, donating all of it to Project Alive following the show.

"We just could not walk away with prize money in good conscience after seeing Mrs. Estevez and Sebastian watching us on stage," Giralt said. "She was one of my best teachers at Heritage, and she was even responsible for introducing me to Bob Dylan, one of the many artists I love."

Eusse and Perez travelled down a long and winding road to their eventual talent show performance, a road filled with many bumps.

Eusse plans to transfer to another school next year, so she wanted to make her last year at Heritage count in whatever ways she could. One of those ways was through a talent show performance – so she posted on her Snapchat story asking if anyone wanted to perform a duet with her, and Perez stepped up immediately. "Every year in middle school I used to sing with my guitar for the talent show, and I've had a little voice nagging at me to do it at Heritage," Perez said. The duo discussed possible songs and eventually chose "Waving Through a Window."

"The lyrics really resonate with the whole high school experience," Eusse said of their song selection. "Most people, at some point in high school, feel alone and out of place. But what I don't think people realize is that they aren't alone, and there are people around them feeling the same loneliness."

You're never alone. You just have to look around and you'll find people going through the same feeling."

perform their piece from memory, and judges rate their pieces using a range from poor to superior. Those who receive superior on their pieces can compete at the State Competition.

Kolondra and Paixao both earned superiors for their performances and Yu earned an excellent. Kolondra and Paixao will now advance to the State Competition where students will go through a similar process.

"It felt great to receive such a high praise after working on something wholeheartedly for months. I had spent countless hours playing certain passages over and over again that gave me trouble, and to see it work out in the end was worth all of the hard work," said Paixao.

When the two auditioned in front of an SGA board, they "nailed the first verse," but then "completely fell apart," according to Perez. Luckily, the SGA board still let them through – and then they placed first.

Perez shared an experience from a rehearsal with Eusse during lunch.

"We gained a few fans who were just passing by giving us encouragement, but during our last practice a few people actually stayed with us and listened, and one student even dropped a dollar in my ukulele case," Perez said. "It was magical."

Eusse and Perez both felt the same way – like that magic was in the air once more – when their names were called from the podium that night. "Natalie and I looked at each in shock and squealed when we realized what was happening."

Honestly, I think I nearly started crying," Eusse said. "It was just such an empowering moment."

While Eusse will not be attending Heritage next year to perform again, she hopes Perez will continue their legacy through a new, even better act. "She's incredibly talented, as everyone else on that stage was," Eusse said.

Regardless of who won, the goal of the talent show was simply to bring students together for a magical and musical night – and also support for Project Alive. "Performing isn't just about self-expression; it's about having fun with the audience, and they were so engaged with us," Perez said. "Everyone clapping along was music to my ears in itself." Visit projectalive.org to donate or find out more about other ways you can help.

One of Heritage's own vying for city council

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With elections coming up soon, whether primaries in August or generals in November, members of the Heritage community have been gearing up to participate in the political process. In the past students have gone to debates, volunteered in campaigns, and worked for politicians.

However, this may be the first time a member of our community has run for political office. Nick Sortal, father of alum Aaron Sortal, has lived in Plantation for 25 years, and he hasn't sat still.

From working for years as a writer at the Sun Sentinel to helping at the Patriot Post, Sortal has been active in the Plantation community for years. This year, Sortal has decided to run for Plantation City Council.

He believes his experience as a journalist has prepared him well for the job. "I've covered community news in South Broward and thought if I can take some of the ideas I've found and apply them to Plantation, I can do something meaningful, something that matters."

[Journalism] also made me a really good listener, and to me

listening is the number one trait a public official should have."

In his time as a reporter, Sortal was most noted for series where he helped educate parents on their child's -water safety.

He hopes to bring that same focus on local issues to the city council, where his priorities will be better conducted meetings, fiscal responsibility, natural disaster preparedness and engagement with teens.

"For 30 years as a journalist I've had to take information from all sides and put it into words," he said.

Sortal also believes that his time as a Heritage parent will be important in his political career.

"Heritage is a place where the culture is we want to catch kids doing something right, compared to other schools I've been at, it's an encouraging place. They have high expectations, and I want to bring that attitude to the city as a whole."

Due to the way elections are structured, Sortal doesn't know until June which at-large seat he'll be running for in November, but he hopes that voters will give him the chance to make sure Plantation stays on a good path.





OPINION

Natural selection at its finest

Rumor has it that Tide PODs are being discontinued. However, one of our staff writers is here to dispell that myth and provide the truth.

Maia Fernandez Baigun | Staff Writer
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First, it was the cinnamon challenge and the gallon challenge. Then came the hot pepper challenge, the banana peel challenge, the fire challenge, the duct tape challenge and, now, the Tide pod challenge.

As one of the more dangerous internet-fueled challenges, the Tide Pod challenge involves filming yourself (or a friend) biting into one (or more) Tide detergent pods. Enough people jumped on this crazy bandwagon to cause numerous life-threatening injuries and Tide addressing the situation publically.

“What should Tide PODs be used for? DOING LAUNDRY. Nothing else. Eating a Tide POD is a BAD IDEA,” the brand tweeted on Jan. 12, 2018.

In 2015, the brand addressed a situation when toddlers looked at the brightly colored pods and thought of them as food. Tide then began coating the pods in a chemical substance that would taste bad to the toddlers. However, this does not seem to stop teenagers.

The trend became more popular with the new year, and consequently, hospitals started seeing more and more injuries related to this challenge. So far, six adults

and two teens have died from detergent ingestion and the American Association of Poison Control Centers have received more than 12,300 calls reporting exposure/ingestion of the pods. Around 700 of these calls resulted in “moderate” or “severe” risk to the person’s health, the CDC reported.

Recently, a fake tweet captured the attention of many. “We regret to inform you, we will be removing Tide Pods from shelves starting February 1st. It’s been a good run, but we can’t risk lives over having clean clothes,” tweeted an anonymous user under the name of the brand.

An investigation by Tide questioned the integrity of the screenshotted tweet and because of the formatting of the tweet, it appeared to be fake.

Like many of the other “challenges,” the Tide Pods challenge follows the same unintelligent and ignorant guidelines. Just because some people are unintelligent (and even stupid) does not mean that a brand should have to take responsibility. Even though the tweet was fake, Tide has taken to social media to discourage this challenge and attempt to stop it.



Hurricane Andrew
BY ANDREW (AJ) KOLONDRASocialism ≠ happiness

Consider a class of 20 students. If each student’s grade on a test is individual, students know they will be rewarded for studying. Some will study, and some won’t; each group will thus pass or fail based on the amount of work they put in – individual incentive. This scenario represents the central idea behind capitalism: that humans run on incentive.

Now let’s say the grade on said test is communal. All grades are averaged and every student receives that new average score – say, a C – even though some students pass and some fail. Students would presumably not study as hard next time if they knew that the reward for their work would be redistributed to those who put in less work, or none at all. The hardworking students in the class eventually recognize their work earns them nothing, and gradually the class average drops until it bottoms out. At this point, no one studies, and everyone fails. This scenario, at its most basic, is communism – and its cousin, socialism.

Most people know communism doesn’t work. As such, few well-known U.S. politicians have run on the platform of communism since the fall of the USSR. However, 2016 Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders based his platform on socialism, which many claim is communism with extra steps.

Merriam-Webster defines communism as “a system in which goods are owned in common and are available to all as needed” and socialism as “any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods.” I challenge you to spot the difference.

People know communism does not work. And as dictionary definitions, communism and socialism are almost interchangeable terms. Why, then, according to a 2016 Gallup poll, do 35 percent of Americans still view socialism favorably?

One argument for socialism that likely leads to this is that Nordic countries are the happiest, thanks to socialism. That comes from an oft-cited and confusedly worded UN study. Gallup conducted a simpler one with a similar goal; they essentially asked people “are you happy?” and allowed them to respond “yes” or “no.” This approach resulted in Paraguay coming out on top as the happiest; no Nordic countries placed in the top ten. It is likely these nations will drop lower on the list as, eventually, they bottom out, just as in the class example.

The simple truth is that no economic system is perfect. Communism and socialism end up with everyone poor and no one happy (where Scandinavia is heading), but capitalism leads to economic disparities between rich and poor. Which would you prefer, a country with incentives to wealth creation that has both rich and poor, or one that doesn’t reward hard work and results in everyone sharing in the poverty and misery? See Venezuela before making your decision.

Choosing life skills one book at a time

Kelly Taylor | News Editor
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Assigned independent reading has taken root in attempts to encourage a love of reading in students. However, many students see independent reading as just another homework assignment to complete and may even come to resent it.

A love of literature starts with a book that students love. As everyone has different interests and tastes in books, choosing independent reading novels should be allowed, at least to a certain extent.

Some argue that given the opportunity to choose their own books, students will not pick challenging material. But engaging in literary pieces that

spark individual interest inspires deeper thoughts and connections as the students care more about their readings. Similarly, if students read books that inspire them personally, more meaningful conversations will come from what the students feel passionate about.

Although the students would not read the same books, thought-provoking conversations could still take place in the classrooms as students have their own takes on literary aspects that may relate to other books chosen by their peers.

Throughout the process of picking their own books, teachers looking to challenge their students should recommend particular books for individual

students depending on their interests. Guided by teachers, students can make well-informed decisions about the books they want to read.

With so many students choosing their own books, teacher interaction in their pupils’ reading becomes more complicated as they need to have read the books in order to fully engage with their students. Possible solutions that accommodate both teachers and students include allowing students to pick from a list of books with options from different genres that teachers have read. While this may hinder student interest in some regards, at least it would give them some options.

Despite the instructional and insightful nature of

classics, if students have no interest they will not get as much out of the books because they do not have the same appreciation for the literary pieces in question. Nevertheless, studying classical pieces of literature can continue in the classroom regardless of student choices for independent reading books.

Giving students the choice of what to read stimulates independent thinking and requires making an active decision as opposed to passively submitting to decisions made for them. Necessary for the rest of their adult lives, the ability to make decisions promotes independent thinkers and encourages students to not rely solely upon others.

Hours for hours

Amber Bhutta | Co-Assistant Editor
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For some students, the 120 community service hour requirement serves as little more than an obstacle keeping them from a shiny gold gown, a cap bearing a tassel and a diploma marking the finish line. This prompts some administrators across the country to question mandatory community service, using the rationale that service hours have lost their true purpose if students treat community service in the same way they treat a P.E. requirement or mandatory Fine Arts credit.

“The community service boom began a while back, and it looked right and felt real,” said Bruce J. Poch, vice president and dean of admissions at Pomona College in California. “Now it’s devolved into a lot of kids just punching a ticket. It turns my stomach a little bit.”

While Poch may believe community service has morphed into little more than a box to check off, he fails to realize that intentions aside, students are still giving back to their community.

Richard J. Hawkins, the William Floyd school district

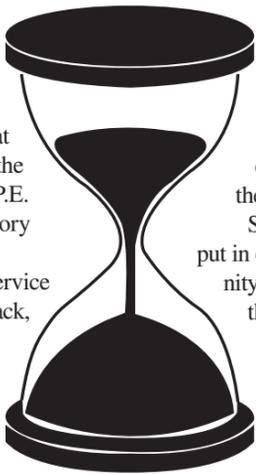
superintendent, said the requirement had been “institutionalized for such a long time, that the students know this is an expectation the district has” of them.

“The only feedback is positive,” he said. “It connects the kids to the community, and our kids have told us that being connected is important.” Intent aside, students

who fulfill their hour requirements give back to the community and help others, an activity they may not have otherwise involved themselves in.

Senior Karen Lu has put in over 1000 community service hours around the school and the community. While she was originally skeptical of the 320 community service hour requirement for scholarship students at American Heritage, she eventually found community service becoming a prominent part of her life.

“I don’t know if I would’ve put in the same time and effort had the hours not been required,” Lu said. “But I realized how much I enjoyed helping others and in that way, the requirement helped me.”



Save to be safe

The importance of developing good financial traits is essential to becoming independent. Read what our opinion editor has to say about opening a savings account.

Kristen Quesada | Opinion Editor
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From birthday money to babysitting earnings, the likelihood is that most teens have some money in their possession. What to do with this money, however, is the big challenge. Instead of blowing all your money on material things, it may be wiser to put that cash into a savings account.

Put in simple terms, a savings account is a bank account that earns interest over time. With this account, you can deposit money for safekeeping and withdraw funds when necessary. Deposited money can’t be misplaced or affected by physical disaster and is federally insured.

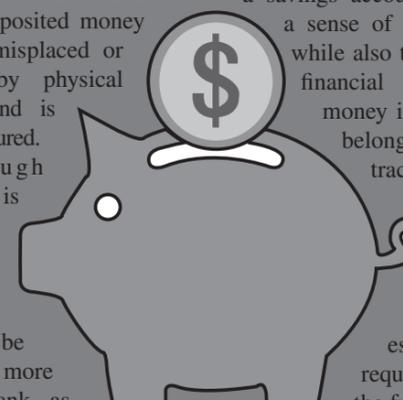
Although interest is normally miniscule, your money will still be earning more in the bank as

opposed to in a piggy bank at home. Savings accounts are often free to open, and with the accumulation of interest, you’ll be earning more money just for leaving it alone. A savings account helps set aside temptations that may make you waste your money and helps you plan for the future.

