

TEENS **in** PRINT BOSTON

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BUILDBPS:

CAN WE PLAN FOR
THE FUTURE WITHOUT
HURTING THE PRESENT?

Volume XIX, No. 66

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TEENS *in* print

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*unites the city's teens to
create an outlet to inform,
communicate and provide **positive**
change through written expression.*

WRITE FOR US!

Teens in Print is Boston's only citywide newspaper written by and for high school students. Launched by WriteBoston and the Boston Globe in 2004, and published quarterly, TiP is a powerful platform for student journalists, essayists, poets and artists.

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Submit your original news articles, features, opinion, essays, poems, or editorial cartoons.

Send submissions, questions and feedback
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Please provide your full name, grade and school.
Teens in Print reserves the right to edit for length and content.
We look forward to your submissions!



SEE THIS AROUND INSIDE THE NEWSPAPER?

We are excited to recognize the winning pieces from our Rising Voice Awards, celebrating powerful teen voices across diverse genres of journalism.

WriteBoston

Building a Community of Writers



**JACOB
DOWNEY**

Bold of you to assume this isn't a simulation.

MEET THE STAFF

Every New Year, we celebrate that the Earth has managed to exist one year longer. Or has it? Our staff weigh in on when the world really ended.



**MARIELLA
MURILLO**

2012, when Whitney Houston died.



**MASHA
LEYFER**

2000. That's too many zeroes, suspicious.



**YASMIN
MOHAMED**

The world hasn't begun yet. We're still stuck in the prologue.



**AMEERAH
DADA**

I think the world really ended in 2012 because that's when things started to go downhill. The world hasn't been peaceful since; maybe this place we call Earth really is a simulation!



AMY AGUILAR

2014, when I experienced my first heartbreak.



**CRISTIAN
DUBON SOLIS**

The world ended when I was born. Boom.



**DAVID
SANTANA**

2010, because the 2000s glasses were ruined.



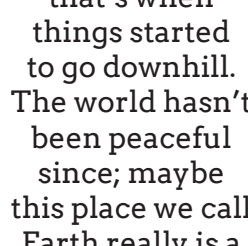
DRE SALOMON

January 20, 2017 at 12 pm, when Donald Trump was inaugurated.



**GABRIELLE
BOLDEN**

2015, the year I left the school I grew up in.



**GAVIN WEI
XUAN ZHANG**

If humanity does not destroy Earth, the world will end 10 billion years from now when the sun dies.



**ISABEL
RODRIGUES
RAO**

2012, when Whitney Houston died.



**MADDIE
COSGROVE**

When my relative passed away.



**SABRINA
YOHANNES**

2016, when my best friend moved.



NATEH PANYERE

2016. There was no WiFi in my house for 2 MONTHS.



**MIGUEL
ESTRADA**

2016, when I missed a soccer penalty that determined the champion team of the soccer tournament.



SAJIDA RAHMAN

2016, when Trump was elected.



**TIFFANY
CESPEDES**

2015, because that's the year "Phineas and Ferb" ended.



**MALIA
MCCLERKLIN**

2018, when Toys R Us closed.



WHAT THE FUTURE OF OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM MEANS FOR US NOW

By: Mariella Murillo // Opinions Editor

Located across the street from Fenway Park, Boston Arts Academy is the city's only public arts high school. Founded in 1998, the school harbors about 450 students, myself included, all brought together by a love for the arts. The building, formerly a warehouse, has gone through a lot over the decades. While it wasn't falling apart, it was remarkably bland. Most spaces felt cramped, and there wasn't even an auditorium—just a small black box that only fit 100 people.

In December 2017, our school was finally okayed for some serious renovations under Mayor Marty Walsh's BuildBPS plan. While this meant we would have to move all the way to Dorchester and share the building with the Community Academy of Science and Health for three years, the end result would give future BAA students the creatively fulfilling space they deserve. However, while we were complaining about our temporary move, other BPS students were losing not only their buildings, but their entire school communities.

BuildBPS is a plan to renovate, merge and build new schools over the next decade. "BuildBPS is an opportunity to invest in school buildings that will deliver high-quality learning environments for our students for generations to come," said Walsh in a press release. "In order to achieve our goals, we need to think big and work together to build a bright future for our schools." According to the BuildBPS Phase II Report, the goals of the initiative are to "expand access to quality learning environments for more students, locate new or expand buildings in neighborhoods with high student need and low current access, create more equitable program placement and learning opportunities for vulnerable students, and reduce pre-K-12 transitions by creating clear pathways."

BAA has been positively affected by BuildBPS, with renovations underway 20 years after the doors first opened. The project budget is \$125 million—only a tiny fraction of the \$1 billion going into BuildBPS overall.

However, the McCormack Middle School, which is also part of this initiative, is getting the short end of the stick. The Dorchester school, along with Urban Science Academy and West Roxbury Academy, is being affected in the worst way—the school, as well as the community, is being destroyed in order to phase out middle schools. The current BuildBPS plan neglects these communities, and places the best interest of future students far above those of current students.

The original plan stated that McCormack will close in 2020 and its students will become part of Excel High School, a lower-performing school. Traditionally in a school merge like this, the entire staff and students would move to Excel and become a new community. However, that is not what is happening with McCormack.

“It’s more like dismantle and then send the kids to Excel on their own,” said Neema Avashia, a teacher at the McCormack who has spent months advocating for the community. “What upsets me about it is that it’s not necessary. They’re going to need seventh and eighth grade teachers when they go to Excel, so why would we, as a city, enact additional harm on kids? It’s already going to be hard enough for kids to change schools... there’s no reason to separate the adults and the kids.”

Rob Consalvo, BPS’s Chief of Staff, talked about the plan and how our voices are being heard. “We are extremely sympathetic to the aspect of closing schools and recognize how difficult that is,” he said. According to Consalvo, BPS is listening to both students and teachers, considering the ideas they are putting forth and using that feedback to devise the final plan.

One of the biggest motivators for the BuildBPS plan is making fewer transitions for students—which involves getting rid of middle schools. According to Consalvo, in 2009, there were a total of 16 middle schools in Boston. Currently, there are only six. This dissolution of middle schools is already happening naturally, and the McCormack is part of that demographic. “We believe that it’s in the best interest of the entire district to give parents that sense of

continuity, to move away from middle schools and into that shorter structure,” explained Consalvo.

Yet, while it makes perfect sense to lessen the transitions from school to school, there is no clear explanation as to why the McCormack can’t travel as a community.

“Closing a school, taking kids out of their community—it hurts,” said Avashia. “The number of our kids who—if you watch our school committee testimony—they’re like, ‘The McCormack is my home.’ When you take someone’s home away, that’s traumatizing.”

Even though Avashia, and many others, are possibly losing their jobs, that’s not their main concern. They are looking out for their students—something they feel the BuildBPS plan isn’t doing.

“That is completely outrageous and irritates me,” said TaNeja Williams, a student at BAA and a McCormack graduate. “My question is, why can’t the McCormack be treated the same way and be given the opportunity to have a swing space, thus keeping the community intact, as the Boston Arts Academy was granted?”

BuildBPS is for the future. It isn’t for the students of right now—it is for the wealthier class taking over urban areas where working class and minority

families live, and their future kids. “It’s getting more and more expensive for my kids and their families to live in the city,” Avashia said. “So when you are reading them a letter in school that says ‘Oh, we’re going to make your building really nice, but it’s not for you’—kids experience that as being evicted, the same way you get evicted from a house.”

Recently, interim BPS superintendent Laura Perille stated that in response to the backlash from the McCormack community, the plan may shift—leaders are considering a model in which teachers will help select a partner high school and create a new 7-12 school to move into the building on the McCormack site after renovations. However, even if this plan is ultimately accepted, Avashia believes the fight is far from over.

“What’s happening to my kids now is going to happen five more times,” Avashia says. “And there are going to be ripple effects.”





FEAR NOT, FIRST-GENS!

CRISTIAN DUBON SOLIS'S ADVICE FOR FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

By: Cristian Dubon Solis // Staff Writer

People who say that the hardest part about college is getting in could not be telling a bigger truth, especially when you don't even know where to start. My name is Cristian Dubon Solis and I'm a junior in high school getting ready to apply to college.

The college experience is full of adventure, craziness and laughter as I've

read from countless articles on the web. However, some people—like myself—may not know how to get into college. I will soon be a first generation college student, which means I've never had a sibling or relative attend college before me.

One cold winter night during my freshman year, I startlingly awoke and

couldn't get college out of my mind. There were so many questions rushing through my head that I felt dizzy. What is college? Where do I go to for help? What's financial aid and how do I get it? I was a total mess. Now that I'm in my junior year, I have the tools to answer some of the most pressing questions about college my fellow first-gens may have.

DEAR CRISTIAN,

College looks so confusing. How am I supposed to know how to get there when I don't even know where to begin? I tried reading articles online, but every website I checked started in a different place. I'm worried that if I can't figure this out, I may have trouble later down the road. I'm lost, confused and frustrated that I can't figure this out. It would be a big help if you could give me some direction.

Yours truly,

JESSIE FROM JERSEY

HEY JESSIE,

The confusion, frustration and bewilderment are all a part of the process for first generation college students. As to where you should start, there are many places where you can lay your groundwork. A good place to start, no matter where you are in the college process, is to write a broad personal statement. Most colleges ask that you submit a personal statement answering a particular prompt. By writing a broad personal statement, you can later modify the statement to suit the requirements of different colleges. I would start this process by drawing a web about yourself. Draw a circle, put yourself in the middle, and start brainstorming ideas about the different aspects of your life. Make sure to put specific experiences next to your branches with extra details to better describe why you are who you are today. This personal statement is all about you, so you call the shots!

If this isn't something you're interested in doing at the moment, I would start taking a deeper look at the schools you may be interested in. There's a website and app called the Common App which gives you tons of information on various schools and the different courses and activities they offer. It is an amazing resource to look up and contrast and compare different colleges and universities. I would make sure to research one or two colleges every week so that you're knowledgeable on all the options out there.

If these starting points aren't your cup of tea, I recommend going to a guidance counselor to see what recommendations they may have. Hope this helps!

