

TEENS NEED TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF INSENSITIVE MEMES

BY LESLIE GONZALEZ, STAFF WRITER

PAGE 28

no one:

teens: *making fun of real crises*



INSIDE

IN THE DEBATE BETWEEN RELIGION AND LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES, THERE IS MORE COMMON GROUND THAN EXPECTED

BY NATHAN DEJESUS

'ANIMAL CROSSING: NEW HORIZONS' BRINGS CONTEMPORARY MECHANICS TO THE BELOVED SERIES

BY MARIELLA MURILLO

WE SHOULD EXPECT WILDFIRES UNTIL WE TAKE OUR CLIMATE MORE SERIOUSLY

BY RICHIA JEAN-BAPTISTE

EDITORS:

JACOB DOWNEY
MALIA MCCLERKLIN
NATHAN DEJESUS
YASMIN MOHAMED
CALEB BOVE

STAFF WRITERS:

AAYANA STEVENSON
ADRIAN RAMIREZ-DIAZ
AYAN MOHAMED
BENDU DAVID
CRISTIAN DUBON-SOLIS
EDDIE CONLEY
HANNA GUMMER
HASSINA WHITTAKER
LESLIE GONZALEZ
MADELIN SANCHEZ
MARIA O'MALLEY
MICHAELLE MOTA
NATEH PANYERE
PHAIDON ATHANASOPOULOS
RHYS MCALLISTER
RICHIA JEAN-BAPTISTE
SAMIIR MUHAMED
T'AURA SMITH
TONI MOSLEY
YANIRY BAEZ

CONTRIBUTORS:

AMIR RIVERS
ANESHIA ALEXANDER
CLAER JESTIN
GEANNA PATTEN
JAKAYLA FURR
JOSIEHANNA COLON
MADELEINE FARNKOFF
SALLY PHAN
STELLA SMITH

LAYOUT & DESIGN:

JENNIFER PRANDATO

WRITEBOSTON:

SARAH POULTER,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CARLA GUALDRÓN,
TIP DIRECTOR

JASMINE HEYWARD,
TIP SENIOR ASSOCIATE

ELVIS ALVARADO,
TIP PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

Teens in Print is Boston's citywide newspaper written by and for students. Launched by WriteBoston and The Boston Globe in 2004, the paper is published quarterly and distributed to Boston-area schools, public library branches, and youth-serving nonprofits.

NEXT ISSUE: JUNE 2020



CHECK OUT OUR AWARD-WINNING ARTICLES.

WE ARE EXCITED TO RECOGNIZE THE WINNING PIECES FROM OUR RISING VOICES AWARDS, CELEBRATING POWERFUL TEEN VOICES ACROSS DIVERSE GENRES OF JOURNALISM. MANY THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS FOR SPONSORING AND PRESENTING THE AWARDS TO OUR TALENTED YOUTH WRITERS!

This edition of the paper was written and edited before a social-distancing policy was enacted in Boston. Though it may seem like the world we're living in now is increasingly different than the one our students wrote about, we think it's important to still publish and celebrate our writers. Many of them have continued to write for us, including a perspective series on how their lives have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Read that series at bit.ly/COVIDperspective and stay up-to-date on how our programming is changing by following us on Twitter and Instagram @teensinprint.

Thanks for your continued support, and we wish you and your loved ones health and wellbeing,

Jasmine Heyward
Senior Associate, Teens in Print

WRITE FOR US.

Teens in Print accepts submissions of original news articles, opinion pieces, essays and poems.

To submit, please fill out the form at bit.ly/tipsubmissions

We reserve the right to edit pieces for length and content.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Program
Director Carla Gualdrón at
carlagualdron@writeboston.org.

We look forward to reading your work!

Want to join our team for the summer? Check out the back page of the paper to learn how to get connected and apply for our Summer Journalism Institute.

**WANT TO
READ MORE?**

Find exclusive
online content
including
multimedia
projects at
bostontip.com.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MEET THE STAFF	3	CULTURAL CRITICISM.....	26-36
SCHOOL NEWS	4-12	SCIENCE & HEALTH.....	37-45
CITY NEWS.....	13-21	A&E.....	46-55
NATIONAL NEWS.....	22-25	FREWRITE.....	56-59