As for why savings accounts are relevant to you, it’s important to begin saving from a young age. By saving money early on, you build an economic padding for your future self.

Setting your money aside in a savings account gives you

a sense of independence while also teaching good financial habits. The money in the account belongs to you, and tracking it yourself and properly maintaining it builds essential skills required for the future.



(Graphic/Kristen Quesada)



Opinion

The decline of whitewashing



The snowflake BY VANESSA RYALS Don't submit to patriarchal religious practices

To stand in solidarity with hijabi women, many of whom are often made the targets of vicious attacks spurred on by anti-Muslim hate groups, the Muslim Student Association (MSA) sponsored World Hijab Day (WHD) on campus Feb. 1. At the club's first meeting, members, regardless of religion and gender, were encouraged to sport a head covering to spread awareness of Islamophobia. But the practice of women covering their hair is not exclusive to Islam.

A passage from the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, states "every wife who prays with her head uncovered dishonors her head... For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man."

In traditional Jewish communities, women wear head coverings (or sheitels) after marriage. It is a practice stemming from the Sotah, a ritual in which women suspected of adultery have their heads uncovered by a priest before establishing their guilt or innocence.

As with Judaism and Christianity, Islam emphasizes a cult of modesty among its followers. For some, hijab is worn out of duty to Allah. For others, it is simply an expression of religious or cultural identity and pride. Regardless of motivation, there are inherent problems in submitting to fundamentally patriarchal religion.

That the standard for "modesty" was set by men, and enabled by others who feared social repercussion, is the issue. Wearing a head-covering for religious purposes only further perpetuates the misogynist belief that women are not "pure" or worthy of divine acceptance unless they are covered.

That recent protests by women in Iran against compulsory hijab have let to multiple arrests, and proponents still try to argue that wearing the garment is a choice, is the issue. Even in "free society," is wearing anything a choice when the pressure to conform is so large as to rule out any option not to?

I believe there are better ways to fight Islamophobia while also combating misogyny. Start by educating parents and peers on the ways in which the United States has and continues to destabilize the Middle East. If you are out in public, speak up if you witness another person being harassed or humiliated for "appearing" Muslim or speaking a foreign tongue.

Don't weaken your stance on one cause just to support another.

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Whitewashing is a negative term associated with the use of white actors to portray characters of different ethnicities. While this plague has swept the Hollywood industry for years, new films, TV shows and novels show a promising shift from all white to a blend of multicultural characters and actors.

Picture any classic movie. Not a single lead character was anything but white. However, current popular movies have more and more diversity, in both the

roles for actors to play and the actors themselves. Originally, if there was a character, for instance, who was Asian, a white actor would have a much greater chance of winning the role than an Asian actor.

Some examples of this include Angelina Jolie as Mariane Pearl in "A Mighty Heart" and Mickey Rooney as Mr. Yunioshi in "Breakfast at Tiffany's." Now, characters are being portrayed by actors who match their ethnic identity.

For instance, the new "Mulan" live action remake is using actors

and actresses who are Chinese, like the characters themselves.

Another movie staying true to ethnicities is "Moana," with the Hawaiian characters being portrayed by Hawaiian actors. The transition to a more diverse array of characters is present in not only movies, but books, too.

Take Cassandra Clare's "New York Times" bestselling series "The Mortal Instruments" for example. In this series, there are characters who are Asian, African, Hispanic and Caucasian. They are not only a blend of cultures in the books, but

also in the TV adaptation. The actors portraying the beloved characters follow the book, with the ethnicities matching.

TV shows are also featuring a more diverse cast, such as "Thirteen Reasons Why" and "Riverdale." Both of these shows exemplify the positive shift away from whitewashing.

As time and views progress, so does variety in movies, books and TV shows. At the rate the shift is moving, it won't be long until whitewashing is completely a thing of the past.

#Bopo does not endorse obesity

Olivia Lloyd | Guest Writer
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In the #bodypositivity movement that has permeated social media, many people are jumping on board to promote body positivity.

However, some dissenters have countered the movement with the assertion that body positivity is just complacency with obesity. This prompts the question: What is the line between embracing your body and also treating it with care by eating well?

First, it is necessary to discuss the origins of the #bopo movement, and how it encompasses more than simply looking past someone's weight. The movement inverts imperfections and highlights them as human characteristics, rather than flaws.

This includes "flaws" such as cellulite, acne, fat rolls, body hair, scars and other external

traits that are maligned by a society that demands perfection. Most people have felt a degree of shame or self-deprecation about some physical characteristic of theirs.

The #bopo movement originated as an aloe to soothe the internal wounds that society has inflicted when it comes to external appearances. Dissenters of the movement claim that it endorses obesity, but this is not the case.

It is entirely possible to accept your body image, whether that be "skinny" or "fat," while at the same time striving to lead a healthy lifestyle. Telling people they should love themselves does not mean they should accept their own obesity.

Promoting self-love regardless of weight is not the same as allowing your health to be cast by the wayside because weight loss is bad. You can be

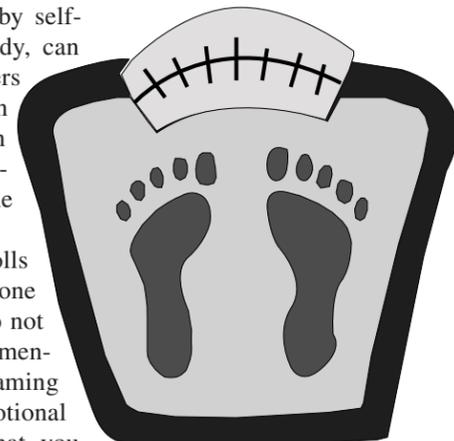
overweight and love yourself without promoting obesity. Acceptance does not mean resistance to change. It means loving yourself regardless of, or rather, because of your physical traits. Changing the trait that you dislike does not always solve the issue.

Sometimes, an attempt to lose weight, motivated by self-hatred of your "fat" body, can lead to eating disorders or habits that are even more unhealthy both physically and emotionally than remaining the same weight.

Accepting your fat rolls does not mean you condone obesity. It means you do not allow the mentally detrimental stigmas of fat shaming to influence your emotional well-being. It means that you understand what your body is. Whether or not you try to change

it is up to you, but that change should not be motivated by unrealistic societal expectations, but rather by a personal, positive desire to change.

Negative thoughts cannot yield positive results. We cannot change ourselves until we accept who we are and process that peacefully.



(Graphic/Maia Fernandez Baigun)

Is bribery the right kind of motivation?

Sammy Rosenthal | Staff Writer
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"I'll give you \$20 if you read this article." If this statement were true, any sane individual would accept it in a heartbeat. However as you read, the only thought lingering in your mind would be the end prize, and you wouldn't be reading carefully to expand your knowledge. This is one example of many in which students are offered rewards for completion of a task, otherwise known as bribery.

Whether students are bribed to simply finish chores around the house or to call a relative, each task has one main constant: the only reason you would be "wasting" your time to accomplish the task at hand is because you want the reward. For example, instead of cleaning your room for the sake of being organized and sanitary, you only do it for the money.

Bringing these examples into the context of school, imagine you have a major biology test

that will make or break your semester grade. Knowing you need to do well, your parents offer you \$50 if you acquire a B or higher on the test. With this reward at stake, you actually put in the time to concentrate and learn the material just enough to receive the minimum requirement of a B. After test day, you find out you succeeded in earning the B and collect your cash reward.

Without a bribe, you only apply yourself to study enough,

if at all, for you to say, "I studied." However, with a cash prize at stake, you suddenly gain the self-discipline and drive to achieve the required grade on the test to obtain the money. The effect of bribery goes beyond motivating someone to study in exchange for their reward. It instead robs one of a basic level of responsibility, integrity, and self-discipline.

This may not seem like a big deal now, in the future it may result in greater consequences. By accepting bribes as a student will not prepare you for your future. There will not always be a prize hanging above your head to inspire you. When that time comes, you will not be mentally prepared to maintain a good work ethic and self-discipline.

Hopefully, you took the time to focus and carefully read each of word of this article, and, as a result, gain new knowledge. However, if you skimmed through this article to receive your \$20 for "reading," I can assure you that there is no cash prize, neither today nor when you're in the real world on your own.

No more pants rants, please

Joanne Haner | Asst. Online Editor
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If you haven't noticed, the uniform office has made a change in the girls' uniform shorts -- again. The shorts no longer have patches on the lower left leg with the Heritage emblem; instead, the Heritage emblem is embroidered directly onto the cloth.

While many students have yet to notice this change, those who have noticed have already expressed concern in regards to being forced to purchase new shorts again; this concern is

especially common among those who purchased the patched shorts this school year.

From a completely objective point of view, the reasoning behind the new change is logical. The previous change to the shorts proved ineffective, as the patch was simply an iron-on and could come off easily. As a result, girls were removing the patches, hemming their shorts, and putting the patches back on their now shorter school uniforms.

Students failed to learn from this attempted solution to the

original problem. The reason behind new shorts is essentially the same reason for another redesign. If students had not tried to go around the rules -- not once, but twice -- we would not have to buy shorts designed to avoid inappropriate lengths.

Students will be permitted to wear any of the "old" shorts -- including the patched shorts -- for an extra year. Don't be mad; instead, learn from your mistakes and don't hem your shorts.



Opinion

The effects of too much TV time

Sammy Rosenthal | Staff Writer
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96.5 percent of American families own a TV set as of 2017, according to the Nielsen Company. In today's day and age with technology so widespread across the world, television plays a major role in everyone's lives, but is this role detrimental to one's overall health or can it actually be beneficial?

In most cases, TV can prove harmful to someone who loses

control of how much he or she watches. According to "The New York Times," Americans watch an average of approximately five hours of television each day, which can be destructive to one's health in the long run.

Specifically, obesity can result from watching too much television. Why? Television eats up people's time that could be used to perform physical activity by going outside or exercising. However, people

choose to sit on the couch for endless hours watching multiple programs, hence the name "couch potato."

TV can also deprive individuals of sleep without them being aware of it. The bright screen emits an artificial light that prevents the brain from producing the hormone melatonin, which makes you tired. As a result, as you watch your favorite show late at night, you are actually disabling yourself from receiving a healthy amount of sleep.

With hundreds of studies regarding the negative effects of television, it is easy to disregard any positive features that it may provide. One positive effect can be seen most often in viewers of popular programs.

Popular shows such as "Riverdale" have the power to unite people and spark conversation, which can lead to friendships. When people analyze the latest episode in a popular series together, they are interested in hearing others' perspectives

on the same topic. Whom-ever the conversation may be with, television has the power to influence people and spark social interaction.

In essence, with television being a main component in daily life, it is important for viewers to watch in moderation, such as one or two hours a day. In this case, viewers will be able to experience the positive effects of television; however, watching more than five hours daily may lead to poor sleep and obesity.

Who should be choosing speech topics?

STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE A VOICE

Joanne Haner | Asst. Online Editor
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While the annual speech assignment is created with the intention of pushing students out of their comfort zones, a student is more likely to produce higher quality work when he or she is passionate about the topic of the assignment.

When students lacks interest in a course, their motivation level is low. This reflects in the quality of their work; said student may do well enough to earn a passing grade, but the lack of interest often blocks

any potential to go above and beyond the bare minimum.

Allowing students to weigh in when deciding their speech topics would prove to be a more effective and subtle method for learning how to research and persuade. It would also give students who are interested in a particular topic the opportunity to research and explore the subject in depth.

A simple poll conducted at the beginning of the academic year asking for areas of interest from students would be an easy method of collecting infor-

mation for choosing possible speech topics.

The majority of this year's speech topics are heavily political; topics included controversies such as net neutrality, climate change and Deferred

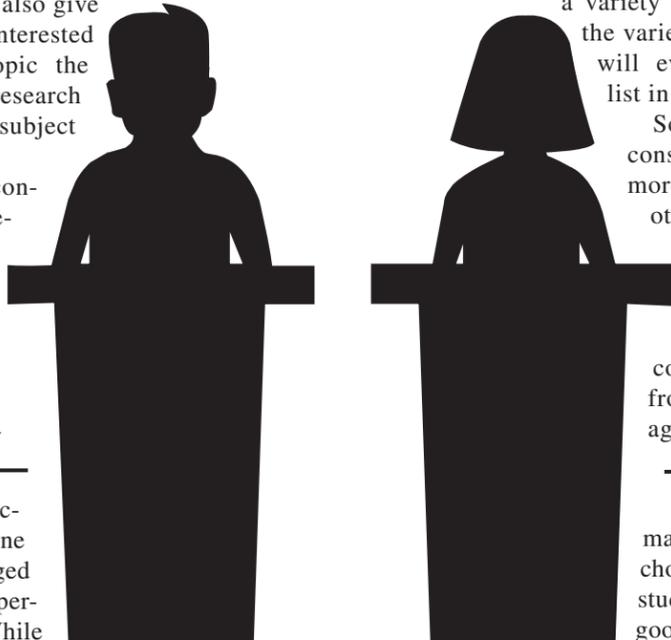
Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Although it is understandable to create a list of topics regarding current events that students will ultimately need to understand later in life, it is also important to contain a variety of subjects to suit the variety of students who will eventually find the list in their hands.