Til next time,

CDS

HIYA CRISTIAN,

Fellow first generation college student in dire need of your help! So, I vaguely know the application process—filling out applications, updating my resume, applying for financial aid—but who do I go to for support? I don't really know who to go to other than my guidance counselors. Is that it? I want know who you would go to for help when you need it.

Your good friend,

BECKY FROM BOSTON

HEY BECKY,

I had the exact question when I first started thinking about college! It's true that your guidance counselors are a key part to the college process. They help you keep track of applications, financial aid applications, due dates, college visits, etc. However, this is not to say this is your only source of support. There are plenty of programs in Boston that help with college readiness including Bottom Line, Minds Matter, Summer Search and so on.

I, for example, am a mentee at Minds Matter Boston and the help I have received is so valuable. They've taught me to be a go-getter, brag a little, keep up with due dates, and so much more. I know the help I receive from them is priceless, so I would highly recommend Minds Matter or a similar program. It's all up to you.

Other than counselors or programs, there are still some support systems which you may not see. Ask people who have attended college as first-gens, ask friends if they have relatives who attend college, or ask your teacher what it was like to go to college. All these resources are at your disposal—you just have to make use of them!

Best,

CDS

Applying to colleges seems like a bigger climb than Mount Everest! It's no wonder that first generation college students don't have a clue where to start, who to go to for help, or the opportunities available. I hope I answered some of your questions to help your journey up the mountain a little more bearable. Til next time, fellow first-gens!



YOU HAVE THE POWER TO IMPROVE YOUR SCHOOL!

Thank you to all the BPS Secondary Schools that identified their BSAC representatives and all the BSAC Members that dedicated countless hours engaging in meaningful discussions with BPS and City officials on decisions that impact their educational experience.

Thank you to the following Schools with Active BSAC Representatives in SY17-18.

- BCLA
- BLA
- BLS
- East Boston High
- EMK
- John D. O'Bryant
- Madison Park
- Mary Lyon Pilot School
- New Mission High
- Quincy Upper
- Snowden International
- Tech Boston Academy
- Urban Science Academy
- West Roxbury Academy

Are you interested in making a difference in BPS? BSAC is seeking high school students this fall to support student voice and civic engagement and work on important campaigns including school safety, student rights, environmental impacts and sustainability.

The 1st BSAC of the year:
Monday, January 7, 4-6pm
2300 Washington Street,
Roxbury, Ma 02119 2nd floor

For more information, you can email Maria Ortiz, BSAC Student Engagement Manager at mortiz@bostonpublicschools.org or, Abraham Osorio, BSAC Student Engagement Coordinator at aosorio2@bostonpublicschools.org

BSAC FIGHTS FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY IN SCHOOLS

By: Shailany Ortega // Contributing Writer

Do you know how to open a bank account? Do you want a credit card but are not sure how to get one? Does thinking about college loans scare you? These financial issues can be complicated and are usually not taught in school, but the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) thinks students should have access to this type of information.

On Nov. 29, 2018, BSAC visited the Massachusetts State House to present our proposals to the legislators who represent Boston. BSAC performs a “legislative drop” twice a year to make sure our representatives and senators know what their constituents need and to make sure our voices are heard. Something that we see through history, and that still rings true today, is that young people often do not realize how much change they can make by speaking up and standing together.

Through the Youth Empowered Learning subcommittee, BSAC is fighting for a better learning environment for students, including key classes like financial literacy to prepare us for the future. Financial literacy lessons would be available to students in grades K-12 and each lesson plan would be tailored to those different age groups. It is the job of public education to prepare all students for the real world and we’d be silly to think our futures don’t include things like paying taxes, taking out student loans, or learning how to create budgets for ourselves. We need these tools and understandings to be responsible young adults, for choosing what college we go to, joining the workforce and generally looking out for ourselves.

Not only is it beneficial for us to gain financial literacy, but it’s necessary for the survival of our country. If the next generation of

decision makers and leaders doesn’t understand the value of a dollar or how to handle money, how will society function? We shared these concerns when we visited the State House and we urged legislators to consider supporting this initiative, for which we received great support and feedback. We have real hope that this important potential legislation could pass in the next legislative session, impacting students all over the state and improving the future of Massachusetts education.

We spend so much time feeling like the government is against us rather than supporting us. This makes young people scared to speak up about what’s on our minds and frequently makes us not even want to try. But, it is so important for us, the generation who will inherit this planet, to fight for what we believe in, and here at BSAC we fight together.

ABOUT BSAC

BSAC is a group of students representing their respective high schools and serving as a voice for the students of BPS. Here at BSAC, we share our ideas and discuss changes we want to see within our schools and within the school district as a whole. Our young, intelligent individuals frequently break off into smaller subcommittees based on interest and around issues they believe need change. Those subcommittees are Environmental Justice and Sustainability, Student Rights, and Youth Empowered Learning.

Ready for your

Next Chapter?

Next Chapter is Teens in Print's college and career readiness program designed to take you from the start of your application process to the finish line! Complete with individual essay editing sessions and group college readiness workshops, we are dedicated to helping you create an application encompassing your unique skill set as a student and individual.

All Boston resident teens will be eligible for:

- Individual support brainstorming/editing personal, supplemental, and scholarship essays
- Free college tours of Boston area schools
- College readiness workshops on building your resume, writing professional emails, and more

Interested? Email
sarahrobbins@writeboston.org.



The following is a college essay produced through a partnership between Boston International Newcomers Academy and the Next Chapter program.

PITI PITI, WAZO FE NICH LI

By: Mickelsen Legerme

Work is important for me because it makes me feel independent. I have had many jobs and now I am ready to work on my career.

My first job was at a hardware store in Carrefour, a city in West Haiti. I lifted, pulled, loaded and unloaded iron, wood, 94 lb bags of cement, and shovels. I was only 17 years old and the physical stuff was arduous, and the pay was not good. I didn't want to do the work but I had to. I had to do it because I needed to pay for my education and food.

My friends in the neighborhood quit high school to get full time jobs. They tried to make me drop out of school. They showed me their cell phones, watches, shoes and other expensive items they were able to buy. I was tempted to drop out, but my mother made sure I stayed in school to accomplish my education. Like my mom always says, piti piti wazo fe nich li. "Little by little bird makes its nest." She also said education is the key to making sure you get a good job. I followed what she said and I stayed in school. My mom is a quiet person, but when she's angry, she keeps talking and talking until you get it done.

I decided to quit the hardware store job and become a DJ because I love music and I could make more money that way. I also had more time for studying. I set up a playlist on my computer, went to a school hall, plugged the speakers into the equipment and started playing the music. The crowd started dancing. I really liked my second job because I met new people, and I was always in conversation with them. Being a DJ also kept me on track with my school, because I learned a lot about music, and often wrote about it for projects. My mother did not like my second job but she did not object strongly because it was at night.

I came to Boston in April 2016 with my dad and my little brother. My mother stayed in Haiti. My mother thought the United States was the best opportunity for me to have a career. She said I would come back to Haiti to visit her. I started school at Boston International Newcomers Academy. It was really uncomfortable for me: no friends, no English. I missed everything: my mom, home, friends and healthy food. My mother kept telling me to go to school.

One of the most important days for me at BINcA is Career Day. Doctors, engineers, lawyers, and police come to speak to students about their work. I was most impressed by the police officers. The officers said police always respond quickly when someone calls them. I know this is true because when my grandmother was sick I called the police and they came in four minutes. In my home country the police are not quick. My mother agreed that law enforcement would be a good career for me because I am patient, helpful, diligent, courteous and I also dreamed about the law enforcement. I also speak French, Spanish and Creole, and want to help my community using my skills. I want to serve people the same way the police officers helped my grandmother. My mother would be proud and delighted.



It's 5:30 pm. Your school day has officially ended and you are walking to the bus station. You take out your phone to call your parents, but before you get a chance to dial their number, you see someone blocking you. They are wearing a jacket with the letters ICE in big white font and they are looking for you. This is the moment you realize you are an undocumented immigrant.

Immigration is a serious problem in this country because the current administration is not handling the immigration crisis appropriately. One side of the immigration problem that a lot of people are talking about is how inhumane ICE and border patrol treat undocumented minors once they are in custody. According to a 60 Minutes investigation, about 5,000 children have been separated from their families since the beginning of Trump's administration. CNN has reported that minors who are held in immigration detention centers are held in windowless enclosures that can be compared to dog kennels. They have to use unsanitary

bathrooms and some are placed in solitary confinement. Pretty much, these children are living in jails while being separated from their parents.

What is most concerning to me are the toddlers being held in these facilities. Young children who are separated from their parents experience a wave of emotions and don't know how to deal with it. It is hard enough for adults to process their emotions, so imagine how a young kid might feel if they don't have any familiar people to guide them through this trauma.

President Trump argues that he and former president Barack Obama had the same separation policy, but he's just doing it differently from Obama. However, the difference between the two policies is that Trump is immediately prosecuting anyone who crosses the border illegally, whether they come with a child or not, while Obama didn't enforce the law as heavily. This ultimately has caused thousands of children to be separated from their parents. The Trump administration has been falsely

stating that it is the law to separate families when they are caught crossing the border illegally. According to the Washington Post, there is no official law that states families should be separated when they are detained at the border. We need to do something about the way the Trump administration is handling family separation. No child should be in a cage waiting to be set free or sent back to their country which could be filled with danger or poverty which they were trying to escape in the first place.

No president should allow children to be taken away from their parents. This is really damaging the image of the U.S. Trump swears he is a better president than Barack Obama, but at the rate he's going, he might be remembered as something much different. These kinds of decisions make people really mad, and it's not only because of the family separation, but because more and more people are getting killed or hurt because of Trump's policies. I'm tired of seeing kids in pain and I know I'm not the only one.

CASH FLOW

WOMEN EMPTY THEIR POCKETS FOR THEIR PERIODS

By: Sajida Rahman // Staff Writer

I walked quickly to the nurse's office—it was that time of the month again. When I got there, I told her I needed two pads to get me through the school day.