Some individuals consider themselves more political than others, so said individuals would love the idea of writing their annual papers on a controversial topic from the political agenda. However, for

students who do not consider themselves political, writing the same essay would be torturous and boring.

Last year, the speech topics presented a slightly larger range of topics; many were indeed political, but there were also choices that were less associated with politics, such as the controversy regarding electronic versus physical textbooks or advertisements of harmful products to children.

Interest is key when writing a paper or speech. Satisfying such a diverse body of students is not an easy task, but allowing members of the student body to express their interests would motivate them to produce more high-quality work.



(Graphic/Joanne Haner)

TEACHERS KNOW BEST

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Speech is essential to existence. We use it every day to greet, bid farewell and express our opinions. More often than not, our opinions are met with other and opposite opinions, and agreeing to disagree is not our first choice; hence, we see the real importance of speech.

The art of debating, or arguing an opinion, is a craft that must be cultivated, such as any

other skill. To practice this skill, one must be challenged past one's own perceived ability. While training for competition, an athlete does not conform to his or her own exercises nor practice schedule, he or she is tested by a coach, forced to go beyond perhaps what his or her mind believed was possible.

Similarly, a teacher must challenge students, push them beyond their boundaries and force them to explore new areas of thought. This is where the speech project comes in.

Teacher-chosen speech topics take kids out of their comfort zones and expose them to new areas of study, presenting students with a chance to explore their own opinions on the matter. A well-rounded mind only comes from venturing into new spheres of thought, and frankly, most students will not venture on their own.

The speech topics may not be the first choice to argue for the student, and that's a good thing. If we, as a student body, only researched and educated ourselves on the things we are interested in or "relevant topics" pushed by the media, we would be lost in a world of complacency out of ignorance.

We need to learn to stop believing what others say and start looking for the truth regardless of subjective importance -- and this is exactly what speech teaches.

The best weapon to have in your arsenal is the weapon of investigation. The analysis of a topic, any topic, will be the best resource to utilize in every area of your life, college and beyond. The ability to be presented with a topic and construct a strong argument in favor of your opinion not only advances your cognitive development but also your agenda.

Thus, when choosing a speech topic, approach each unknown with an open mindset of education, and, who knows, you may end up knowing more than CNN.

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the American Heritage student newspaper

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This publication informs students about events, influences readers through editorials, and entertains through features and reviews, all achieved through responsible reporting.

Opinion articles reflect the views of the staff and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the administration, faculty, or student body. We strongly encourage letters to the editor from students, parents, or faculty in response to these articles.

The Patriot Post is sold on a monthly basis for 25 cents. The American Heritage Upper School consists of 1,950 students and 160 faculty members.

Do you have a response to a column or article that was published in the paper?

You can make your voice heard by submitting a "Letter to the editor." Physically hand the response in to room 9114 or email it to patriotpost@ahschool.com.

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FEATURES

Self care or self scare

Although it can be challenging to stick to a strict schedule of sleeping and studying (likely due to abundant extracurriculars, tests and other time-consuming activities), these tips to improve your studying and sleeping habits may help.

Carrie Kuecks | Features Editor
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1. Keep a consistent schedule.

Even if you are unable to achieve the recommended number of hours of sleep for teenagers (nine hours according to the Nationwide Children's Hospital), maintaining a consistent schedule is extremely beneficial and can allow you to sleep better. According to the Huffington Post, "Keeping a consistent daily schedule— where you eat, start working and go outside around the same time each day—is associated with better sleep."

2. Try to get at least five hours of sleep a night.

For some nine hours of sleep each night may seem unachievable. However, getting at least five hours of sleep has extremely positive effects for your body and can lead to a longer life. A study at Stockholm University showed that people who slept less than five hours per night had a faster rate of mortality than others.

3. Review test material in the morning.

Spending time studying nights before an exam is extremely important. However, if you have time the morning of the exam to do additional prep, this may be better. Science shows your brain peaks in the morning, and reviewing study material in the morning can ensure that the information will be fresh in your mind. According to Steve Kay, professor of molecular and computational biology at the University of Southern California, "Our body temperatures start to rise just before we wake up in the morning and continue to increase through midday." Medical Daily adds that the "gradual increase in body temperature means that our working memory, alertness, and concentration also gradually improve, peaking at about mid-morning."

4. Studying multiple subjects in one sitting is beneficial.

Although many think it is best to study one subject for a long period of time during one sitting, research proves the opposite. It is important to space out the material for various subjects during one sitting. According to the New York Times, "Varying the type of material studied in a single sitting — alternating, for example, among vocabulary, reading and speaking in a new language — seems to leave a deeper impression on the brain than does concentrating on just one skill at a time."



(Graphic/Katherine Quesada)

Don't be a chicken, own a chicken

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When thinking about pets, dogs and cats usually come to mind. However, for junior Olivia Lloyd and senior Nithya Kasarla, they think of their chickens and the good and bad experiences that come with owning this unconventional pet. Despite neighborhood restrictions about owning chickens, Lloyd and Kasarla defy the odds in their backyards.

Olivia Lloyd

Owning chickens hadn't even come to mind for Olivia Lloyd until her brother suggested it. Her family adopted two Silkie chickens named Pristina and

Stacy that are soft and docile. Lloyd feeds her chickens chicken feed which contains seeds and corn, and special feed when she wants them to lay eggs. Both chickens lay eggs —about one per day. However, Pristina passed away about a month ago.

Silkie chickens live to seven to nine years old. Stacy is currently 10-11 months old.

"Pristina was more loving. When I sat down, she would hop onto my knee and flap up, and I would pet her," Lloyd said.

Nithya Kasarla

Senior Nithya Kasarla's chickens are more of a source of eggs than pets. In her sophomore year, Kasarla's

family bought four chickens because of the appeal of home-grown eggs. In a few months, they had up to 20 chickens, however some died because of "natural selection."

Besides this unfortunate event, Kasarla has also had a traumatic experience with her chickens.

Since there was an overpopulation of chickens, Kasarla's father butchered several chickens and made curry and served it as dinner, unbeknownst to Kasarla.

Kasarla currently owns seven chickens. "I don't give them any affection. I just open the pen and feed them. Sometimes they chase me and my dog," Kasarla said.



CRAZY CHICKIES: Junior Olivia Lloyd loved showing off both of her chickens, Pristina and Stacy. She continues to take many pictures of her chicken, Stacy today. (Photo/Olivia Lloyd)

The interesting history of Groundhog Day

Alyssa Herzbrun | One Pager Editor
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Punxsutawney Phil says to expect six more weeks of winter.

In 1723, the Delaware Indians moved to Punxsutawney, Pa. The Delawares' considered groundhogs respected ancestors. They believed all Indians began life as animals on Mother Earth before beginning their lives as men.

When German settlers came to live in Punxsutawney in the 1700s, they brought their customs and traditions. One of those traditions was known as Candlemas Day. During Candlemas, clergy would distribute candles that were needed for the winter. Tradition held that the longer the candles burned,

the longer winter would be. Candlemas was celebrated on Feb. 2 which was the midpoint between the winter solstice and the spring equinox and deemed a means of determining how much longer winter would be.

If the sun came out Feb. 2, the citizens of Punxsutawney could expect six more weeks of winter. At some point, it was determined that an animal would cast a shadow if the sun would appear on Candlemas Day.

Germans originally chose hedgehogs to predict the length of winter but quickly adopted the groundhog because they were so plentiful in Pennsylvania.

The first official Groundhog Day was celebrated in the United States and Canada in 1887. Today, Punxsutawney

Phil is cared for by members of the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club inner circle. This club is responsible for planning the annual Groundhog Day ceremony. Inner circle members prepare two scrolls.

One scroll proclaims six more weeks of winter and one proclaims an early spring.

On the morning of Feb. 2, Punxsutawney Phil emerges from his burrow on Gobblers Knob.

In "Groundhogese," the language spoken by groundhogs, he declares whether he has or has not seen his shadow.

The president of the inner circle, the only one who can "interpret" Phil's language, makes Phil's proclamation known to the world. Unfortunately, Punxsutawney Phil doesn't have

the greatest track record. After all, what do groundhogs really know about making weather

predictions? He has only been correct about 39 percent of the time since 1887.

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Features

Everyone Has a Story: GABRIELLA INCHAUSTI



(Photos submitted by Gabriella Inchausti)



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We are on a mission: to prove to you, our reader, that everyone, and we do mean everyone, has a story within them, both unique and interesting. Cue our monthly feature EHAS: Everyone Has A Story, where two Patriot Post staffers set off on a quest to find and extensively interview a Heritage student at random to prove that everyone does, in fact, have a story.

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, we decided to initiate a campus-wide pick-up line contest. In an absolutely unsuspecting manner, we left a shoebox along the canal in front of the kitchen with a sign asking students to leave their best pick-up lines and their names. To our surprise, students enthusiastically responded, filling the box to the brim with pick-up lines ranging from cheesy to questionable.

Ultimately, we chose our top three favorites and had *The Patriot Post* staff vote for our winner. Eighth grader Gabriella Inchausti won by an overwhelming majority with her line "Are you my self-esteem? Because I've been looking everywhere for you."

Born in Miami in 2003, Inchausti has lived in Florida for her entire life and has attended American Heritage since preschool. Though she has no siblings, Inchausti

appreciates her family and the time she spends with them.

"I look up to my family because they are all creative, thoughtful and love to try new things," she said. Inchausti believes she has inherited her family's inquisitive nature and drive to partake in new activities.

"If I had to describe myself in one word, it would be curious," Inchausti said. As an only child, Inchausti often finds herself with the freedom to explore wherever her curiosity leads her.

One result of her exploration lies in her passion for music. Even as a wide-eyed toddler, Inchausti found herself captivated by different types of melodies and began taking piano lessons at the age of five.

"I've always loved the idea of making music myself, and piano allows me to do just that," she said.

In addition to playing the piano, Inchausti picked up the violin in first grade and continues

to play today in the school's orchestra. Wanting to further explore different types of music, she also joined chorus this semester.

Motivated by her love of music, Inchausti also recently attended a Panic! At the Disco concert and considered it as one of the most influential experiences she has ever had.

"It was definitely the best show I've ever seen and one of the most amazing experiences I've ever had," she said.

Her love of music aside, Inchausti's curiosity has also led her to join the girls JV softball team in seventh grade. She still participates in the sport today, practicing twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"I like how there is a mix of running, throwing and catching. I feel like it is very entertaining," Inchausti said.

A member of the National Junior Honor Society

(NJHS), Inchausti also enjoys community service.

"I like volunteering because it is a fun way to experience different things while also helping people," Inchausti said. Inchausti spends much of her time cultivating her passion for helping others as she volunteers at Flamingo Gardens where she works in the arts and crafts room.

Though unsure as to what she wants to pursue after high school, Inchausti is sure that she will continue to play violin and piano.

"Are you my appendix? Because I have a funny feeling in my stomach that I should take you out."
- freshman Mary Abi-Karam

"I'm not an organ donor but I'll be happy to give you my heart."
- sophomore Sara Soterakis

"My mom always told me to follow my dreams so I'm going to follow you."
- sophomore Christina Knowles

"Do you have a name or can I call you mine?"
- eighth grader Emily LeGette

"Do you know where I got these biceps? Lifting children out of poverty."
- junior Nicolas Menendez

Campus Environment: How we affect our world



Where's the water?

A look into South Africa's water crisis

Sloane Kapit | One-Pager Editor
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Every day, you wake up, brush your teeth, take a shower and flush the toilet without a second thought. Water is a resource that many of us take for granted, but in Cape Town, South Africa, time is running out as the city approaches Day Zero, the day this vital resource becomes inaccessible. Cape Town is the second largest city in South Africa, boasting 4 million residents. As a top international tourist destination, the water crisis ominously looms over the tourism industry and economy of the city. Many tourists are leaving as they do not want to put more stress on the severe situation and want to avoid inconveniences. As reported by CNN, the shortage of water has resulted from a combination of rapid population growth, a changing climate and the worst drought in more than a century. "It is first off and foremost a climate issue," AP Environmental Science teacher Mr. Osmel Rodriguez said. "Although Cape Town is surrounded by ocean, it has been getting less rain.

The government knew this was a problem and although they talked about implementing techniques such as desalination that could help prevent the water crisis, they did nothing about it until now." To put the crisis in perspective, an American resident uses an average of about 100 gallons of water per day while a resident of Cape Town is limited to about 13 gallons per day. For residents, including family members of senior Yakira Matisonn, this means changing their daily lifestyles. Matisonn was born in Cape Town and moved to the United States at the age of nine. Matisonn's father, who still lives in Cape Town, is limited to 90-second showers. Many of Matisonn's friends take buckets into the shower so they can use the excess water to flush the toilets. Rather than using a hose or going to a car wash, Matisonn's father fills a small bucket of water to wash his car. Baths are a luxury of the past, and people with the means to do so take showers only once a day. The government has implemented restrictions on the refilling of swimming pools, which has caused an imbalance in pH levels making pools unsafe for swimming.

Lack of irrigation has led crops to die and fruit production to cease. This, along with limited water supply have caused animals to starve. Many households have begun to make trips twice a month to Newlands Springs to collect their allotted liters of fresh drinking water. "Overall, everyone is aware and conscious of the situation, and it impedes the regular flow of everyday life," Matisonn said. According to the Washington Post, the water crisis has also begun to exacerbate the inherent rich-poor divide within the nation. As many wealthy residents still use water to fill their pools and tend to their lawns, the water supply continues to drain, affecting the poor who cannot afford to pay for such luxuries. "Cape Town is an incredibly eclectic and diverse city," Matisonn said. "What I mean by this is that aside from the multicultural population that influences architecture, cuisine and the arts, the beaches, mountains and wine farms make you feel like you are in different parts of the world, and they are all found within one city." One can only hope that the government and citizens of this multidimensional city will display the strength to overcome this devastating crisis.

"AP Environmental Science has changed my perspective on how my life has impacted the environment. Prior to taking the class, I did not quite understand how much of an impact I had been making. Now, I have consciously changed some aspects of my lifestyle to have less of an impact such as using less water and eating less meat. In a world of climate change and indecision about what to do about climate change, I believe it is important to try to aid the planet on an individual level."
- Junior Kaitlyn Seese, AP Environmental Science

"AP Environmental Science (APES) has changed not only my view on the environment and our treatment of it, but also how we learn science material in the classroom. APES allows students who have no knowledge or tons of knowledge of science to excel. Outside of the education, APES has made me realize how our species is affecting our population. The push for a healthier environment for, not only other animals, but also for our future generations is discussed extensively in the classroom, and the documentaries that we watch motivate me to save the environment in any way possible."
- Junior Jared Cohen, AP Environmental Science

"I've developed a greater appreciation of many things that I once took for granted, and I've become more conscious of the way I treat the Earth and learned to respect our planet that gives us life."
- Junior Aaron Thaler, AP Environmental Science

"Now I know specifically how humans are driving everything on this planet into a premature extinction. I have taken steps to reduce my carbon footprint and water use, along with educating others about what I know."
- Senior Jack Gottlieb, AP Environmental Science

How environmental science class changed my life

"Over the summer I decided to become a vegetarian (no red meat, chicken, fish, etc.). Initially I made this lifestyle decision because I am a big advocate for animal welfare (especially since I am co-president of PAWS), but APES has taught me that this decision is saving energy, lives and water. Therefore, I plan to continue to not eat meat to save animals and help the environment. Overall, AP Environment has taught me information that most people do not know about the world. Now, I am more conscious of my decisions and try to make smarter choices."
- Senior McKenzie Larson, AP Environmental Science

"I've always cared about climate change like the normal person, but it wasn't the focal point of my day. Now because of AP Environment I have been able to reflect on not only my actions but also the actions of the entire global community and how we do not care about the environment whatsoever. We are all going to suffer from the environmental consequences that we've placed on our globe and we don't seem to care about it. The fact that the ice is melting, water levels are rising, there's forest fires in California and we proceed to not care about it — to me it's astonishing. The fact that legislation has yet to be properly installed to safeguard the environment from corporations that want to freely put CO2 in the atmosphere is frightening to me, and considering we don't have an EPA that can properly conduct its job is also very sad because global climate change matters."
- Junior Emily Irigoyen, AP Environmental Science

How green are you? Take this quiz to find out

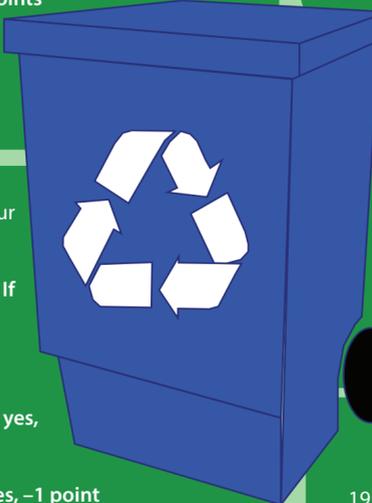
Start with 10 points.

Recycling

1. If there's no recycling bin nearby, do you carry your trash with you until you find one? **If yes, +2 points**
2. Do you recycle only if it's convenient? **If yes, +0 points**
3. Do you sometimes throw away recyclables simply because you forget to recycle? **If yes, -1 point**
4. Do you never recycle? **If yes, -2 points**

Water Use

5. Do you leave the water on when you brush your teeth? **If yes, -1 point**
6. Do you take showers longer than 20 minutes? **If yes, -1 point**
7. Do you take baths regularly? **If yes, -2 points**
8. Do you water the lawn at least once a week? **If yes, -1 point**
9. Do you do laundry more than twice a week? **If yes, -1 point**
10. Do you use a dishwasher instead of washing dishes by hand? **If yes, +1 point**



11. Do you use low-flow toilets? **If yes, +1 point**
12. Do you bring a reusable water bottle to school instead of plastic bottles? **+1 point**
13. Do you save rainwater at home? **+1 point**

Electricity

14. Do you still use old incandescent light bulbs instead of more efficient compact fluorescents, LEDs or halogen bulbs? **If yes, -1 point**
15. Do you leave your electronics plugged into the outlet even when they are 100 percent charged? **If yes, -1 point**
16. Do you leave the lights on when you're not in the room? **If yes, -1 point**
17. Do you turn your air conditioning off when you're not at home? **If yes, +1 point**

Transportation

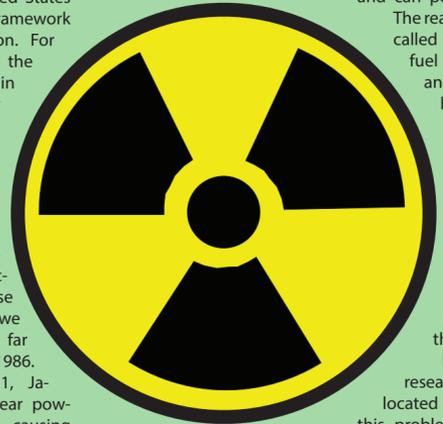
18. Do you drive to and from school? **-1 point**
19. Do you walk or bike to and from school? **+3 points**
20. Do you carpool with a friend to school? **+1 point**

16-20 points: Congrats! You're environmentally friendly. Brag to your friends about your good habits, and try to get them to be more green, too.
11-15 points: Hey, that's pretty good! You're no environmentalist, but you recognize that recycling and saving water are beneficial for the planet. Go you!
5-10 points: Well, you're not terrible. Some of your habits are good, but you should consider the impact your choices make on the environment and think about how you can lessen that impact.
0-5 points: Come on! You waste water and electricity and shorten humanity's time on this planet with your every action. Maybe change your habits a bit? Please?

A look into nuclear energy

Kenzo Kimura | Staff Writer
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With controversial politics painting our daily news headlines, there's one topic that seems to be easily forgotten: nuclear energy. After recent talks regarding nuclear missile production by North Korea, the United States has set up a new framework for nuclear production. For the United States, the production comes in the form of not only missiles, but also renewable energy. When discussing nuclear energy, studies tend to focus on the safety regarding the source. If we want to look at a precedent for the misuse of nuclear energy, we don't have to look as far back as Chernobyl in 1986. In March of 2011, Japan's Fukushima nuclear power plant exploded, causing nuclear fuel rods to melt and raising a nuclear alert of 4-5. The reason? One week prior to the incident, the infamous Sendai earthquake and tsunami ruptured one of the power plants and caused the release of deadly nuclear waste into the air, forcing thousands to flee from their homes.

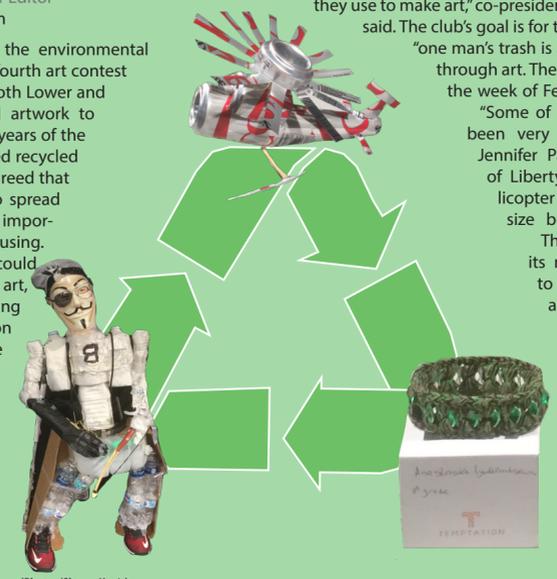


With multiple natural and human disasters linked to nuclear energy, scientists have started to question the links between climate change and nuclear energy. According to a report by the Union of Concerned Scientists in June 2017, there are "67,000 metric tons of spent at age 14, suggests burning the fuel and waste, instead of spending money to store it. He designed a small reactor at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, Calif. that he claims is safe, can destroy the waste, can run for 30 years without refueling, and can power 10,000 homes. The reactor he introduced is called "nuclear fusion." The fuel is virtually limitless and produces no carbon or toxic waste. The Lawrence Livermore Lab 2017 study has reported, "While scientists make fusion reactions all the time, they don't have ignition or the capability to get more energy out than is being put in." However, with more research and funding allocated to nuclear energy, this problem could be solved in the upcoming decades. Although there have been tragic events due to the misuse of nuclear energy, more research toward a cleaner and safer form of this renewable resource has opened a new door for humanity's clean and safe future, powered by rings of heated nuclear plasma.

Students art stars recycled material

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Black, Gold & Green, the environmental club on campus, held its fourth art contest Feb. 5-9. Students from both Lower and Upper School submitted artwork to the contest. The first two years of the contest the club welcomed recycled art pieces, as members agreed that it would be a fun way to spread awareness about the importance of recycling and reusing. Because participants could only submit recycled art, the club wasn't garnering the level of participation they had hoped, despite widespread advertising efforts. This prompted change, as last year, the club started to welcome nature-themed art including paintings, drawings, sculptures, photos, poetry and prose related to nature and the environment, thus, many more submissions. "I think the best part of the contest is that we're teaching students to find beauty in anything, whether it's the nature around them they can photograph, animals they can paint or the literal pieces of trash, the recyclable materials, that



they use to make art," co-president, senior Andrew Kolondra Jr., said. The club's goal is for the contest to bring the adage "one man's trash is another man's treasure" to life through art. The club displayed students' work the week of Feb. 5 in the Black Box Theater. "Some of the recycled art entries have been very creative," club adviser Mrs. Jennifer Page said. "We had a Statue of Liberty built with milk jugs, a helicopter from soda cans, and a life-size boy made of water bottles." The art contest has fulfilled its mission in allowing students to express their appreciation and creativity toward the environment through art. The club encourages students to participate in the contest not only to spread environmental awareness, but also to help raise money for Project Alive. Black, Gold & Green members place great value on giving back. The club donates the total profits from entries, which cost \$3 each, to Project Alive. Last year, members raised about \$250 for the charity. "The officers were very excited about being able to continue the contest this year and contribute to Project Alive," Mrs. Page, said. In addition to helping Project Alive, students who entered earned three community service hours.



Features

Singing in the Big Apple

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While attendees of the 2018 "Heritage Got Talent" talent show Feb. 8 unfortunately missed out on hearing junior Yasmeeen Altaji's impressively high opera notes – thanks to flu season – another audience did get to hear her perform this February. Altaji sang with 154 other girls from around the world at Carnegie Hall in New York City Feb. 4 as a part of the Honors Performance Series (HPS).

To achieve this honor, Altaji first applied to a national competition for students of all arts disciplines called YoungArts. HPS discovered her YoungArts application in a music program database and nominated her to sing at Carnegie, prompting her to submit four recordings of her work in classical voice to compete for a spot. Altaji's performances bested her competition, and she was accepted to both the February Carnegie performance and an additional performance at the culturally iconic Sydney Opera House in Australia this July, winning her spot in Sydney out of a pool of more than 12,000 applicants.