"The first one will be free, but the second you will have to pay for," said the nurse.

"What do you mean I have to pay 50 cents for another pad?" I responded.

As outraged as I was at the school nurse, it wasn't a surprise I had to pay extra for the second pad. For centuries now, women have had to deal with the burden of periods. One week of the month is always dedicated to that, and in that one week, they go through about one box of tampons, costing

about \$7 on average.

That doesn't seem like a lot, right? Wrong.

The money spent for a box of tampons adds up every month. Women pay around \$1,773 per year on tampons alone, according to the Huffington Post. Women shouldn't have to pay for something they have no control over, which is why pads and tampons should be free of charge everywhere. It's a necessity which makes it more justifiable in why it should be free.

"Tampons and pads should be treated just like toilet paper. They serve the same purpose—items to tend to our everyday, normal bodily functions," Nancy Kramer said in the Huffington Post.

If pads and tampons were treated like toilet paper, this problem wouldn't

have arisen at all. But, because we live in a sexist world, women and girls unfortunately have to pay for something they can't control.

"It's unfair for girls to pay for a necessity," said Angie Mejia, a UCLA student. "Most of us can't even afford it." That money could be used for other reasons, but it has to go towards their menstrual cycle.

Some women argue tampons and pads are a "luxury." Gina Davis wrote in the Odyssey Online that the government has the right to keep a price on them because "money doesn't grow on trees."

Periods should be normalized and seen as a regular bodily function. They are something a woman can't control, and we should have access to pads and tampons for free anytime, anywhere.



REFLECTIONS ON THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

By: Gabrielle Bolden // Staff Writer

African-American lives have just as much value as anyone else's does. African-American lives have just as much value as anyone else's does.

Before I actually understood what the world around me was really like, I was just living my daily life, doing the things that I always do. I woke up, went to school, came home, and did my homework. That was my normal, daily routine. I thought the world was just fine. I never saw anything really happening outside and I never watched the news, so I assumed that everything and everyone was doing okay.

In the past, I wasn't willing to watch the news because I thought the whole news system in general was nosy and was always looking for a story. I didn't realize that the media was saving lives by drawing attention to injustice. One

day, I had nothing to do, so I decided to focus my attention on whatever my grandparents thought was interesting on TV. They turned on the news, and I saw something that sparked my train of thought. Innocent black lives were being taken by white police officers. That day, my whole world changed.

As I consistently saw similar situations like this happening, I felt incomplete because I felt as if I could have spoken out or I could have done something to help prevent things like this from happening. The youth's voice is strong, but I kept my voice to myself instead of using it as a weapon against inequality. As a young African-American girl, I should have been more aware of what was going on. I should have cared more about this topic instead of just wandering around like everything was

fine, ignoring the fact that people like me were being innocently slaughtered by people that are "higher in power." But I thought, who was going to listen to me? I'm a young girl and no one is going to care about my opinions because I do not have that much power.

Now as I search police brutality against people of color, I see a bunch of news articles and videos about it. I now realize that I've been ignorant to the fact that African-Americans such as myself need guidance, strength and support in such crucial situations. I felt as if I've been misled by my society, just thinking that everything was fine because of all the cheery, upbeat videos I watched on YouTube. The world is like a person that pretends they're happy in front of others, but is deeply hurting inside.



JOHNNY SILVERCLOUD [CC BY-SA 2.0], VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

THE FACTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

By: Miguel Estrada // Staff Writer



Everyone knows what a hot day feels like: air conditioner on blast, eating cold ice cream, going to school feeling dehydrated. On a day like this, I learned about the effects of global warming, greenhouse gasses and other boring stuff that didn't make sense to me at the time.

Many say that global warming is a boring, irrelevant topic. Others think we should take care of it immediately. But, it's amazing how some people think it is totally "fake news." No matter what your opinion is, you've probably heard the term thousands of times before, but have you ever asked yourself why should you care?

Global warming occurs when harmful gases that form from fossil fuels don't allow heat to escape the atmosphere, explains Jay Etsy, a Green Ambassador program manager at Thompson Island. "It's so bad that it has come to a point where we cannot return to the state we were in forty years ago," he said.

The effects of climate change have been on the rise over the last couple of decades. In Massachusetts, we can already see changes. According to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental

Affairs, "from 1921 to 2006, relative sea level has risen 2.6 millimeters annually, an increase of approximately 26 centimeters per century." Rising sea levels can increase flooding during storms. Low elevation areas are the most affected by these floods and could be permanently flooded. Shorelines around beaches become smaller and possibly eroded.

In Boston, the threat of flooding is important because many of our parks and green spaces are close to water. In a survey of Boston residents by the Trustees of Reservations, some 85 percent of respondents agreed that the Boston waterfront is vulnerable to climate change's effects, with 42 percent agreeing that it is very vulnerable to flooding and erosion. Over half of respondents said they visit parks around Boston multiple times a week, and 60 percent said that visiting parks leaves a positive impact on their lives and families. This shows that many residents of Boston enjoy the parks and losing them could impact their lives negatively.

But it's not just rising sea levels we are seeing, there's been crazy weather

happening all over the world. According to the Climate Reality Project, the Philippines has had ten deadly typhoons since 1947. Over a thousand people died in 7 out of 10 of these typhoons. The Climate Reality Project also interviewed a 14-year-old Inuk boy from Canada who told them the polar bears looked very skinny. He also noticed that the permafrost had been melting and saw fewer caribou each year.

Imagine living in a world without conflict about global warming. It is really hard for me to do because I have never experienced that before. Christmas starts to disobey the snowy day laws here in Boston when the atmosphere becomes warmer every time. And summer keeps giving its hot and dry best. People with power seem to forget about all these problems. It seems that we ignore facts because it hasn't affected us yet, so we do not need to worry. The human race has made many mistakes, like exposing chemicals in the air that harm the ecosystem, and now is the time to address them. We could make a better tomorrow if we sacrifice a little time now to create a healthier world.



THE DAMAGE OF DIVORCE

By: Tiffany Cespedes // Staff Writer

I was the type of child who believed in fairytales and finding true love, so the process of my parents' separation was like a wound to the heart. I was hurt, but I didn't express this to anyone. I never cried about it. I never talked about it. I tried to convince myself that it was a good thing—finally, something interesting happens to this family.

As I grew up without my mother in the house I became isolated from my family. I began to see the struggles of being the child of a divorced couple. Soon my bottled up feelings were beginning to settle in my mind. I have had days when I've cried and I didn't know the reason why, but for the broken family I have. I can't think about having a future marriage without thinking of my family's history of broken relationships. This divorce is like a shadow I don't want, it follows me and at the same time it is me.

As it turns out, it's normal for teenagers to feel this way. Many kids today can relate to the struggles of having separated parents. The American Psychological Association states "About 40 to 50 percent of married couples in the United States divorce. The divorce rate for subsequent marriages is even higher." With divorce hidden in about one out of two families, one would expect to see more media coverage of it or counselling in schools. If the population of today continues to overlook the consequences many children suffer from the effects of divorce, they are leading them like lambs to the slaughter.

One of the common effects of divorce is sadness in general. Mood swings and behavior changes don't sound too horrific, but divorce can leave children in a depressive state for as long as years. It is already tough enough for children to learn that the two people who are supposed to be their loving protectors are breaking apart,

but they also have to accustom themselves to seeing less of one of their protectors.

Tahnyi Brown is a student who attends Fenway High School. She is currently 14 years old and was 8 when her parents divorced. "I would sit with myself and think about how I would have turned out if my mom and dad were still together," she said. "I probably would have been more enthusiastic." Divorce can be something that haunts a child for long periods of time and ignoring this may lead to stronger depressive feelings.

Anxiety and stress is also another outcome of divorce. Divorce is infamous for its messy and complicated nature, and it definitely isn't easy for the kids. When parents argue, it is often the child that is left in the middle to decide which parent to live with or whose side to take in an argument. This puts a great deal of unnecessary stress on them at a young age. Kids may also feel stressed for their parents who are now trying to adapt to being a single parent.

Yeilanise Noriega is a 14-year-old student who also attends Fenway High School. Her parents divorced when she was only 3 years old. I asked her if she felt like her parents' divorce was a burden.

"Yes, because it means that I'm in the middle," Noriega said. "I can't even see them both at the same time cause one of them lives in Puerto Rico...Every day I would just wake up knowing that I only have my mom to rely on and my mom has to deal with all this pressure, so it is definitely a burden."

Divorce is not simply a thing that affects the couple, but also a child's everyday life, whether it's moving from one parent's house to the other or being left in the middle. Everyone knows that divorce can be difficult, but when kids grow up without knowing about this additional stress, it puts a strain on them.

Finally, one of the most concerning effects of divorce is the lack of healthy relationship examples or models. When children do not develop a general idea of what a healthy relationship is, it takes a toll in their own relationships.

Josefa Tavarez is currently 43 with three children. Her parents separated when she was 3 years old, and she herself divorced when she was 41. Tavarez is a walking example of the cycle of divorce.

"It's like a heritage of divorces in our family," Tavarez said. "I didn't grow up with a father. A father figure is important to daughters because the girls look for an image that is similar to their fathers."

Without a father figure, girls may get into toxic relationships because they were never shown how a woman should be treated. Fear also plays a role in the cycle. "Before I got married, I was afraid to be in love," Tavarez said.

There is a saying that goes "Do not fall in love, step on to it with steady feet." Divorce has given many unsteady feet when it comes to relationships. Without a healthy idea of how to interact with loved ones, divorce can affect everything from friendships to dating in high school.

However, I refuse to let this chain carry on and you can too. I know who I am, although I am still learning and growing. I cope with the burdens of divorce by writing in journals, asking questions and learning all I can about my parents' marriage and what went wrong, connecting with other students who are going through the same situation as me, and learning from the good relationship examples around me. I know that I have control over my future and I choose to be the one who breaks free from the burden of my past—and every child who has faced the dreadful effects of divorce can do the same.