"The interesting aspect of this program is that this choir was

made up of girls from all over the world, meeting for the first time in New York," Altaji said. "I met a girl from Kansas, someone from Guam, another girl from Taiwan. We practiced together for seven hours each day the two days before the show."

The choir performed six pieces: two in English, three in Latin and one in Macedonian. "Ave generosa," Altaji's personal favorite, was a Latin A Cappella piece that she said had the element of resonance characteristic of a chamber choir. "It sounded like the kind of choral ambient music you'd hear in the soundtrack of an intense movie," she said. "It was mesmerizing to hear it live and realize that it was coming out of real people and not just some electric keyboard on the 'choir' setting."

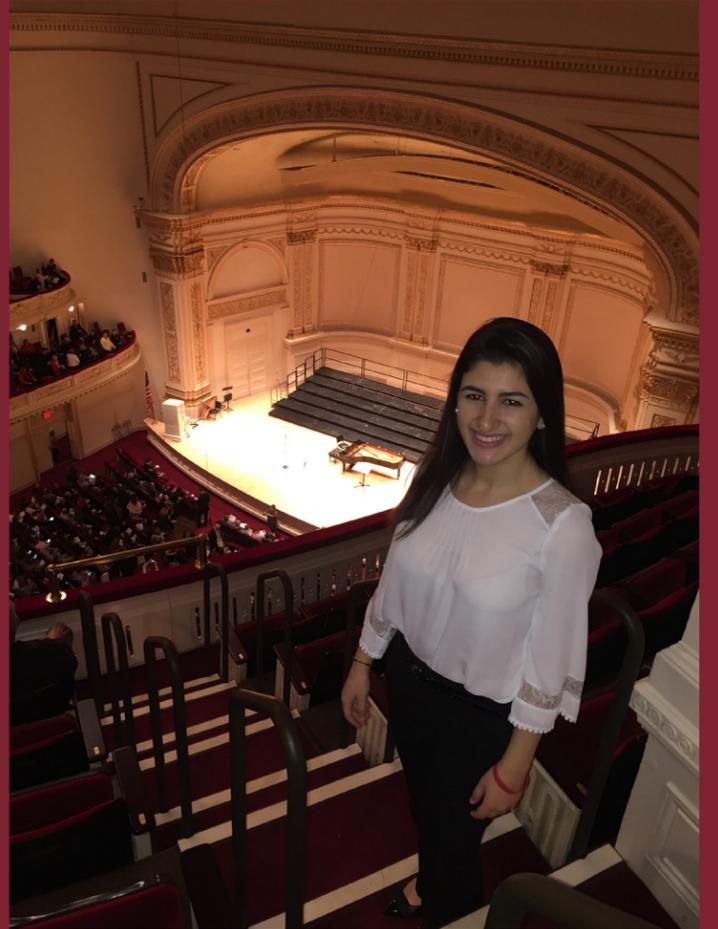
While the rigor of the rehearsal schedule didn't allow Altaji to talk to her fellow choir members all too often, she still enjoyed her time with them, particularly the conductor Dr. Lynne Gackle, a professor and conductor at Baylor University. "We were a huge group so there wasn't really much one-on-one instruction, but she was an incredible musician and an even better conductor," Altaji said. "There was a lot of attention to detail on her part, which made

being a part of the choir all the more enjoyable, and presumably made the experience better for the audience as well."

Altaji was blown away by the experience of getting to perform on such a stage as the one at Carnegie. "Being in that hall during the performance made me think about my music career with a long-term view, you know? When will I be back on this stage, if ever? What will I be doing?" she said. "It puts a lot of things into perspective."

As for that future, Altaji is hopeful. She currently takes piano at the Frost School of Music Preparatory program at the University of Miami and has been eyeing certain arts schools as the college application season for the class of 2019 looms.

Whatever the case, Altaji cannot imagine a life without music. "Music for me is what a sport or some other activity would be for everyone else. I've been learning it since I was four years old, so without it there really is something missing," she said. "There's a quote that says 'let the beauty of what you love be what you do,' and through music, I'm able to personally design my hobby, its sound, its time, its movement... that's the beauty of it all."



CARNEGIE CHORUS: Junior Yasmeeen Altaji stands in the balcony overlooking the world-famous stage at Carnegie Hall. She performed six classical pieces with 154 other girls from around the world as a part of the Honors Performance Series. (Photo/submitted by Yasmeeen Altaji)

The key(club) to success

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In seventh grade, junior Dalya Ackerman saw a flyer for Key Club at the club fair. While her initial response was, "What, do they make keys?," she eventually looked into it and decided to attend a meeting. At the meeting, the president at the time, Kristy Yeung convinced her to come back. Since her membership in seventh grade, Ackerman has swiftly moved up in the ranks. In eighth grade, she became the Junior High Director; in ninth, she took over the secretary position. For the past two years, she has served as club president, the club's

chief executive officer. Presidents are responsible for setting and monitoring the goals of the club, running club meetings, appointing committee chairs and delegating tasks as necessary as well as recruiting, training and retaining members and maintaining regular communication with the lieutenant governor of his or her division. The president is also the face of the club, so he or she is encouraged to attend divisional council meetings (DCMs), maintain enthusiasm and planservice projects.

After exhausting positions on a school basis, Ackerman decided to run for a community position, specifically Lieutenant Governor (LTG)

of Division 24B, a division within Broward County. This would require her to support the growth of clubs within her division and serve as a liaison between the district and the club. Duties include publication of a newsletter, holding divisional council meetings (DCM), training and consulting with club officers and advisors, and serving on one or more district committees. Lt. Governors are elected at Spring Zone Rally." She won the race and will now represent our district as LTG.

Ackerman strives to make a difference in her community, which is the sole reason she joined the club in the first place. "I wanted to

make the biggest difference I could. Because that's what Key Club is about. Everyone wants to make the biggest difference he or she can. For me, I did the president thing, and I wanted to do more. As LTG, I can, one, help all the clubs in our area be as successful as they can, so individually they can do more service," she said. Serving as an LTG will also allow her to implement larger and more encompassing service projects, allowing the Key Clubs around the district to raise more money.

"The people I have met through Key Club inspire me. These are students who give up social lives or other activities for the sake of helping those in need. I think it's really amazing," Ackerman said.

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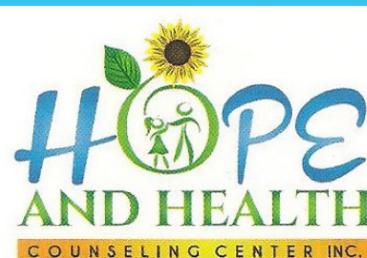


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Features

WTWU: Ms. Shannon Brandt-Asciola

Have you ever wondered what your teachers were like in high school? In our monthly teacher profile, we take a trip back to the past and explore what teachers were like 'When They Were Us' (WTWU).

Alyssa Herzbrun | One-Pager Editor
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Ms. Shannon Brandt-Asciola, a new junior high English teacher this year at American Academy, grew up in the Bronx and has dreamed, since the age of 6, of being an actress in a musical on Broadway.

Living within walking distance of Broadway, she was so close to the theater district that she was able to walk and see a variety of Broadway shows. She fell in love with "Les Miserables" and saw the show more than 10 times and dreamed of playing a lead role as Eponine.

"I cried when the show closed because I never thought I would have a chance to play my dream role," she explained.

She spent two years at Preston High School in the Bronx, where her interest in theater continued to develop. However, she never quite got a lead role. Her claim to fame was that she maneuvered the spotlight during the play "Bye Bye Birdie." Her family moved to New Jersey when she was 16 in search of the suburbs. She began attending Hakkestown High School. At her new school, she joined the theater group and landed one of the lead roles as the mother in Bye Bye Birdie.

An individual of many talents, Mrs. Brandt-Asciola excelled in theater, but she also participated in the team sports of basketball, soccer, fencing and softball. "I

loved playing sports but eventually acting in theater won out," Ms. Brandt-Asciola said.

She has always had a love of literature and became very passionate about the subject when her senior teacher asked the class to read "The Handmaid's Tale," finding the novel "life-changing."

Looking back on her high school experience, Ms. Brandt-Asciola recounted her three favorite moments of high school. "My favorite high school memory was going solo to prom. I hadn't planned on attending because I didn't see the need to buy a fancy dress to use for one night, but I decided to go because my friends were going," Ms. Brandt-Asciola said. "Another favorite moment of high school was the applause I received after my role as a principal actor in the school play." Ms. Brandt-Asciola had a reputation of being late to class after lunch. "One day my teacher asked me what I had to say for myself and I said, at least I'm consistent. He is usually such a serious teacher but he laughed so much."

After the decision to stop acting in plays in college, Ms. Brandt-Asciola took up directing. She thought directing plays was a good fit for her and decided to take her knowledge from high school to help her direct the play "Mulan" at American Heritage.

Ms. Brandt-Asciola never thought she would be an English teacher, but she explains she was



FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER: Ms. Shannon Brandt-Asciola graduated from Preston High in New York and fell in love with theater while in high school. She is currently an American Academy junior high English teacher. (Photo submitted by Ms. Brandt-Asciola)

always a reader and researcher. "When I teach literature, it's a passion of mine so when my student has that lightbulb moment, it's amazing to me. I want them

to have the same passion as I do." Her experiences in high school have shaped the English teacher she is today.

Cultural clubs create unique bake sales

Kristen Quesada | Opinion Editor
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Clubs all around campus host fundraisers to support themselves or the charities they donate to. However, with at least one bake sale on campus every week, clubs must distinguish themselves to stand out, and our school's language honor societies do this best. These societies work to serve the community and school while promoting knowledge of the culture's language, traditions and heritage.

"We want our students to learn and appreciate our culture, foods, traditions, and languages," Mrs.

Evelyn Silva, sponsor of the Spanish Honor Society (SHS) since 2015, said. SHS sells churros at its bake sales and donates all proceeds to Children International to support orphaned children from the Hispanic world. They have also previously donated proceeds to Project Alive. "Churros are an important part of the Spanish culture as a tradition of sharing as a community or family," Mrs. Silva said.

They sell half of a churro for \$1.50 and a whole churro for \$2 and have free chocolate syrup to add. SHS purchases churros from Costco the day of the bake

sale to provide students with fresh churros.

As for the Chinese Honor Society (CHS), it hosted its first fortune cookie bake sale Feb. 15. The price was four fortune cookies for \$1. CHS will donate its proceeds to charity once the society decides which to donate to.

"The fortune cookie sale was the day before the Chinese New Year

which is part of the reason why we chose to do it that day," sophomore Evan Wang, co-president of the Chinese Honor Society, said. "CHS sells fortune cookies because we thought it would be a fun way to raise money and people can learn a little bit of Chinese with it."

All in all, these bake sales help introduce students to foreign cultures in a creative way. The societies are able to raise money for a worthwhile cause and promote their own goals at the same time.



The Q Concept BY KATHERINE QUESADA **Snow Queen: this teen is setting slope history**

In today's world of #MeToo and fighting for women's equality, it can do us some good to step back and appreciate women who are making a difference in their fields, and, as the 23rd Winter Olympic Games have just passed, what better time to highlight one of the world's best snowboarders: 17-year-old Chloe Kim.

Kim was born in Long Beach, Calif. and has trained her whole life, entering her first competition at age 6, to be one of the best snowboarders in the country. At the 2016 Aspen X Games, upon winning three gold medals, she became the first person to win back-to-back gold medals at an X Games, surpassing legends such as Shaun White.

As if that were not enough to fill 2016, Kim went on to become the first woman to land back-to-back 1080 spins in a snowboarding competition at the 2016 U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix.

Although Kim qualified to compete in the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics at age 13, she had to back out due to the rules barring her from competing at such a young age; thus, Kim resorted to receiving two gold medals at the 2016 Winter Youth Olympics in the Halfpipe and Slopestyle divisions and was selected as the flag bearer for the United States.

This kickbutt, pipe-shredding snowboarder not only transcends athletic boundaries, but also the "box" people put her in. Kim, who is of Korean descent, surpasses the world of snowboarding and brings to light important issues of identity.

"I always get the question, like, 'Where are you from?' L.A. 'No, where are you really from?' I was born in Long Beach. 'No, no, like, where are you really, really from?'" Kim said to the "Washington Post." "... I always get that question. It's never, like, my first answer would be, 'I'm from Korea,' or like, 'I'm Korean.' It's always like, 'I'm American.'"

Despite her parents immigrating to the United States from South Korea more than 20 years ago, Kim often has people question her nationality. "I just grew up in the States, so I feel like I identify more with American culture [as opposed to Korean culture]," Kim said. But she still makes sure to have strong ties with her ethnicity, as she visits relatives in South Korea every year, and, thus, had quite the familial entourage at the games.