DIGITAL EYE STRAIN CAN HAPPEN IN A BLINK

By: Sabrina Yohannes //
Staff Writer

Every day, teens check their phones for social media, use their laptops and desktops for work, and watch Netflix for entertainment. Children watch TV and play on tablets. However, staring at screens all day can lead to digital eye strain. Even if you do not know what that means, I bet you've experienced it.

Digital eye strain is the physical discomfort that you feel when you look at TVs, phones, tablets, computers, or other screens for more than two hours at a time, according to Lenscrafters. If you use electronics for more than two hours at a time, you probably have experienced digital eye strain at some point. It can cause many symptoms such as sore, tired, burning or itching eyes, watery or dry eyes, blurred or double vision, headaches, increased sensitivity to light, difficulty concentrating, or feeling that you cannot keep your eyes open. While researchers are still studying digital eye strain, many think it can potentially cause permanent damage and ruin your eyesight.

Some researchers believe that digital eye strain can also lead to you needing glasses, which can cost up to hundreds of dollars. Every hour you spend on your phone could result in worse eyesight and more money gone.

However, most people don't even know they have digital eye strain, and many who do don't think it's a big deal.

"I normally keep my screen at low brightness so I don't have that problem," Ciara Warner, a 7th grade student at John D. O'Bryant, said.

"I know students use the internet, but I don't know if it's a problem or not," said Ms. Yara Cardoso-Barbosa, a teacher at O'Bryant. "As a parent, I want to be able to limit the average time people use technology so nothing bad happens."

The hard question is, why do people use technology even though they probably know it'll be bad for their eyes? The truth is, the internet is so connected to our lives that we have no choice but to use it.

"YouTube is the most interesting thing

about the internet because it is a very wide video sharing platform that has a wide variety of videos to choose from and watch," said a student at O'Bryant. "And technology is good because a lot of people use it for school. The internet makes learning a lot easier."

If you feel like you're suffering from digital eye strain, here are some tips. Lower the brightness on any screens you use. When your phone or laptop has low battery, don't charge it to encourage yourself to use it less. Blink your eyes often. Consider getting computer glasses from a company like Foster Grant or Felix Grey so screens will be less painful to you. And follow the 20/20/20 rule, take a 20 second break from your screen every 20 minutes and look at something 20 feet away.

"I see students using phones every day," an O'Bryant nurse, Debbie Kerr, said. "Technology's all over the place."

It is, and if you think you have digital eye strain, be sure to get your eyes checked.

MONEY ON MY MIND

A FINANCE EXPERT'S BUDGETING TIPS FOR TEENS

By: Maddie Cosgrove // Staff Writer

Once, when Boston resident Jeff Paddock was a teenager, he saved up all of his money. He had about \$250. He was saving to buy a leather jacket that he liked. About two weeks after buying his jacket, his friends got tickets to a concert. He wanted to go so badly that he asked his mom for money to buy a ticket, but she said no and his next paycheck didn't come for another few weeks. Paddock learned a lesson from this whole experience.

Now, Paddock is the financial empowerment coordinator at Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion, a nonprofit organization located in the South End. Here are his tips on how teens can better manage and budget their money.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE MONEY SET ASIDE FOR EMERGENCIES.

You never know what's going to happen—if you lose your bus pass, need to buy necessities, or realize you forgot to buy something for school at the last minute, you want to make sure you have money to cover it. “It is important to spend less than you make,” Paddock said. If you have leftover cash, try putting it in a special pocket in your wallet or a different place to make sure you don't spend it and have it nearby in case of an emergency.

A GOOD WAY TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE A BUDGET IS TO DRAW IT OUT ON A PIECE OF PAPER, SO YOU CAN SEE HOW MUCH YOU HAVE AND HOW MUCH YOU SPEND.

If you realize you spend too much money, here is a good way to make sure you can manage your money! First, make sure you have paper and three different colored markers. I suggest using red, green and black markers. Use the red to draw how much you are spending. Use the green for how much you have. Use black to draw what you want to buy. With this you can see how much you spend. Make sure you always have money left over.

DON'T LET TECHNOLOGY FOOL YOU.

If you click “buy” too many times on a website, you might buy your item more than once.

Lots of teens have access to Amazon and other online shopping sites. If you want to purchase

something and you click “buy” three times, you might end up buying that item three times and spending three times the money. When you click “buy” once, wait for it to say that you bought the item instead of clicking buy again. Technology requires patience.

SPEND LESS THAN YOU MAKE.

This is important. You always want to keep this in mind while you're shopping or trying to budget. It is always good to spend less than you make because when you get a job, you will get paychecks, and if you have money left over, you can add that onto your budget from your next paycheck. Or, if you have an allowance, you can add on to your extra money with your allowance.



DEGREE...OR DEBT-FREE?

By: David Santana // Staff Writer



My father never went to college. My mother works in a field unrelated to what she studied in college. Yet, almost every day of my life, I feel influenced by everybody around me to go to college. In this modern society I do not believe it's necessary to go into debt for a college degree because there are other viable options that can lead to success.

The stereotype that one is a failure if they do not go to college pushes many Americans to feel as if their only option is to go to college after high school. This feeling has led to a record-breaking \$1.5 trillion of collective student loan debt in 2018, according to Federal Reserve data. The current cost of a college education is \$63,973 more than it was 32 years ago, which is an increase of 161 percent, according to Market Watch.

Emily Stainer, the

Chief Academic Officer at Match High School, graduated from college years ago, but the debt still follows her. "It worries me. It really does. Even my husband is still in debt," Stainer said.

Stainer believes getting a college degree should be a backup plan and not a gateway to getting a job. "Imagine you lose your main job. If you had a college degree, you would surely be able to get another job," she said. This point of view is a very valid one as, according to a study by The Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 27 percent of college grads have a job related to their major.

Companies like Google and Apple no longer require a degree for many positions, according to the Consumer News and Business Channel. The absurd amount of debt people may obtain just to

ensure they're not poor, it's far too much.

Alikhan Fabrice, a local student, dreams of attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is not concerned about the debt he might get into. "Well, to be frank, I don't really care. All I know is that I'm going to get into MIT and get a good job," said Fabrice. It is viewpoints like this that have caused staggering student loan debt in the U.S.

Saving for college while in high school is a difficult task. How is a student going to get a high paying job, save all the money for college and balance their academics? It is almost impossible to do this. Some teens are in better financial positions than others. For the teens in worse financial situations, there should be more scholarships and grants awarded than loans.

Canada, for example, offers college for free, and I think this is something America should offer as well. Many countries, in fact, offer college for free. Countries are able to offer college for free because the colleges are funded publicly by taxes. I personally wouldn't mind a costlier tax. What's a couple of extra dollars for free college?

Many teenage students like Johandy Ozuna agree. "If there are free colleges in Canada, in my opinion, I think there should be free colleges in America," said Ozuna. He wouldn't mind a higher tax for free college instead of wasting tax money on things like the death penalty.

If America really raised their taxes to support free colleges, many people would support it as the new generation's lives would benefit from this.

THE UNLIKELY TEAM BEHIND “THE PRESIDENT IS MISSING” PENNED A SOLID THRILLER

By: Mariella Murillo // Opinions Editor

The first time I saw “The President is Missing,” I was at the airport buying a pair of headphones for a three hour flight. My initial thought was, “How does this book even exist?” I had read half of a James Patterson book, and I knew Bill Clinton was the 42nd president of the United States of America—and that he did, in fact, have sexual relations with that woman—but how did these two end up writing a novel together?

There was something I found utterly hysterical about the existence of this book.

“The President is Missing” takes place over three days, focusing on the president—a man named Jonathan Duncan—who is in the middle of trying to save his presidency, the U.S. and the world. He must challenge the ones trying to take him down and protect one of the people trying to cause the most amount of harm to his country.

Patterson has been writing longer than I’ve been alive and it’s clear why people enjoy his work. It’s readable, paints tangible images in your mind and keeps you interested. The very first page grabs your attention with a metaphor

comparing sharks to politicians grilling a man he deems right for his people in front of the entire world. The plot has many layers and bounces between perspectives, which moves things along nicely. Some of the best parts are when Duncan faces difficult decisions and we have to go through his process of making a choice with him and his staff.

Even though the book is clearly a political thriller, I didn’t know what to expect going into the novel. Was it going to be some secret way for Clinton to let out frustrations of his presidency? Was there going to be subtle commentary on the political climate of today, in a post-’bama world? Or, is the novel just a fun, dramatic tale with no real hidden bias (though, I think we all can guess that wouldn’t happen)?

One thing that is clear is that this isn’t Bill Clinton’s personal diary. Yes, we do see the difficulties of being in charge of millions of people’s lives, but in nothing less than the most dramatic sense. It’s clear that Clinton and Patterson don’t want us to think about Clinton when we read through the eyes of Jon Duncan, but we can’t help but hear Clinton’s voice when the book

goes into its not-so-subtle social and political commentary. Stuff like, “What happened to factual, down-the-middle reporting?” (which I try not to be too hurt by) and “We’re using modern technology to revert to primitive kinds of human relations.” If Clinton’s name wasn’t smack at the top of the book jacket (and his signature engraved underneath it), it wouldn’t feel like as much of a statement. Putting aside the questionable amount that he was actually involved in the writing process (it was ghost written by David Ellis), I certainly believe that he was involved with this book more than people might give him credit for.

Overall, “The President is Missing” was a delightful surprise. It’s not marketed towards teens, so maybe you aren’t drawn to it unless you’re a total nerd like myself. Sometimes the political terms can be a little confusing if you’re unfamiliar, but this was enjoyable. There is a decent amount of filler that can deter you from continuing, yet nothing unbearable. And while I unfortunately have not read many thrillers in the past, I can say this book certainly pushes me to want to change that.

THE CAN'T MISS LIST

By: Isabel Rodrigues Rao // Staff Writer

Winter got you down? Beat your cold-weather blues at one of these Boston spots.

TAZA CHOCOLATE FACTORY TOUR

If you are a chocolate lover this is where you should go. At the Taza Chocolate store, you can watch them grind cacao beans using hand-carved granite millstones which results in a bold tasting stone ground chocolate. You can go on a chocolate tasting tour Monday through Friday from 11 am - 6 pm, and Saturday through Sunday from 10 am - 6 pm. The cost is \$8 per person and online reservations are required.