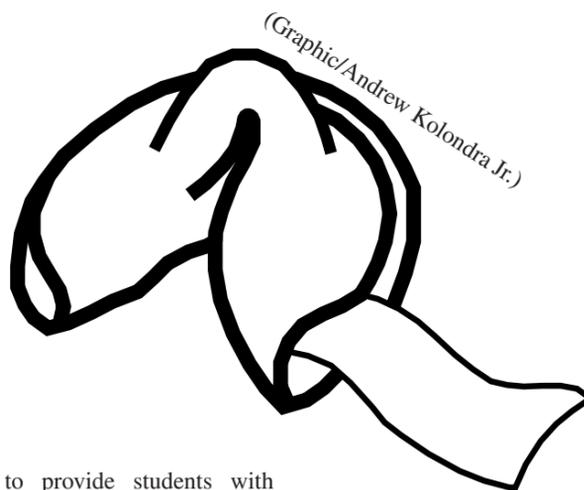
As the games have passed, Kim rides through the remainder of senior year ready to tackle the next jump, and as for us, Kim is an inspiration to continue our passions and a reminder to break through societal boundaries and embrace our personal identities.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Spotlight: Armando Torrealba

The Fine Arts program is one of the strongest at Heritage, filled with talented students.

Joanne Haner | Online Assistant Editor
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One may have to think a while when trying to find a student as involved and in love with the fine arts as senior Armando Torrealba. As a member of the marching band, wind ensemble, orchestra and jazz band since freshman year, Torrealba dedicates the majority of his time to his music composition and instruments.

Torrealba is also a part of the symphony orchestra, brass choir and pit orchestra. His passion for the arts does not stop there; Torrealba has also expressed interest in percussion and music tech.

"If I had room in my schedule I would add more Fine Arts classes," Torrealba said. Before moving to South Florida, Torrealba learned to play the viola at the age of six in his birthplace, Caracas, Venezuela. In 2008, Torrealba, his parents and his brother packed up and moved to their current home state.

"The transition was really difficult at first because I didn't

know how to speak English at all. I felt like I was really behind all the other kids," Torrealba said. "Since music doesn't have a language barrier, playing in my elementary school orchestra made me feel like I was at home."

In sixth grade, Torrealba picked up the trombone and continued to improve his playing abilities.

He has always wanted to learn guitar or piano, but his busy lifestyle has prevented him from finding the time to do so.

"Fine arts [is] fun for me, so rehearsals and practice are my free time," Torrealba said. "Since most of my friends are in orchestra or band, I love being able to spend time with them during rehearsal or performance days."

At the start of his junior year, Torrealba picked up music composition. He started with a simple, free computer software and hand notations, but he eventually progressed his skills to the point where the orchestra plays his pieces at concerts.

"At first, I decided to compose because I felt like I could tell a story through my songs," Torrealba said. "I'm mostly inspired by stories and things I see in the world around me. My first composition was a story about a soldier who leaves his home to go fight in a war and eventually finds his way back home to his family."

Torrealba's pieces range from duets to entire orchestras. Most of his pieces intended for larger ensembles are 7 to 12 minutes long.

"I'll write a jazz duet over a three day weekend. However, my latest piece for symphony orchestra took me the whole summer to compose," he said.

He has a special connection to his first piece, which he wrote for the string orchestra.

"It led me to believe that I could have a future in composing, eventually pushing me to keep progressing," Torrealba said. "Composing is extremely stressful, and sometimes it's borderline unpleasant if I'm being completely honest. Eighty percent of



MARCHING IN TIME: Senior Armando Torrealba blasts out notes on his trombone during a halftime performance at a varsity football game last season. (Photo/submitted by Armando Torrealba)

the time I spend writing a new song, I experience writers block. However, the other twenty percent of the time, when I can feel the song really coming together and all the different parts becoming a whole, that portion of time is why I love composing music."

Over the past two years, the orchestra has performed one of Arnaldo's string pieces, the

symphony orchestra played another and the marching band has performed multiple popular music arrangements of Torrealba's during halftime and in the stands between plays.

In the future, Torrealba hopes to carry out his passion for music and the arts throughout his life with a degree in music performance or composition.

Healthy alternatives to improve your diet

Angela Lin | Co-Assistant Editor
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Popcorn

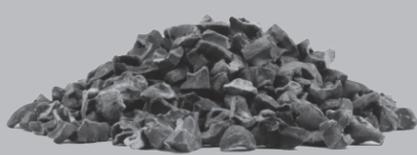
Replace potato chips with this addicting snack. Air-popped popcorn has nine times less saturated fat and one-third fewer calories per serving.



(Photo/wordpress.com)

Cacao Nibs

Craving chocolate? Eat cacao nibs instead of chocolate chips as cacao nibs contain no sugar and have five times the fiber.



(Photo/prana.bio)

Almond butter

You can still have your creamy snack without consuming hydrogenated vegetable oils and added sugars in peanut butter. Almond butter contains healthy fats that help prevent heart disease.



(Photo/Amazon)

Coconut water

After a workout or sports practice, drink coconut water instead of a sports drink. Coconut water has less than half of the sugar and more than 16 times the potassium.



(Photo/Amazon)

Restaurant review: Budare Bistro

Maia Fernandez-Baigun | Staff Writer
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Miami is well known for its Latin influence. It is found in the everyday lifestyle, customs and cuisine. However, there is a very distinct line between Latin-inspired cuisine and the authentic Latin taste of many Floridians' home countries. Located just off Weston Road, Budare Bistro combines a trendy, but minimalist, style with authentic Venezuelan food.

Located in Weston, it is perfect for busy students in the area who do not want to travel far to get a little Venezuelan flavor. The name, Budare Bistro, originates from the typical budare, a griddle, made from stone, clay or steel, used to cook a variety of breads such as cachapas, arepas and casabes. With modern Latin music playing in the background, Budare Bistro is like a little slice of Venezuela in South Florida.

To get an overall feel for the variety of food listed on the menu, I ordered the mini platano empanadas with cheese (\$7), the Arepa Budare (\$11.75), the Patacon Maduro (\$10.50), the Cachapa with meat and avocado (\$14.75) and a specialty drink, chicha (\$6).



LATIN FLARE: Get a taste of the Arepa Budare with tomato, sweet pepper, cheese, meat and cilantro mayo (\$11.75). (Photo/Maia Fernandez-Baigun)

The menu also lists a variety of Venezuelan specialties, including mini tequeños (sticks of bread filled with cheese), chocolate or guava jelly; mandocas (fried cornmeal rings) and arepas (filled with your choice of meat and vegetables). All dishes were flavorful and savory, but like many customers, my favorite was the Arepa Budare. Unlike the other dishes, the Arepa Budare had the refreshing taste of tomato and cilantro mixed into the arepa, while the other dishes had only cheese, meat and cornmeal patties.

Another popular item was the famous chicha drink. If you like

Venezuelan rice pudding, this is the drink for you. It is made the same way as the traditional pudding, except blended into a drink, and serves as the ideal compromise between dessert and beverage.

Whether you are looking for a modern taste of authentic Venezuelan food, or simply trying something outside of your comfort zone, Budare has many options for you. Although, as a whole, the prices are not for every day dining, Budare provides what mainstream chain restaurants do not: authenticity.

Asian Fusion Food and Deserts

- Ramen
- Boba Tea
- Asian Deserts



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Entertainment

Book review: The Sun is Also a Star

Kayla Rubenstein | Staff Writer
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Combine impossibilities, the power of fate and real-world issues and set them in modern day New York and you get Nicola Yoon's young adult (YA) novel "The Sun is Also a Star."

After readers' tears stop flowing, and the plot's ending is fully absorbed, readers will be able to see why this book, a well-written, coming-of-age YA novel emotional roller coaster, won as many awards and accolades as it did.

The plot unfolds with female lead Natasha Kingsley traveling on the New York

subway after yet another failed attempt to meet with an immigration lawyer, as deportation to Jamaica is set for that night for her and her family. With one more appointment with one last immigration lawyer, Natasha clings to the hope that that day would not be her last on the American soil her parents had illegally arrived on years before.

Poet Daniel Bae, the male main character, faces pressure from his Korean family to get into the medical school at Yale with an admissions interview later that day. By chance, the two run into each other and spend one magical day together, clinging onto the hope that

it would not be their last day with each other.

Inclusiveness was a priority for Nicola Yoon, as demonstrated by her cast of characters. From Jamaican and Korean-American main characters, to secondary characters with mental health issues and LGBT side characters, Yoon encompasses a variety of characters to enhance her novel as one that all YA lovers will enjoy.

What makes this story such a beautiful and deeply moving one is the relatability to the characters and their problems. While most of us aren't facing the problem of deportation, we have all at one point

experienced the crushing feeling of trying our best and not having things go our way.

Everyone has felt the pressure of pleasing a loved one, and most certainly face a common issue of who we are and what our identity is.

Yoon has failed to deliver a book anything less than perfect. "Everything, Everything," her other adapted-into-a-movie YA book, allows readers to experience the same events the characters did. The draw to reading a book includes the ability to lose oneself in the plot, and Yoon has managed to create one that allows different readers to immerse themselves.



The Shuffle

BY AMBER BHUTTA
Debunking the Hijab

Misconstrued and misunderstood through the echoes of history, the hijab has a turbulent history of inciting controversy over women's rights, many Western feminists going so far as to purport that hijabs do little more than demean and oppress women. This, however, could not be farther from the truth.

The origins of the hijab trace back to the Quran that commands both men and women to dress modestly, the word itself roughly translating into "veil." Some scholars argue that the religion merely requires Muslims to dress modestly while others posit that all women must wear hijabs to cover their hair. Loose and strict interpretations of Islamic scripture aside, the majority of Muslim women with the liberty to do so treat the hijab as what it should be: a choice.

I wear a hijab when I go to a mosque out of respect for the rules that govern Islamic institutions in the same way in which one may dress more conservatively when visiting a church or a synagogue. Beyond the walls of a mosque, however, I choose not to cover my hair and instead express my religious devotion through other means. On the other hand, my cousin, born and raised in Jersey City, never leaves her home without a hijab, one of nearly 430,000 other Muslim women across the United States who wear headscarves daily, according to the Pew Research Center. No doctrine issued by the U.S. government demands these women to cover their hair; some Muslim women in the United States make the decision to express their religious piety through a hijab while others do not. As a conscious choice women make, hijabs adhere to their true purpose and symbolize self-expression, not oppression.

In countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, in which grossly inaccurate interpretations of Islamic texts have an alarming degree of influence over theocratic law, systemic misogyny prevails hiding behind the false name of religion and robs women of the choice of how to express their religion by necessitating hijabs. By denying women a choice, such countries take away the idea of religious expression, turn the hijab into a demonized symbol of Islamic extremism and prey upon the ignorance of non-Muslims by propagating false impressions of Islam.

A woman wearing a hijab walking the streets of Chicago or New York likely chose to do so, despite the threat of Islamophobic backlash. A woman in Saudi Arabia covered from head to toe, denied the right to travel without male supervision or even drive, covers her hair because the law requires her to and faces a different situation entirely. Understand the difference, and consider the context the next time you see a woman wearing a hijab.

School survival guide: socially awkward situations

The comic corner, by Maia Fernandez-Baigun

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Entertainment Hip-hop evolves through hood politics

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Let's be real. Even those who have never even heard a single rap or hip-hop song in their lifetime can realize that the genre is not what it used to be. An early 2000s rap or hip-hop song such as Soulja Boy's "Kiss Me Thru The Phone" or Sir Mix-a-Lot's "Baby Got Back" can effortlessly be recognized from a track released in the past decade. From a listener's perspective, artists who have entered the rap game within the last five to 10 years have little to no similarities with the average '90s rapper.

Older hip-hop music does have a distinguishable tone. Not only does the style and flow

distinguish itself, but there seems to be the constant theme of "hood politics," a trademark term rapper Nas referenced in his 2002 hit "One Mic." Hood politics is defined as "positively impacting crime-ridden communities by spreading a message of injustice and awareness."

Although spreading positive messages through rap was common during the '90s, some rappers preferred to maintain another trait, which was less favorable in the eyes of society.

Drug dealers and convicted criminals, artists such as 50 Cent and The Notorious B.I.G., created the perception of the "gangster" persona in the eyes of those who view hip-hop as an unsophisticated genre.

In 2018, although rap and hip-hop lyricism accompanied by societal values has changed, the use of this genre has remained untouched by the same two topics on which the genre originally focused: the art of "flexing" – boastful bragging – and the idea of using music to spread a message to the people.

In the past five years, a few successful songs have spread messages and viewpoints formerly unheard of in the rap game. Artists such as Tyler, The Creator and Logic have songs relaying less-talked about subjects regarding homosexuality, gender equality (Same Love ft. Mary Lambert, 2012) and suicide prevention (1-800-273-8255 ft. Alessia Cara, Khalid, 2017).

Others such as Drake and Chance the Rapper exemplify the gangster persona is not a prerequisite to gain support by popular masses. Kendrick Lamar is one of the most prominent American rap artists who reference their upbringing in an impoverished community while also spreading the old '90s message of injustice to the African American community, the negative effects of drugs and alcohol as well as the constructive development in his hometown of Compton, Calif.