Taza Chocolate Factory, 561 Windsor St., Somerville.



ICE SKATING AT THE BOSTON COMMON FROG POND

Not only is the Frog Pond a place to go in the summer for the spray pool, but it's also amazing in the winter. You can spend an afternoon skating on perfect ice and getting bites to eat from the snack bar. This place is great for a date or entertaining your children. People 58 inches and over only pay \$6. Those under 58 inches can skate for free. If you don't have skates, you can rent a pair for a very cheap price: \$12 for adults and \$6 for kids. I recommend this because I had so much fun skating here when I was younger. I enjoyed spending time with my friends and getting a snack.

Boston Common Frog Pond, Boston.



SKYWALK OBSERVATORY

The Skywalk Observatory is a closed room with clear windows where you can see all of Boston. It is an amazing view and imagine how wonderful it looks during the winter with all the snow and the trees. You can also go on an audio tour and get a 360 degree view of Boston. You can see wonderful famous landmarks such as the Hancock Tower, Fenway Park, the Boston Common and Public Garden. The Skywalk is open all days of the week from 10 am - 8 pm. If you are going in the winter I would recommend going in the afternoon before it gets too dark out. In the end, it is all up to you what time is best for you to go and see the splendid view.

Skywalk Observatory, Prudential Center, 800 Boylston St., Boston.



HOT CHOCOLATE FLIGHTS AT MET BACK BAY

The Hot Chocolate Flight at MET Back Bay debuted earlier this winter. The flight features four hot chocolate creations that are great for a stormy winter day. The four unique flavors include classic, espresso, caramel sea salt and white chocolate peppermint. The drinks are all served in tall, clear glass mugs, each with unique garnishes. The classic hot chocolate is comprised of vanilla chocolate, whipped cream and mini toasted marshmallows. The espresso hot chocolate is garnished with an almond biscotti, the caramel sea salt has whipped cream and a caramel drizzle, and the white chocolate peppermint has crushed peppermint stick and a candy cane. This is perfect for a cold winter day to go out with friends.

MET Back Bay, 297 Dartmouth St., Boston.



SKYWALK: ROBERT S. DONOVAN FROM ANDERSON, SC, USA [CC BY 2.0], VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS; HOT CHOCOLATE: MASATOSHI, FROM KYOTO, JAPAN [CC BY 2.0], VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS; ICE SKATING: WORLD WIDE ICE PROFESSIONALS, PHOTO BY CHRIS ANDERSON [CC BY 2.0], VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (1)

SUMMER WITH THE FOOD PROJECT SPROUTS INTEREST IN AGRICULTURE

By: Yasmin Mohamed // A&E Editor



I board the T exhausted and wanting nothing but a hot shower and rest. It's a normal commute, until passengers sit next to me then shuffle away in a hurry. Is it because I have dirt streaks on my nose? Or do I reek of unripe tomatoes and sweat? Well, at least I have enough space on the train to relax.

Being a farmer is challenging, especially for someone who avoids gym class like the plague. You'd ask why someone who hates physical activity would seek a summer job as a farmer—but this past summer, I learned a heck ton about agriculture and it helped me grow (pun intended) as a thinker and hard worker. My enthusiasm towards gym class hasn't changed, and no, I still don't own a pair of overalls, but I'd definitely work as a farmer again.

In early February of last year, I was scrolling through the PIC job postings, but nothing sparked a sprout of interest in my heart, and I did not want to dedicate my precious summer to doing something I wasn't keen on. At the bottom of the email chain was a posting about Seed Crew, a seven week program of The Food Project (TFP) teaching sustainable agriculture, administering fun workshops and connecting agriculture to our daily lives. I was interested and decided to apply because I feared a boring summer re-watching Netflix shows and the dreaded “Are you still watching?” prompt, where I'd see my groggy reflection in the black screen of my phone. I filled out an application in one shot and submitted it. Weeks later, after the interview, I wondered if I'd go through if I got a job offer. I was so sure I would decline. Days later, I got a call, and with apprehension and slight nervousness for what was to come, I accepted the job.

As a city kid, farming seems like an unnecessary skill. We don't have much farming area—and the dead, grey, muck-filled patches aren't much to look at either.

Farming taught me how to work on a team. When working on a team at school, I ended up taking most of the weight on my shoulders because I didn't want a lousy grade. On the farm, there were new teams every day, so new conversations sparked, and I ended up having one workflow with one partner, and a different one with the next.

Walking onto the farm, I didn't even know how to use a Hula-Ho, a farming tool used to upend the weeds and pull fresh soil. My tired wrists from using the Hula-Ho the wrong way taught me that I'll struggle before learning anything new.

I also learned that farming isn't all about sweat and physical

exertion; it also takes mental strength. Waking up at 6 am to start a new day on the farm, and coming home at 6 pm tired and sweaty, was tough. I often thought, why did I decide to do this? It made me ponder my values and what I wanted to gain from this experience.

Learning new farming skills also came with new friendships. While working in teams, digging through dirt for annoying weeds, we learned each other's favorite movies, cultures and customs. When you see your peers with questionable fluids dripping down their faces, it sort of, well—bonds you.

When I was younger, most of the food in the fridge was bought at the grocery store or the farmer's market. The TFP mantra was “from seed to fork,” and after hearing that I thought, where does my favorite comfort meal come from? Who is involved in putting it onto the shelves of the grocery store?

During a lesson on underpaid workers in the food industry, I thought about how we put our food on the table. Most of the crops we eat don't grow in Massachusetts, so we have to import them—which costs money and time. Working at TFP opened my eyes to what it takes for food to go from a teeny seed to the stove.

A fellow TFP worker, Zack Myers, told me about how he learned where his food comes from. “I mostly took it for granted; where it comes from and who grows it seemed so far away. After workshops and learning about those who grow the food and those who are in need of food, I appreciate it more and feel more connected to where it comes from,” he said.

So why be a summer farmer? Madison Beehler, an operations specialist at TFP, says that it is a fun experience for teens. “Each experience is unique to the teen and a lot of the interactions I've had were very meaningful and impacted me as a person,” she said. “It can be tough at times because the weather is hot, the work is challenging, but it's also very rewarding.” Not everyone is going to love farming, and some people will decide not to continue this work during the fall.

Looking back, I miss the sun beating on my neck. It's awfully cold now, and although I only spent seven weeks on the farm, it showed me how much of an impact I have on my surroundings. Next time you go to the farmer's market, or the grocery store, or are sitting around the family dinner table, remember that your food didn't Harry Potter magic itself onto the table (although I wish it did) and that there were many people that put effort and time into it.

CANCEL THE CRAB RANGOON

IT'S TIME TO SERVE UP AUTHENTIC CHINESE CUISINE

By: Gavin Wei Xuan Zhang // Staff Writer

We've all been there: you walk into a foreign restaurant and become puzzled by the menu. You randomly choose something—eenie, meenie, miny, moe—and the food turns out to be awful.

Many teens enjoy Chinese food, but few are knowledgeable about the authentic cuisine. When local teens are asked to name as many Chinese foods as they can in under two minutes, common American-Chinese foods like fried rice, lo mein and chicken teriyaki are mentioned. Most authentic Chinese food is very different from American-Chinese food. It is not over sauced and does not contain a lot of grease. Authentic Chinese food is split by the many regions of the country and each region's style varies from others.

CANTONESE CUISINE

Cantonese cuisine originated in the Guangdong province and it is the most eaten Chinese cuisine in the world. An authentic Cantonese chef will preserve the food's natural flavor, so little spices are added and there are not a lot of calories. The flavors of Cantonese cuisine are usually mild, fresh and slightly sweet. Some of the most popular Cantonese dishes you should try are Chinese steamed eggs, white cut chicken or char siu (barbecue pork). I have tasted all three dishes and they are wonderful. Think of a smooth ride on a water slide, that's how smooth the steamed egg goes down your throat. An authentic Chinese steamed egg dish has the consistency of jelly and it is usually coated in light soy sauce. The Chinese white cut chicken is both juicy and tender, and it preserves the natural taste of chicken. The chicken is chopped into pieces and coated with light soy

sauce to give it a golden look. Char siu has a reddish brown coating and tastes slightly sweet. Skewered over the fire and constantly coated with spices, char siu is moist on the inside and slightly chewy on the outside.

Since many Americans are accustomed to deeply flavored food, authentic Cantonese food might taste very bland to them. To get the best authentic Cantonese food experience, I recommend slowly working your way from American-Chinese restaurants to authentic Cantonese restaurants, and dialing down the over flavored taste. A recommended Cantonese restaurant to try is Jade Garden, located in Chinatown on 20 Tyler Street.

SICHUAN CUISINE

Sichuan cuisine, from the Sichuan region, is favored among the youth because of its spice. Sichuan cuisine is most famous for its hot and spicy flavors, especially the must-have seasoning, Sichuan pepper. After eating Sichuan cuisine, it's usual for people's mouths to feel numb. Some famous Sichuan dishes you should try are the pockmarked granny bean curd, sesame oil chicken and Sichuan hot pot. Personally, anything that contains Sichuan pepper is saliva-inducing and appetizing.

HUNAN CUISINE

Hunan cuisine, from the Hunan region, is also hot and spicy like Sichuan cuisine. The difference is that instead of numbing your tongue to the point where foods start to taste the same, Hunan cuisine stimulates your taste buds so you can taste the flavors. Hunan food is even hotter

than Sichuan food and a bit sour. Some famous Hunan dishes that you should try are boiled yellow catfish, Mao's braised pork and dry-wok chicken.

FUJIAN CUISINE

Fujian cuisine originated from the southeastern province of Fujian and has a long history dating back thousands of years. Fujian cuisine uses natural ingredients from mountains and the sea like wild herbs, mushrooms and bamboos in their cooking. The flavors of Fujian cuisine are usually light, with a slight sweetness and sourness. Some famous Fujian dishes are crispy skin fish rolls, clams in chicken soup and drunken ribs.

SHANDONG CUISINE

The last region on this list is Shandong which includes different kinds of seafood in their dishes because Shandong province is near a coast. An authentic Shangongese chef aims to preserve the natural color, taste and cut of the food. The flavor of Shandong cuisine is slightly salty and sometimes crispy. Some famous Shandong dishes you should try are sweet potato with caramelized sugar, red braised king prawns and dezhou stewed chicken.

If you ever complain that your local American-Chinese restaurant cooks bad food, you haven't eaten real Chinese food yet. The next time you enter a Chinese restaurant, order white cut chicken instead of chicken teriyaki, char siu instead of dumplings, crispy skin fish rolls instead of crab rangoon and oranges instead of fortune cookies.



THE 2018 MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

On Thursday, December 6, three TiP journalists attended the young women's program at the Massachusetts Conference for Women. Here's a glimpse into their action-packed experience!



The day included a list of powerful speakers, including comedian Maysoon Zayid, psychologist Shawn Achor, and keynote speaker Amal Clooney.



"My favorite speaker was Maysoon Zayid! Her balance between comedy and shedding light to the issues we have in our current society was a pleasure to listen to!" **-Meena**

"Amal Clooney and [her father-in-law, journalist] Nick Clooney's conversation was very fun to watch, with very clear chemistry, and it was also interesting to see two people of very different generations and backgrounds talking about her work against ISIS." **-Mariella**



"While Shawn Achor was really funny, I felt like I also learned a lot about psychology through him, and a lot about anxiety and depression. He did a great job combining humor and serious topics." **-Malia**

The students also took part in breakout sessions on body image, anxiety, and "how to be rebel girls."

"I enjoyed listening to Francesca Cavallo, the author of "Bedtime Stories for Rebel Girls," talk about her experience growing up and being angry, and her struggle in trying to get her book published." **-Mariella**





"Amanda, the 17-year-old inventor of the AnxietyHelper app, was so brave and was very well spoken about the issues she went through; it was so inspiring. I also loved how she took the time to warn people that the topics she will be discussing were serious and that they were allowed to leave if they couldn't handle it. So many people frown upon "trigger warnings" but it made me feel a lot safer to excuse myself if I had to." - **Malia**

Many thanks to the Boston Globe for sponsoring our tickets!



The women's conference attendees also got to take over the Teens in Print Instagram for a day!



Lunch was, of course, also a highlight.

"I LOVED THE CHOCOLATE PARFAITS! IT'S MY NEW FAVORITE DESSERT! Seriously—I had like three? Four? And I now believe in love at first taste." - **Meena**



MAKE IT FASHION

By: Ameerah Dada // Staff Writer

"DOES THIS BLACK MATCH?" -DARIA

Fashion is one of those things that has been around for a while—ever since clothes were a thing, really. Sometimes people wear band merchandise to show that they like that band. Others dress in bright, lively colors or in black and gray.

Many teens use their wardrobe as a way to show how they feel. I know I do that sometimes. I just throw on some black leggings, a black shirt and black Vans and call it a day. Or, I'll wear a cute wine-colored shirt with some mustard pants and be fine with it, but like I said, it all depends on how I feel.

While expressing yourself through fashion becomes harder when you enter the workplace and need to look professional or even wear a uniform, many professionals will use different accessories, shoes and sometimes even their hair to express themselves. I talked to Lali Armijo, a professional in the beauty industry, about how she uses fashion to express herself.

HOW DO YOU MEET PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPECTATIONS WHILE STILL HAVING A LITTLE "YOU" IN YOUR OUTFIT?

It's really just understanding the criteria of what is professional and what it means. I think that as you get into the working world, there are a lot of commonalities as to what professionalism is. I think it's also something you learn in school. I personally like to wear scarves, earrings, and any sort of jewelry and that to me is kind of a way I express myself while still making sure I'm meeting the professional criteria. That's my way of spicing up a "boring" outfit.

HOW IMPORTANT IS WHAT YOU WEAR TO YOU?

It's very important! I mean what you wear is what people see you in, right? Unfortunately, we live in a judgmental society, so being professional is a way in which people judge you in the workplace, so it has to be very important because you want people to take you seriously.

WHEN DID YOU REALLY FIND AN INTEREST IN FASHION?

I've always had an interest; once you start working and you start getting paychecks and you learn how to budget you start to think, "Where can I buy clothes that aren't too expensive but still look good?" From there, you start to mix and match outfits and it just becomes fun.

DOES YOUR MOOD EVER AFFECT WHAT YOU WEAR?

Yes, for sure. I think that if I'm feeling energetic that morning and ready for work, I'll definitely put more time and energy into that outfit. But if I'm running behind schedule or I'm stressed, then I'm definitely just going to throw something on and not necessarily think about what I'm going to wear.



YOU'RE CANCELED:

STAN CULTURE BRINGS THE BEST AND WORST OF SOCIAL MEDIA

By: Yasmin Mohamed // A&E Editor



Twitter is a whirlwind. Likes, followers, content, mutuals, these are all confusing terms to latch onto at first, but as a frequent Twitter user, I'll guide you through them and show you a new side to the social media platform you may not know about.

Stan Twitter is a section where users dedicate their accounts to supporting a music group, solo artist, TV show and more. It's how you connect with people who share the same interests as you and have a fun time creating content—or, if you're like me—liking and retweeting everything about Adachi Yuto, a member of the Korean pop group Pentagon, which you should definitely listen to! Out of the nine members of Pentagon, Yuto doesn't post as often, but when he does, I'll like it, retweet, spam the comment section and all.

Stan culture is a modern way of supporting your faves. Sarah Poulter, 43, co-executive director of WriteBoston, reminisced about how teens supported their favorite celebrities in the (g)olden days. "When I was in high school, email addresses, phones, the internet, didn't exist. I bought posters. I had mini Michael Jackson pins, posters and a lot of items like t-shirts, folders, things that were branded," she said. Before the age of social media, industries could profit off celebrities by creating physical items for consumers. But, in the stan Twitter age, we can find artwork, memes and various content just a simple click away for the extremely low price of free!

Stan groups have a fan name, and they section off into fandoms. Think of it like the great hall tables in Harry Potter. You exist peacefully in your

chosen fandom, or you can mingle around and choose to be a multifandom, stanning more than one group or artist at once, and curating your online presence to surround them.

If spending time on the internet keyboard smashing on your fave's new cute selfie doesn't seem like a new concept, then what's good about stan culture? Well, have you ever fallen in love with an underground artist and found yourself not being able to talk about them because no one knew them? Stan Twitter resolves this issue by quickly creating a fandom to support underground artists, and you won't have to feel like you're the only one who has interest in the artist.

Stan culture also allows you to make a place for yourself in online communities. People who are shy, or have a hard time making social interactions in real life have a platform to make mutuals. Mutuals are accounts who you follow, and they follow you back. They are like an acquaintance you'd make at school and wave at while you pass them in the crowded hallways. Also, these accounts help you escape the hectic schedule of day to day life. Having an online space to relax and look at cute pictures of your faves is a stress reliever to many.

However, stan culture isn't always the best place to be. Constant fan wars and hate messages make stan Twitter less enjoyable. Mare Chavez, @pandayanan says, "So far, on stan Twitter no one has sent me hate yet. But, as I gain more followers, I'm expecting people to be more judgemental and negative. Back when I was on Tumblr and had a

popular aesthetic blog, I'd get hate for no reason, nothing but the fact that I had a lot of followers."

When I ran my Tumblr blog I stuck to myself, reblogging content I enjoyed, art that I liked, and I enjoyed being part of the Voltron fandom. Tumblr has a feature where you can send a user a message or ask someone questions, with the option of being anonymous. I got nice messages often and it made me happy that someone out there liked the content I posted. I once got a hate message and the user didn't bother to use the anonymous option, so it made it easier to report the account and have some of my mutuals report the user too.

Cancel culture is the act of unstanning someone because they did something negative, either currently or in their earlier years. Cancelling happens when an artist does something way out of hand, like saying a slur that doesn't belong to them. Once a famous person has been cancelled, it takes them a lot to gain what popularity and respect they had before. Cancelling is done by some fandoms out of spite, who want their faves to succeed, and they're willing to go as far as dragging others down to see that happen.

Stan Twitter is fun and all, but take time to invest in other activities. Feed the fish that you haven't fed in a while. Take the chicken out of the freezer before your mom comes home. Clean your room and find ten dollar bills lying around. Your life isn't tied to how many likes you get, or the amount of mutuals you have.



LADIES:

IT'S TIME TO SIDELINE THE PATRIARCHY

By: Nateh Panyere // Staff Writer

The noisy gym cheered for 25-year-old Alex Georgiadis as she won a championship with her co-ed volleyball team. They worked hard for this moment. While their team wasn't part of a professional league, their win symbolizes the benefits of playing on a co-ed team, or a team with both males and females.

Professional co-ed teams could have victories similar to Georgiadis'. If women were allowed to play on professional sports teams with men, the combination of their skills would make the team better, and it would help motivate other women to join the sport.

Women have been fighting for a place in sports for many years. During the 20th century, women were finally allowed to participate in the Olympics. This gave them the chance to earn gold medals and have their names imprinted in history. There was Gertrude Ederle, who won a gold medal in the 400-meter freestyle relay in the 1924 Olympics. In 1945 Babe Didrikson Zaharias became the first woman to make the 36-hole cut to qualify to play against men in a PGA Tour. Wilma Rudolph was the first woman to win three gold medals in track and field in the 1960 Olympics.

In 1972, Title IX changed the game for women. Title IX is a "federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that receives federal funding." Under Title IX, discrimination on the basis of gender is not allowed. Now, we have women's teams for sports such as basketball, volleyball, tennis, track and soccer at high school and college levels. There are also some professional women's sports teams, like the Women's Tennis Association and the Women's National Basketball Association.

However, co-ed sports are nowhere to be found in the world of professional sports. Even though women can technically participate in professional sports leagues like

the NFL and the MLB, there is a strong social stigma that stops them from playing.

An article in ESPN tells the story of Okiima Pickett, a running back on a D.C. women's football team. She dreamed of playing on the Redskins, but never made it close to the NFL because she was prevented from playing on her high school football team in Charlottesville, VA. Her coach told her he didn't want to see her get hurt, demonstrating the social stigma against women in sports typically played by men only.