Although multiple rappers attempt to achieve positive change within their communities through music, there are also those who merely adopt hip-hop culture artificially, using it as a mask to hide their true intentions –

boasting their clout. Lil Pump and others such as Jaden Smith and Travis Scott have skewed the original definition of hip-hop, which skews the mentality of hood politics. Regardless of their lack of attempts for integrating any sort of message, some of these artists have catchy beats and pop-culture appeal.

Everything from the meaning of standard hip-hop to the record labels to the personas of rappers themselves has progressed over the previous decade, yet maintained the same theme of "woke" lyrics. If anything, many of these artists may call themselves, as Jaden Smith says, "an icon-living."

Obscura: How will you know if you never try?

Maia Fernandez-Baigun | Staff Writer
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Described as an indie pop band and called "a band with great potential" by billboard.com, lead singer and synthesizer, COIN was created in 2012 in Nashville, Tenn. The band consists of four members: Chase Lawrence (lead vocals and synthesizers), Ryan Winnen (drums), Joe Memmel (lead guitar, backing vocals) and Zachary Dyke (bass guitar).

While their first album released in 2015 was a great success, they released their sophomore album "How Will You Know If You Never Try" in April 2017, which racked up many more views on Youtube, the radio and Spotify than their previous album. It features 11 tracks, each co-written by different members of the band.

The album not only discusses heavy topics such as

growing old and losing the ability to do certain things, but it also celebrates youth.

The band first released a single, and soon after, the whole album followed. Lawrence and Memmel co-wrote "Talk Too Much" in a three-hour period, and as the band's most famous song, it peaks at number eight on the Alternative Songs chart.

A happy and cheerful song, "Talk Too Much" starts out with an upbeat bass and exciting electric guitar. Accompanied by synthesizers and Lawrence's lead vocals, the song talks about impulsivity and enjoying what one has in the moment. "Better to leave it unsaid, why can't I leave it unsaid? You know I talk too much" Lawrence sings in the first verse of the song.

However, I think, the best song is the last song, "Malibu 1992." Like most of the other songs, it starts out with a steady

bass. However, on this track, the bass slows down much more than on other tracks.

Accompanied by nostalgic and hazy synthesizers, the bass sways along to the melody of an apologetic tune. "A bit tongue and a taste of iron, sweethearts that high school soured, now," Lawrence sings. Overcome with emotion and heartache, COIN wrote this song after most of its long term relationships had come to an end. Reminiscing about a past relationship, this is one of COIN's only ballads along with a much sadder "Lately."

Although "Lately" is from their first album, it still has the ability to emotionally connect with the audience. Sung with pain, Lawrence tells the story of his beloved sister having a baby who, sadly, only lived for a few short hours. "What a tragedy, it's a settled score. Like a cavity, a canyon of sorts," Lawrence sings.



COINING A NEW PERSPECTIVE: COIN released its sophomore album in 2017. Members from left to right are Chase Lawrence, Zachary Dyke, Joe Memmel and Ryan Winnen (Photo/metrolyrics.com)

Now on an international tour, Lawrence expects nothing but happiness, fun and enjoying the moment while on tour. "We had a carefree nature from the start. It is being applied to our fanbase. They are loving, accepting, and kind. This show comes together, and it is basically a family reunion for these people, and for us, too. That

is what we want people to know. That's what we are all about," Lawrence said in an interview with Chicagopride.com.

Whether you are in a mood, or are simply looking for a song to jam out to, COIN has unique songs many can happily enjoy.



SAFARI EDVENTURE WOLF ENCOUNTER: Safari Edventure takes in animals that were treated poorly. These wolves were rescued after they were abandoned following their appearance in a commercial (Photo/Alyssa Herzbrun).

Rescued animals aid in student exploration and education

Alyssa Herzbrun | One-Pager Editor
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Safari Edventure really is an amazing experience for many who want a close-up encounter with exotic animals from around the world.

Although it has been in business since 1945, few people seem to know of its existence. Located in Miami-Dade County, Safari Edventure is a great experience for families to enjoy animals and nature.

Some may think its title contains a misspelling, however, its founder purposely used this play on words to combine its adventure with the accompanying educational experience.

This unique paradise offers visitors truly unusual experiences. Adventurers can handle a tarantula, feed baby pigs, hold a baby sloth

and hand-feed monkeys. The park contains several special enclosures that provide once-in-a-lifetime experiences. For example, visitors can enter the arctic wolf exhibit and interact with four wolves.

Safari Edventure is a non-profit organization with a small sanctuary and educational facility that teaches people about preserving wildlife. Unlike the Miami Zoo, the facility is not government funded. The zoo's budget is from 47 percent government sources. The benefit of not being a government-funded facility is that people are able to have a close-up encounter with many of the animals because the government doesn't mandate how the animals are handled.

Not only does Safari Edventure have exotic

animals, but it also has a walkthrough rainforest garden, along with hummingbird and butterfly gardens scattered throughout the refuge. There is a large organic garden full of herbs, spices and medicinal plants.

Located in Miami-Dade County (23700 SW 142nd Ave Miami, FL 33032), Safari Edventure is open every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. except for Monday and Tuesday. The admission fee is \$15 for a child and \$18 for an adult, but Florida residents are able to receive a \$3 discount.

If you're looking for a truly wonderful opportunity to enjoy nature and have a close encounter with many different species of animals then you should really check out Safari Edventure.



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SPORTS

Student-athletes commit to college

After a thorough recruiting process, 32 student athletes sign on the dotted line on National Signing Day. Three coveted football standouts receive special notice, deciding live on national television.

Katherine Quesada Co-Editor
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Thirty-two varsity athletes reaped the reward for years of hard work as they committed to colleges. On National Signing Day, Feb. 7, players, parents, coaches and fans gathered in the main theater to witness which schools students chose to attend. The event ran from 9:30-10:30 a.m. with approximately 500 attendees.

"It's obviously been exciting to watch our kids go through it. We're excited to see what they decide," athletic director Ms. Karen Stearns said to the Sun-Sentinel. Players from the varsity baseball, softball, girls soccer, girls basketball, boys lacrosse, girls tennis, swimming, boys golf and football teams signed.

However, four student-athletes stole the spotlight as ESPN

streamed their decisions live: seniors Patrick Surtain II, Tyson Campbell, Nesta Silvera and Andrew Chatfield. Surtain and Campbell, both five-star cornerbacks, were two of the top three remaining uncommitted players nationally, deciding to attend the University of Alabama and the University of Georgia.

"They [University of Alabama football team] win championships and over here we are used to winning championships, so I want to be apart of that winning culture," Surtain said.

Campbell is now a member of the University of Georgia, the best recruited team in the nation per ESPN. "When I went to Georgia, I felt comfortable. It was a place that I could see myself playing at. They have a great coaching staff to help me get to the next level," Campbell

said. "Kirby Smart just showed me love. He was keeping it real with me from the get go. It is just up to me to put the work in if I want to get on the field early as a freshman."

Silvera, a four-star prospect, moves on from the Patriots to the Miami Hurricanes as a defensive tackle commit.

Chatfield, a four-star edge rusher, shocked the crowd as he prematurely toyed with the University of Miami cap, but ultimately pulled up a Chucky doll adorned in a University of Florida cap to announce his final decision. Silvera and Chatfield both were accompanied by Chucky dolls, a symbol that has been passed along by Florida Gators defensive linemen over the last few years, and it now seemed Silvera has brought the tradition to Miami.

Football

Nesta Silvera, University of Miami
Tyson Campbell, University of Georgia
Patrick Surtain II, University of Alabama
Andrew Chatfield, University of Florida
Zackary Zambrano, Princeton University
John Alyn, Columbia University
John Jack Fris, Lehigh University
Dyllon Lester, University of Central Florida
Calvin Hart, North Carolina State University
Miles Jones, University of Nebraska
Anthony Schwartz, Auburn University

Golf

Alberto Martinez, Florida State University

Swimming

Nick Pacitti, Loyola of Maryland University
Catharine Cooper, San Diego State University
Christian Kopecki, Seton Hall University

Boys Lacrosse

Ryan Marek, St. Leo's University
Dawson Fisher, Roanoke College
Dante Cloutier, University of Montevallo

Girls Soccer

Victoria Alfero, Villanova University
Michelle Lamorte, Columbus State University
Janel Leon, Stetson University

Girls Basketball

Femi Funeus, Seton Hall University

Softball

Hannah Sipos, University of Florida
Marley Felder, Brandeis University
Marisa Soterakis, University of South Carolina Upstate

Tennis

Anya Gunewardena, Johns Hopkins University
Ellen Ashley, San Diego State University

Baseball

Alfie Soto, Tallahassee Community College
Julio Cortez, University of South Florida
Matt Whitney, Broward College
Bailey Mantilla, University of Miami
Cory Acton, University of Florida



CREEPY TRADITION: Senior defensive end Andrew Chatfield (top left) uses a Chucky doll to announce his commitment to the University of Florida. The Chucky tradition started in 2013 when Dante Fowler used the toy to commit to UF after tearing his ACL. (Photo/ Matt Debery)

SLIDING INTO COLLEGE: Senior pitcher Matthew Whitney (top right) signs letter-of-intent to Broward College after decommitting from Florida International University earlier this fall. (Photo/ Katherine Quesada)

ROLLING TIDES: Senior cornerback Patrick Surtain II (bottom left) commits to the University of Alabama on live television, while his counterpart Tyson Campbell (bottom right) signs with the University of Georgia. (Photo/ Tom VanHaaren)

Patriots ranked No. 1 right off the bat

Alex Becker Sports Editor
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Before even stepping foot on the mound this season, the baseball team has made waves across the nation after being named the top high school baseball team in the nation by Perfect Game, the world's largest baseball scouting service. The Patriots ended last season 20-7 overall, after losing in the FHSAA Class 6A regional quarterfinal to Barbara Goleman High School.

However, with the talent the team has this year it is no surprise the Patriots have risen so high in this season's poll.

Seven-year head coach Bruce Aven claims success comes from more than just plain talent. "Triston Casas and Cory Acton are the team captains. They provide the leadership to work hard and to play together as a team. It is important to have leadership to set the team goals and to guide the team to reach the goals."

Although Aven insists leadership drives the team to victory, talent still plays a role. Senior first and third baseman Triston Casas committed to the University of Miami last year but is projected to be drafted in the first round of the MLB Draft this April. Although Aven considers Casas as a spiritual leader, the former U18 World Baseball Classic MVP is also an offensive leader accounting for 36 runs last season, while managing to keep a .446 average.

Senior third baseman Cory Acton, a University of Florida commit, was named a top 50 player in the class of 2018 by MaxPreps last season after hitting .458 and helping the Patriots score 44 runs.

The Patriots' bullpen is also filled to the brim with talent, including senior left-handed pitcher Bailey Mantilla. Mantilla maintained an earned run average of 2.13 over the course of 42.2 innings last season to limit

the opponent batting average to .250. Over the course of the last two seasons, Mantilla has struck out 104 batters to lead the Patriot bullpen.

Last April, three former Patriots were drafted to the pros, while Mantilla, Acton and Casas are speculated to have their names called this year as the team produces such polished talent. However, Aven says there is no secret to making the majors but deter-

mination. "The player has to have some talent. He has to have the will to work and train year round on the physical, mental and the skills part of the game. We have the best facilities, coaching staff, administration and players that are motivated to reach their full potential," he said.

The baseball program has been prosperous for years but hasn't won state since 2012. This season may be the year for the team

due to great skill, coaching and motivation. Ranking number one in the nation has set a fire in the team, but Aven knows nothing is ever guaranteed. "It is a honor to be selected as the top team in the country, and I am very happy for our players, coaches, parents and school. It is great to start number one, but it will be even better to finish number one. We just need to stay healthy and have a little luck on our side," he said.

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Sports

Twinning on the court

Chances are you've probably seen these two six-foot twin sisters dubbed "the basketball twins" around campus. Read the article below to find out how they came to play basketball as a duo.

From the Bench
BY ALEX BECKER
The value of money

It seems Americans have forgotten the value of a dollar. While the Super Bowl has historically been the biggest betting day of the year, Super Bowl LII was excessive. With over \$4.8 billion gambled on one game, it looks like America has trivialized the value of money.

Although almost betting \$5 billion dollars on a single game is crazy, it isn't complete bonkers because there are winners. However, insanity emerges with prop bets. Prop bets are bets that have literally nothing to do with football. This year, prop bets were ridiculous to say the least. Here are the dumbest of the dumb:

How many times will President Donald Trump tweet during the game?

While Trump may speak without thinking, fire anyone who questions him and is hated by majority of the world, he keeps us entertained. People can say all they want about how his twitter account is unprofessional and should be shut down, but at the end of the day it won people money, as he only tweeted once at the end of the game. Honestly, I wouldn't be surprised if Trump took the bet himself. He's a businessman; he knew what he was doing.