Fans are ready to see something new for a change. "I think it'd be interesting if females and males played on the same team," my uncle, a Boston Celtics fan, said.

If professional teams were co-ed it would lift the social stigma and encourage girls to play. Georgiadis stated that she would like to see more females playing in professional sports, and she would like to encourage others to do so as well. Since men's professional teams are very popular, females playing on those teams would catch the attention of many other women.

Maybe these teams believe that they're fine without women in their league. Maybe they don't want the way their league runs to change if women are added. Maybe they believe that they'll be criticized by fellow fans if they add females to their teams.

However, that shouldn't be true. If the MLB, NFL, and NBA refuse to change, there should be new professional leagues made for co-ed teams. Maybe someday there'll be a professional co-ed league for volleyball, just like Georgiadis'. Maybe, because of their skill, these professional teams will have a lot of wins, just as Georgiadis' team won. Maybe someday, the professional sports world will realize that women can benefit their teams.



IN "X-MEN," DIVERSITY IS GIANT-SIZED

By: **Jacob Downey**
// A&E Editor

Created by the late Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in 1963 and popularized by writer Chris Claremont in 1970, the X-Men team consists of heroes born with genetic mutations that grant them powers from telekinesis to the ability to shoot sparkles from their hands. These heroes, known in the Marvel universe as "mutants," were cast out by society because they were different, and often considered a threat. While they may sound like another generic superhero team, Lee and Kirby had more planned for the fledgling heroes. From their inception, the X-Men were meant to be an allegory for those unrepresented in society.

"Mutants in the Marvel universe have always stood as a metaphor for the underclass, the outsiders; they represent the ultimate minority,"

Claremont wrote in "Uncanny X-Men Masterworks Vol. 9."

It would hardly be a Gambit to assume that the average moviegoer's knowledge of the various "X" teams begins and ends with the SNIKT of Wolverine's claws; however, the X-Men universe is home to the most diverse cast of characters in comics and has pushed for a more inclusive world by mirroring the

struggles of those outcasted by society through the exploits of the superhuman team.

Kurt Wagner, otherwise known as the Nightcrawler, has been a staple of the X-Men franchise since his first appearance in 1975's "Giant Size X-Men #1." Kurt hails from a German traveling circus, which isn't too weird an origin for a comic book hero. He's also blue and has a tail and fangs.

Comics are weird, folks.

While a bit on the nose, Kurt represents the broader social ostracism young people often face. While "social ostracism" to Kurt means being chased around the German countryside with pitchforks and torches, and it is doubtful the loner kid in the back of class doubles as a creature feared by German farmers, everyone certainly has had those moments where they feel alone.

Kurt represents the idea of not judging a book by its cover turned up to eleven, set on fire and disintegrated with an optic blast for good measure.

Ororo Munroe, better known as the weather-controlling mutant Storm, shocked readers and critics alike by being the first woman of color superhero in all of comics. Hailing from Kenya, Storm would bring the thunder with her inclusion in, again, “Giant Size X-Men #1.” Storm’s role on the team revolutionized not only Marvel, but comic books as a whole, as she and her future husband, Black Panther, would be two of comics’ premiere non-white heroes. And Storm was no side character—she would go on to not only lead the X-Men team, but become headmistress of the Jean Grey School for Higher Learning, teaching a new generation of mutant heroes.

Local artist and poet Kenny St. Fleur, 17, believes that Storm was the most significant contribution to diversity in comics.

“She’s this ridiculously powerful, kick a** black woman who one minute is enriching young minds, then blowing up robots with her mind the next!” he said. “As far as role models go, I can think of few better.”

Suffice to say that Storm’s role as the first woman of color

hero was a big win for inclusion in a medium that even today is dominated by white dudes in tights. Her inclusion on this most memorable of ‘X’ teams would pave the way for other female and minority heroes to come while also providing an underrepresented demographic, African-American girls, a hardcore superhero they can see themselves in.

While he has been both friend and foe to many X teams, Max Eisenhardt is probably one of the most controversial progressive characters in comics. While most villains are driven by greed or blood lust, Magneto, master of magnetism, is simply after tolerance. Being a Holocaust survivor, he has seen firsthand the atrocities of man, and seeks to liberate mutants from the oppression of homosapiens, often by any means necessary. This mindset is often the cause of him being labeled a villain; however, it can not be overlooked that despite his often radical approach, it is clear to see where he is coming from. Just because he is the bad guy, doesn’t mean he’s an objectively bad guy.

The big reason Magneto is the villain is because we’re reading from the X-Men’s point of view. “We see him as this big bad, when really, he’s just a survivor trying to keep his people from going

through what he did,” said Boston Arts Academy student Christian Kinney. “Yeah he’s intense about it, but that’s the only way he knows will keep mutants safe.”

While arguments can be made on both sides as to whether Magneto is hero or villain, his fight for the betterment of a marginalized group gives him a level of depth not often seen in older comic baddies, and pushes the idea that even the villain can just be a good guy with a different means of supporting change.

JP Comics’ Paul Bryant believes that [The X-Men] “is about a group of ‘other,’ so as long as we have these other ‘other’ groups that feel like there’s a greater society pushing against them, then the X-Men will always be relatable, and people are more likely to support something they can relate to.” Thanks to the enduring cultural pushback to characters who are separated from the majority, there will always be need for a team like the X-Men.

By breaking the norms of 70s comics, the team would gain notoriety. By amazing writing and societal undertones they would gain fame. And, thanks to readers being able to better see themselves in the new team, the Giant Size X-Men would gain an undying legacy, the effects of which are still felt in comics today.



IS IT TIME FOR "BIRTH OF A NATION" TO DIE?

By: Malia McClerklin // Staff Writer

Imagine a movie where the protagonist is the founder of the Ku Klux Klan, with the villains being incompetent, barefooted, drunk black men who must be defeated. Pretty distasteful, right?

Well, this is the plot of the 1915 movie "The Birth of A Nation," critically acclaimed then and now and credited as the first Hollywood blockbuster of all time. The movie was based on the novel "The Clansmen" by Thomas Dixon, who claimed the purpose of the book was "to demonstrate to the world that the white man must and shall be supreme." It was the first movie to ever be shown in the White House. The propaganda was so powerful, it transformed the KKK into heroes. The film is even credited by some for the reformation of the KKK in the early 20th century.

With the 104-year anniversary coming up, people are still defending this movie to the ends of the earth, and the reason for that is understandable. The movie was revolutionary in the film industry. It produced some of the first movie stars and showcased previously unheard of movie techniques. The Hollywood Reporter praised "The Birth of a Nation" for its use of "spectacular battlefield panoramas,

operatic melodrama, thrilling chase scenes—the full power of cinematic art pulling at their heartstrings and quickening their pulses." History.com says the film's director, D.W. Griffith, "popularized countless filmmaking techniques that remain central to the art today," like close-ups, flashbacks, and fade-ins.

But, in a world where racial tensions are heightened and we're increasingly aware of political correctness, should this film still be so well-regarded in movie history? What legacy should a movie that revolutionized film, but indirectly increased the death count of black people in America, leave?

Film analysis professor Nathan Blake from Northeastern University has studied "The Birth of a Nation" for many years. When asked about the relevance of the film, Blake first acknowledged Griffith's advanced film strategy innovations that defined the Hollywood studio style and the dominant approach to narrative cinema. However, he then pointed out the film's troubling racial elements. "It illustrates our troubling, racist history, not just of the Civil War and Reconstruction, but of the early 20th century and beyond," he said. "It is also relevant today because we continue to see these same stereotypes and

tropes of 'purity' in contemporary white-supremacist discourse."

I asked him how his students perceived the film, and he said "Students are generally troubled, and often don't know how to respond, at least initially. If anything, students are shocked by the film's blatant racism, its cartoonish stereotypes, and the depiction of the Klan as 'heroic.'"

On the topic of how the film should be remembered, Blake explained that "Birth of a Nation" will remain an important film to watch and discuss because it was simply a highly influential film. "It illustrates the ways in which cinema can manipulate its audience," he said. "It is one thing to feel moved by a story in which you might already share its ideology to some degree. But when you see how you are positioned to fear for Flora (Mae Marsh) as she is pursued by the 'monstrous' Gus (Walter Long), you begin to see how the narrative, placement of the camera, music, and editing position the viewer to identify with certain characters and perspectives and against others."

"In other words, its objectionable ideology allows us to see the ways in which such messages are conveyed."

LA BEAUTÉ AU FRONT

By: Dre Salomon // Staff Writer

It's a place that has more than what meets the eye

It's Beauty

The beauty behind the rubble and decay that spectators have witnessed throughout the 4 seasons

The elegance of the culture scattered throughout the community, the embodiment of who we are as

people in the front lines

Within these communities it contains the beautiful figures, profiles, and numerous dispositions dispersed throughout the realms that stretches as far from the sunshine Oaklands to the brutal cold Dorchesters

And yet

These dispositions are hidden behind the innumerable fourth estates

projecting these unappealing images of these beautiful kingdoms

Placing them in a negative limelight they've never asked for which has constantly appeared on conservative and liberal outlets.

They're afraid to display the elegance and prosperity that are the various gems and diamonds the people who've molded and proper this beautiful estate in which it is common to the ear of those who are not familiar with our kingdom name:

The glorious ghetto...

Our humble abode...

My Home...Our Home...

I AM NOT A JALAPEÑO

By: Nayleth López-López // Contributing Writer



Dora the Explorer is iconic. A brown, bilingual character who got through situations with her brain, magic mochila and monkey best friend? She was the realest role model for a little Latina like me. But, as I got older, I saw more of another Latina on my screen—the ones with curves that made me feel inadequate and an accent that was bait for laughs—the spicy Latina. If you're drawing a blank, think Gloria on "Modern Family."

Although representation of Latinas on screens has improved in recent years with shows such as "Jane the Virgin," "Orange Is the New Black," and "One Day at a Time," the number of characters who bridge the gap between Dora and Gloria have been few and far between.

Many may view the spicy Latina stereotype as a mere inconvenience, but here's why it actually matters: we turn to media to see ourselves, because of the lack of representation of Latinas in the government and positions of power. Thus, the spicy Latina stereotype actually hurts all of us and hinders Latinas from improving the future for all Americans.

A common misconception is that it's a compliment to be portrayed as a spicy Latina. At first glance, it does seem like Latinas are portrayed positively. We're seen as attractive, passionate women who can whip up a delicious storm in the kitchen and an even

better one on the dance floor. But in reality, this stereotype negatively impacts how the rest of the world views us.

A study from the Media, Diversity and Social Change Initiative at the University of Southern California released in 2016 found that 39.5 percent of Latinas in film and TV were dressed in sexualized attire, and 35.5 percent in some form of nudity. And this is when audiences see us on screen at all. According to a 2018 Glamour article, although one in five American women identify as Latina, we only make up 7 percent of speaking roles on television. How can Latinas be expected to have big career aspirations when we're continually objectified in the mainstream media?

For instance, how many Latinas can you name that are in positions of power in our government? In the entire history of the United States, only 19 Latinas have served in Congress to date. Today, Latinas make up only 3.5 percent of Congress even though Latinxs make up 18 percent of the U.S. population!

According to the Washington Post, in 2016, Mexican-American Catherine Cortez-Masto became the first Latina in history elected to the U.S. Senate. In an interview with CNN, Cortez-Masto said she knows young Latinas look at her and say, "Oh my gosh, if she can do it, I can do it too."

We can also find hope in

Texas, who elected its first two Latina representatives to the House, and with New York sending Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the youngest woman to serve in Congress, among others. 13 Latinas are currently fighting our fight in Congress, which could result in unprecedented improvement for Latinxs', and all Americans', rights and quality of life.

Additionally, in 2013, the Center For American Progress found that Latinas make up less than 3 percent of all STEM fields. The spicy Latina's impact on this is amplified by research conducted by Common Sense Media in 2017, which found that girls who saw more female stereotypes on TV were less interested in STEM careers than those who saw footage featuring female scientists. That is why Latinas must see more stories like Laura Gomez's to help them break free of stereotypical expectations. Gomez, originally from Mexico, is an entrepreneur and diversity advocate. According to USA Today, she is part of the 1 percent of Latinx tech start-up founders. Gomez worked at YouTube and Google before founding her own company, Atipica.

Hollywood writers and producers have the power to influence how media-consuming Americans see Latinas, which is why accurate representation matters. We need real, complex Latina characters who know their

roots, but are not placed in a mold. Once we see more diverse portrayals of Latinas on our screens, I believe more Latinas will dream bigger than they ever thought possible and hopefully find themselves in a wide variety of real-life roles, whether they be in the government or Silicon Valley.

As for what we can do, it's actually easier than we think. Through various social media apps, simply liking or sharing a Latinx's story can expand awareness. We can look at Gina Rodriguez' #MovementMondays for inspiration. Created by Rodriguez in 2016 in the wake of the #Oscars-SoWhite controversy, she uses the hashtag to highlight and celebrate Latinx actors and their work every Monday on her Instagram, increasing Latinx visibility. We can also make an effort to support shows, films and other media content made by Latinxs. I recommend starting with wearemitu.com for some great content on the diverse Latinx experiences in America.

Latinas should not need to continually prove their Latinidad by conforming to a stereotype. Rodriguez said it best in an interview with HuffPost Live, "I don't actually sit in a definition (of a Latina). I walk in my world, happily and confidently."

So, can we please reserve the use of the word "spicy" to food only? I am not a jalapeño.

The following are excerpts from an English class assignment at Boston Community Leadership Academy. The students were instructed to recount a childhood memory, using descriptive and literary devices. These are their stories:

ARVIN VILLAR //
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As I looked out the window my eyes were like a camera trying to capture the beautiful landscape that was a few feet away from the truck. We passed by vast luscious green mountains that even the Discovery Channel couldn't compete with. We drove through towns filled with love, family values and children who played baseball with a bottle cap and a stick in a dirt field. This goes to show that us Dominicans make the best of what we have, and of our current situation. We make lemonade out of the lemons life throws at us because that is what we are raised to do. It wouldn't be like us not to.

DAISY CORREIA //
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The thing is, I hated the rain, and I still do. Rain meant I couldn't stay outside with my dolls. I couldn't make cakes out of mud. Rain meant I had to stay inside and do nothing but sit and listen to the adults talk about problems that nine year old me found boring.

So imagine how happy I was when it stopped raining later that day. As soon as I heard people talking, I was instantly out the door and looking for my cousins. We went on to search for the best rocks. You may be wondering why we were searching for rocks, and it's because we had to wrap them in blankets and pretend they were babies. Of course, we had dolls, but our parents kept them on the highest shelf where we couldn't reach them. Why? Well, because they knew we would rip them apart to the point where they would be missing most of their limbs, or we would lose them. After finding a rock that was round, smooth, and the right size, we looked for the best spot where we could play without being bullied by the older kids.

CASSELIA DOS SANTOS //
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I really wanted some cupcakes, so I went to the cash register and stole two cupcakes. Heading out, I felt badly because I had just done something I knew was wrong. Also, I knew if my mother found out she would be furious and would think negatively of me. As I was walking back home, I took a bite of the warm cupcake and it melted in my mouth. But, there was still an awkward feeling in my stomach that took away some of the joy of eating it. I was a thief. How could I live with that?

As I went inside and gave my mom the two loaves of bread, I saw the cupcake wrapper fall to the floor and my heart began to beat faster and my mouth was dry. This was it, the moment I had been dreading.

MANNY DEPINA //
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Where did the ball go? I checked under the cabinets, table and chairs. My cousin pointed towards the bed and I started to crawl towards it. I wanted to climb the bed and even though it looked like a skyscraper, I knew how to get up there. I needed to find something that was like a box, that I could push next to the bed. I couldn't find one, but I found what my mom puts on the bed all the time, the iron. Little did I know that it was a torch compared to my soft baby hands. I took no mind and decided to push. I put my left hand first, hisss, I immediately felt the pain. My hand felt like bacon frying on a skillet. My hand couldn't move because it was glued to the iron, so I sat there for a few seconds until my sister came and took my hand off. When she seperated my hand from the iron it was like a grilled cheese, and my hand was as pink as raw beef. Oddly, it didn't hurt at all. I'm guessing my nerves were burnt right off. The last thing I remember was smelling bleach and a whole lot of cleaning supplies.

JOSHUA WARD // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I was playing my Playstation 3 at the time. I was playing, “Call Of Duty Black Ops 2,” to be exact. I was playing with my red and black Turtle Beaches, so I could hear everything that was going on in the game. I always had my mic muted, so I could hear people talking trash, but they could never hear me with my ‘squeaker’ self. Everyone in the game lobby was talking to each other and cutting each other off. After two matches with the same people, I decided I wanted to talk too. I un-muted my mic when the next game started and said, “Hi guys.”

Conversations sparked up in the game chat, people trying to figure out who just said that and why this person sound so young. I heard someone shout out, “Who’s squeaker is this?” My heart drops and I mute my mic as one of the people in the game calls out everyone’s name one by one, trying to see who was the squeaky little boy. I hit the middle button on my controller and quickly made my way to the Playstation mic settings and straight to the voice changer. I made my voice deeper and returned to the chat, where this guy was still listing out names. When he finally got to my name I un-muted my mic and said, “Yo?” Everyone was dying of laughter and told me that my voice changer was super noticeable and that I was the squeaker from earlier. I didn’t deny it, but only because I was pretending I didn’t care about what they were saying, as I switched my voice back to normal.

JASON HUYNH // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It was a Friday afternoon: May 24, 2013. It was pretty chilly out, so I throw on my Nike sweater to wear around the house. As soon as I put it on, I hear a scream from my sister’s room. At the time, my sister was pregnant. Immediately I knew what it was: her water broke. My mom comes rushing down the hall and screams, “WHAT HAPPENED?” in Viet. She gets the keys to her car and brings my sister to the car. My mom, sister, and I all head to the closest hospital. My sister’s heartbeat was out of control. As we arrived at Boston Medical Center we enter through security and find the closest spot possible. I text my sister’s boyfriend at that time, “Yo Bro, Shelly is giving birth.”

JEILYN ORTEGA // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I fumbled my phone as I looked through my recent calls to call my mother. Ring...ring...ring... “you have reached the num-” CLICK.

Something is definitely wrong. My guts are telling my brain and heart right now, and I can feel it all over my body. She doesn’t take long to answer my calls. She especially doesn’t miss them.

Ring...ri-

“Ma, where are you?” I say, trying not to sound worried.

“Baby, something happened to Angel. Baby, Angel was shot.”

Suddenly, I hear my brother’s sobs and his voice overlaps my mother’s from the passenger’s side of the car.

“He’s dead! Mami, he’s dead!” My brother screams from the top of his lungs, “He’s dead.” I hear a loud thud over the screams and cries.

“Ma! Mami!”

Did I just lose my cousin, brother, and mother in one night? Later I realized what I thought to be a car accident was just my brother punching the windshield. I could hear the faint screams from outside the car. My mother screaming and my brother huffing and puffing. They had gotten out of the car hysterically.

My mother just lost her nephew who she loves as her own, as if she carried him nine months in her own womb. My brother lost his best friend, the only person that could talk some sense into him and guide him. My family broke into a million pieces that night. The pain and sadness was unbearable, it almost felt physical. It almost felt like at any second I could die from a broken heart.

On the way to the hospital I couldn’t cry anymore. My eyes were experiencing a drought. My thoughts were blank as if I was in a deep sleep and my whole body was put on anesthesia. I felt a tingle through my body like television static. It felt like a million years had gone by and I was still in that car. We pulled up to the emergency room entrance where the lights blinded my dry eyes. It was like seeing the light at the end of a tunnel. My family stood outside in the humid air. I could tell we all had a million thoughts and emotions running through our minds. We were all so close, yet so distant in our own little worlds. In that moment I realized how it took something so tragic to happen to bring us all together.

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