What color will Bill Belichick's sweatshirt be?

Patriots head Coach Bill Belichick is famous for the three S's: Super Bowls, smiles and sweatshirts. He is so famous that Americans bet not only if he would win his seventh ring, but also what color his cut-off hoodie would be. Usually when you get dressed in the morning the choice only affects your life. This is not the case for "the Hoodie." The sweatshirt was navy, which was a clear favorite, but then again so were the Patriots.

How long will it take for P!nk to sing the National Anthem?

The over-under on this bet was two minutes. The song lasted one minute and 53 seconds to hit the under, which lost a majority of gamblers their money. The over was a clear favorite as four of the last five renditions have been over the two minute mark. Because there was a favorite on this bet, it means people did some research. Are Americans are lazy? Wasteful? Yes. Lazy? Nope.

For a country that's over \$20 trillion in debt and only talks about the economy, we seem to be pretty wasteful. Four separate people in the US put seven digit bets down on the game. It doesn't matter how sure you are of the game, a million dollars on one game is deranged.

These problems stretch further than sports betting, though. We need to understand the value of money. The American dollar is devalued daily because we care less and throw it away. Sure betting on sports is a thrill, but if you're going to bet on sports then bet on sports, not the halftime show.

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Tatyana and Taliyah Wyche not only share the same genes, but they also share a love of basketball. As freshman at American Heritage, they are very proud to be on the basketball team. At their previous school, they played flag football, soccer and basketball all throughout middle school.

One of the main reasons they enjoy sports is because they get to spend time together while playing. Since



(Submitted/Taliyah Wyche)

middle school, they have

enjoyed the same sports and joined the same teams together.

Taliyah and Tatyana decided to join the basketball team for different reasons. Taliyah looked forward to becoming friends with the other players. Tatyana loved basketball so much that she asked her coach to recommend a good school to go to for basketball, and he recommended American Heritage. Taliyah's favorite aspect about playing basketball is being able to spend more time with her sister.

Tatyana enjoys basketball because it keeps her busy. "My love of basketball motivates me to



TRAVEL TEAM: Freshmen Tatyana and Taliyah Wyche wait in the airport with their father, Bennett Wyche, on their way to a Georgia tournament. (Submitted/Taliyah Wyche)

maintain good grades so that I can continue to play on the team," she said.

They both enjoy the spirit and camaraderie of playing a team sport, and they both view team members as one big family with members supporting one another.

Taliyah and Tatyana both want to be professional basketball players. Tatyana believes she does all of the things a professional basketball player does to practice so she wants to take her career farther.

Taliyah and Tatyana both have advice for someone wanting to join the basketball team at American Heritage. "If you really want to play basketball then you should go for it," Taliyah said. "Keep trying. There is a different job for anyone on the basketball team," Tatyana added.

The Wyche sisters seem to be close on and off the basketball court, and they both hope to excel at basketball and help lead their team to victory.

Patriot through and through

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While most people think "serving your country" means going to war, senior Calvin Hart Jr. proved he could serve his country on the gridiron, rather than the battlefield. Hart, a true outside linebacker who can also play strong safety, was selected as one of the top 50 high school football players in the nation to play on the USA U-19 National Team against

Team Canada at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, TX Friday, Jan. 19.

Hart was offered his spot on the roster over a month before the game but decided only two weeks beforehand. "I wanted to play. The only thing I was worried about was maybe getting injured before college, but I didn't let that stop me," Hart said.

Hart helped Team USA blow out its northern neighbor 47-7 in the International Bowl IX. Hart

was impressive on defense for the red, white and blue finishing the day with three tackles and a sack.

Although skeptical about playing at first, Hart feels he made the right decision. "Playing in that game was a great experience, [and I] got a chance to meet a lot of elite athletes across the country chasing the same dream.

I'm extremely blessed and happy I was able to play in that game," Hart said.

Hart finished his Patriot career with three state title rings, 191 tackles, 10 sacks, and two forced fumbles, and will continue to pursue his football dream next fall at North Carolina State.



GAME FACE: Senior Calvin Hart Jr. marches onto the field with fellow United States National Team members. (Submitted/Calvin Hart)



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Sports

Wrestling to the top

Kenzo Kimura | Staff Writer
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Believed to have started during the 19th century in ancient Rome, wrestling has been considered by athletes and coaches all across the world to be one of the foundations to combat sports.

Wrestling involves grappling type techniques such as clinch fighting, throws and takedowns, joint locks, pins and other grappling holds between two (or more) sparring partners.

As simple as it sounds, not everyone is good at wrestling or uses the correct technique during sparring. However, for three wrestlers, wrestling is not merely a sport but their life outside of school. When the wrestling team started practice last December, students committed their afternoons to practicing every day from 3-5 p.m until the state tournament in March.

Junior Mohamad Adada

"Wrestling goes through the spring and then we have some practices during the post-season and summer. We've had about six tournaments thus far, the biggest of which was the Naples tournament.

"As the team captain, I strive to set a good example for the younger wrestlers on the team just like my elders did for me when I joined. I look up to Jordan Johnson, one of the most skilled wrestlers I have ever seen. He puts everything he has into every match and wins 90 percent of the time.

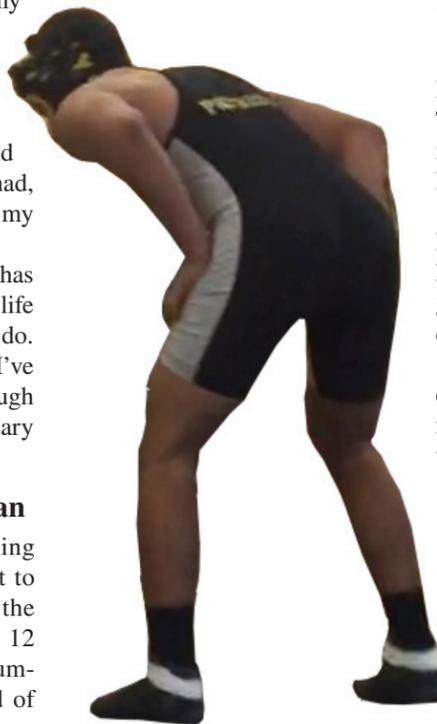
"In one phrase, I would describe the team as a group of people who never give up. We work hard every practice; we get injured; we lose and win but above all we haven't given up. My most

memorable win was during my first year. We were at Naples, and I had been losing all of my matches, but I told myself I would stop at nothing to win my next one. I went in and wrestled with everything I had, and to my surprise I pinned my opponent.

"Individually, wrestling has had the biggest impact on my life than any other single thing I do. The most important thing I've learned from wrestling (although cliché) is losing is necessary to improve."

Freshman Josh Hartman

"Although we [the wrestling team] are not where we want to be, we are getting better as the season progresses. I have 12 wins so far this year. That number should go up by the end of the season."



Sophomore Jennifer Eugene

"My coaches' are Matthew Burnett and Troy Yarborough. They inspired me to open my mind to new things given that I'm the only girl on the team.

"The most important thing I learned was that anything can happen during the match, regardless of how much you condition yourself the day before.

"Technique always overcomes strength; I learned that from personal experience after wrestling with multiple boys."

AT THE HART OF THE TEAM: Freshman Josh Hartman, though just making his wrestling debut, already won the district wrestling competition Feb. 14. (Photo submitted by Matthew Burnett)

Causing quite the racket

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As winter nears its end, tennis season approaches its beginning, and our boys' and girls' teams are ready to tackle it head on. The tennis team, comprised of the top 10 girls and the top ten boys for the varsity girls' and varsity boys' teams, has focused on the upcoming season for months.

Varsity members held extensive tryouts for two weeks in the

beginning of February in order to select new players. The team is more than prepared for the impending competition.

Team captain and senior Anya Gunewardena said, "Through intense tactical training, conditioning, and drilling on the tennis court, we, as a team, are the most ready we can be for the 2018 season."

The girls on the team are competitive tennis players outside of

school and because no offseason exists for tennis players, they have been preparing since the end of last year's season.

"Everyone on the team has always worked as hard as they can. We have only gained motivation and intensity as the season came closer and closer and I feel we have the best lineup possible for a successful season this year," Gunewardena said. Besides the competitive aspect of match prep-

aration, getting ready for the season has prompted team building as well. The seniors on the team take pride in aiding and mentoring the younger students.

"We are constantly talking to them, motivating them to become the best players they can be, helping them with their work whenever they need it on the bus rides to and from matches, and simply being supportive of one another," Gunewardena said.

The team members look forward to starting off the season right.

"I love the competition. Every single one of our players this year is more ready than ever to take on whatever and whoever comes in our way. We are the most prepared, cohesive, and energetic group I've seen in my three years at American Heritage and we will settle for nothing less than state champions," Gunewardena said.

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New construction displaces practices

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Due to the construction taking place between the 2000 and 3000 buildings, sports teams and coaches must adjust to necessary accommodations.

Because the school expects construction to take approximately two years, administrators have made modifications to ensure the best for each sports program.

The Athletic Office has worked diligently with head coaches to work on field schedules and prevent conflict. Most specifically, the construction affects sub-level basketball (teams below varsity). Since it has begun, this basketball team has and will continue to utilize the south tennis courts for practice.

Regarding baseball, the batting cages have been moved and rebuilt so they do not interfere with the construction. They will remain in this new area until the athletic complex is complete. Other sports teams practicing in the

vicinity only conflict during crossover seasons.

Fortunately, the construction will not affect the football field. "We are very lucky to have a turf field upfront as there is little down time for maintenance, and it does not need to be re-sodded," school Athletic Director, Mrs. Karen Stearns, said.

However, some teams must share a field or stagger practice times to make room for one another. Some teams have used Plantation Central Park, as it is a convenient and close location to the school.

"The city has been easy to work with on both scheduling and cost," Mrs. Stearns said. The soccer team has also used the Shooting Stars Indoor Soccer facility on occasion.

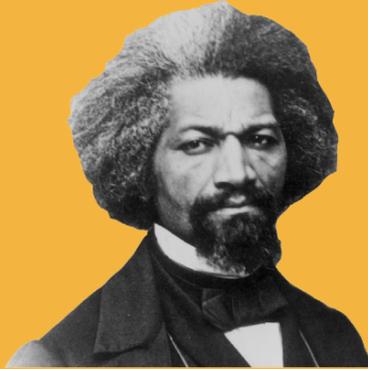
For now, the back field has become a half field to use for training and practices. Once construction is complete, the school hopes to install another artificial turf field on the back field.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Harriet Tubman

-Female American abolitionist, humanitarian and spy for the United States Army during the American Civil War.



Frederick Douglass

- African-American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, revolutionary writer and statesman.



Thurgood Marshall

-First African-American to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1954, he won the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, in which the Supreme Court ended racial segregation in public schools.



Jesse Owens

-Winner of four gold medals in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Jesse Owens embarrassed Adolf Hitler in the Olympic Games because Hitler claimed that whites were the superior "master" race, and Owens proved him wrong with his victories.



Rosa Parks

-Activist in the Civil Rights Movement whom the U.S. Congress called "the first lady of civil rights" and "the mother of the freedom movement." Parks refused to give up her seat in the segregated section of a public bus, spurring a Civil Rights Movement.



Martin Luther King Jr.

-American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 through 1968. His most famous speech was the "I Have a Dream" speech.

ENDING RACIAL INJUSTICE

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Junior Jordyn Allen, a staunch supporter of the campaign to end racial injustice, attests to the importance of Black History Month (BHM) but also believes it paints a poor picture of the state of race relations in the United States today.

To combat such injustice, Allen uses her involvement in speech and debate as a platform to spread awareness for underrepresented issues regarding race. She delivers speeches attempting to eliminate misconceptions surrounding the African-American community. In March specifically, she aims to promote voter participation among African Americans and minorities.

"I am a firm believer that equal representation of all demographics within positions in our legal system can cure racial tension," Allen said. Despite the way Black History Month highlights the long road to racial equality ahead, Allen believes it does successfully promote greater awareness of African-American history beyond the scope of slavery.

"I think Black History Month is important because it gives a month to reflect [on] black history. However, I don't think there should have to be a month because American history consists of black history that is forgotten in our classrooms across this nation. This country was built on the back of the slave, but there is more history to African-American than slavery."

-Jordyn Allen

ACTIVITIES FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

- Read the "I Have a Dream" speech and write your own about the change you hope to make in the world.
- Organize a month-long book club with all the works of famous black authors such as Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison and James Baldwin.
- Watch CNN's "Black in America 2", which shows the challenges African-Americans face on a daily basis.
- Watch the PBS series *Race: "The Power of an Illusion"* to help you better understand what racial profiling is.
- Look up videos on Step Afrika! To get more information about the history of step dancing.

Composed by: Alyssa Herzbrun and Carrie Kuecks