MEET THE STAFF



ADRIAN
RAMIREZ-DIAZ



CALEB
BOVE



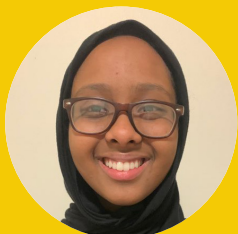
JUAN
ORTIZ



MICHAELLE
MOTA



SAMIIR
MUHAMED



AYAN
MOHAMED



CRISTIAN
DUBON SOLIS



MAKAYLA
ROBINSON



NATHAN
DEJESUS



TONI
MOSLEY



BENDU
DAVID



EDDIE
CONLEY



LESLIE
GONZALEZ



PHAIDON
ATHANSOPOULOS



YANIRY
BAEZ



BETHANY
SOTO



JACOB
DOWNEY



MALIA
MCCLERKLIN



RHYS
MCCALISTER



YASMIN
MOHAMED



MARIA
O'MALLEY

KATE FUSSNER'S CREATIVITY HAS GOTTEN FENWAY HIGH READING

The ELA teacher's commitment to relating to her students on an individual level has made a difference

BY NATHAN DEJESUS, EDITOR

When I was in ninth grade I had one teacher I could really speak to. She was someone I could relate to when it came to being LGBTQ+. She opened a safe space for me to voice my concerns and what I'd gone through, including my anxiety and my mental health problems. I still visit her in her office at Fenway High's library to this day. That teacher is Kate Fussner.

Fussner was born and raised in South Jersey, eventually moving to Pennsylvania when her father remarried. After high school, she attended the internationally recognized Vassar College. Knowing that her career goal was to become an English teacher and a writer, college flew by. In 2010,



Fussner came to teach in Boston and has taught in Boston Public Schools for 10 years, including four at Fenway, where she teaches English language arts to freshmen.

Something that stuck with me from her class was her grading system. Her students either get a 90 or 100% for good work, or a 50% and below. There is no in-between. This pushed me to put in my best work. Fussner gives a workload that encourages meeting deadlines but also scares students into making sure they

are doing good work. If it weren't for her and The Panther Press, the freshman online newspaper that she started in 2017, I wouldn't be writing this article.

Both Fussner and Fenway's librarian, Bonnie McBride, stress a love for reading with their students. They are very in your face when it comes to books. Fussner analyzes each one of her students' reading styles and knows what books to recommend to each student.

"A lot of students come in, if

anything, [saying] ‘I really like reading’ or ‘Oh, I’m not really a reader,’” Fussner said. “Sure, because you were forced to read books that you had no choice over and no interest. And now that we’ve given you choice, and we’ve given you time, like, you can start to see yourself as a reader.”

Fussner also discussed an incident that occurred when she was 15, when she chose to go to summer school to advance her learning, and how it shapes her teaching now. That specific situation was a sexual harassment incident that she wrote about in a 2017 article for WBUR’s Cognoscenti column, “Why #Me Too Isn’t Enough.”

“I never leave a class unattended, or make a student work in a group with others who have wronged him or her,” she wrote. “But more than that, I am trying to do what was not done for me: teach all of my students that violent language is unacceptable, that blind loyalty in friendships has its limits and that even ‘not taking a side’ can be, in fact, standing against a victim.”

In the end, Fussner’s hard work and determination make Fenway and her classroom a place of comfort where students can dive into the pages of a book has paid off. She has the respect of myself and so many talented students both inside and outside of the school.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KATE FUSSNER

SCHOOLS NEED AIR CONDITIONING TO KEEP KIDS LEARNING THROUGH THE END

BY JOSIEHANNA COLON,
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Picture this: It’s June. It’s about 85 degrees inside your math class and 10 degrees warmer outside. The windows are open, but all that is coming in is hot air. You are taking a test, but you’re focused on the sweat accumulating on your seat rather than if A or B is the correct answer. You have 20 minutes left to finish the test, and you are only on question six. You want to get up and get a cup of water, but now you only have 10 minutes left and you are still on question six. You can’t focus at all and the heat is making you tired, so you put your head down on the desk, which seems to be cooler than the room. You accidentally fall asleep! You wake up and hear “five minutes left,” and you realize you still have 14 questions left.

This scenario can be played out by hundreds of students in Boston. As the warmer months begin to approach, faster than usual, teachers and students must prepare themselves to adapt to the heat and recognize the risk of heat stress. But even with adaptation, the struggle to focus

in class, and the distraction that is created because of the heat makes matters even more uncomfortable than they have to be.

Youth across Boston have been researching the impacts of heat stress which include risk of heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash. Studies suggest that heat exposure can reduce the rate of learning and skill formation and greatly harm classroom productivity for teachers and students.

Schools like New Mission, Boston Community Leadership Academy or Boston Green Academy that get super hot, there is a huge strain of frustration and agitation. For many Boston public schools, air conditioning is only in classrooms where teachers are willing to buy an air conditioner with their own money. Something must be done to prevent the inherent problem at hand.

The Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC), and the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCosh), have chosen to collaborate on this issue. The first step is collecting surveys and recognizing the voices of students all around BPS. If you are interested in learning more, join us at a BSAC meeting. We meet Mondays 4-6 p.m. at the BPS Bolling Building, 2300 Washington Street, Roxbury. You can also email us at bsac@bostonpublicschools.org

DEAR RISING SENIORS

A guide to surviving your last year of high school

BY EDDIE CONLEY, STAFF WRITER

Dear Rising Seniors,

We are all hurtling towards one thing: student loan debt. That is the sad reality of our world. However, a college education is a common path towards a better future and upward mobility. While you stress over not knowing what to do to get ready for college, let me help by telling you what I've learned, so you can get the most out of your college application experience.

Q: WHEN DOES THE COLLEGE PROCESS START?

A: Honestly, you should start during the summer before your senior year. My school actually gave us summer work for the college process including a Common App essay draft, a list of activities we did in high school and an autobiography to help the counselors get to know us. I don't want to sound like your guidance counselor, but you should start drafting your Common App essay over the summer.

The Common App is the college application service used by most schools across the

country. There are a bunch of essay prompts that you can choose from, and they'll come up with a quick Google search. When you write your essay, avoid writing about something that anyone could see by looking at your transcript. For example, don't write about how your grades dipped sophomore year and how you bounced back. That is something an admissions counselor can see by looking at your record. Even if you really feel the need to explain yourself, this should not beat out an essay about something important to you such as an ideological concept, personal philosophy or an

anecdote that describes who you are.

Q: I HEARD THAT GRADES DON'T MATTER YOUR SENIOR YEAR. IS THIS TRUE?

A: No! Colleges require that you send them your first semester grades. This means that grades matter up until you finish midterm exams. Even if you apply to schools early, your counselor will report your first quarter grades. This doesn't mean you can slack off afterward, though. The threat of your acceptance being rescinded always looms over your head, which means you should stay focused on your grades. Your second-semester grades aren't as important; however, if your grades drop significantly, you run the risk of the school you worked so hard to get into deciding to reject you at the last minute.

Q: HOW CAN I JUGGLE COLLEGE APPLICATIONS WITH

SCHOOL WORK?

A: It's very hard but not impossible. The advice I would give is just to take things one at a time. When you sit down to do work, focus on one thing. Don't try to scatter your brain among all your school subjects and college. Drown out school when doing college essays. Drown out college essays when doing homework for school.

Q: HOW CAN I BE PREPARED FOR THE SAT?

A: The SAT, originally named the Scholastic Aptitude Test, is ever-changing. Fortunately, more and more colleges are realizing that the SAT is not a clear indicator of intelligence or college readiness. Nevertheless, colleges are businesses, and they will prefer to see higher SAT grades so that their SAT average for accepted students goes up. High averages increase the amount of funding they get from the government

and private groups.

If you want help mastering the SAT, the famous Khan Academy hosts a free SAT prep service. Make an account at khanacademy.org/sat and start practicing ASAP. The latest you should take the SAT is in October of your senior year. I also recommend using Google to find full SAT tests from previous years, which come with the answer sheet. Taking the test multiple times will help you get a feel for what will be covered and also give you an idea of what your potential score is.

Q: WHAT ARE THE MOST UP-TO-DATE REQUIREMENTS?

A: Something we high school students are often told is how different the process of applying to college is now. Nobody can relate across generations to the college process experience, which doesn't allow for consistent development of SAT mastery. Currently, students take an SAT with a max score of 1600 as per the requirements of almost every college/university. Students are also expected to write an

essay of 250-650 words.

Other options include the ACT (American College Testing), another standardized test that incorporates science. Additionally, most colleges require supplemental essays to their own questions. If students apply to a "test-optional" school that doesn't require the SAT or ACT, they are almost always required to write an essay as a substitute.

Based on their GPA and SAT/ACT scores, students can find acceptance projections through Naviance, the website utilized by many schools to organize applications. Students are writing these essays up until deadlines, likely a result of electronically induced procrastination – the double nature of technological progress. So many students are working last minute, in fact, that the Common App website can slow down, delaying submissions or even shut down completely.

I hope this burst any bubbles you might have had toward what senior year would be like. You might find

yourself asking why all of this matters. Well in our world today, the job market is getting consistently more and more competitive. So competitive in fact, that fields of study at universities are beginning to fill up. For example,

This makes it extremely difficult for people without a degree to make it in the average job market. Of course, there are other paths that don't involve college, and I'm in no position to tell you where to take your own life, but even in well-paid

"I WANT TO URGE YOU TO BE CALM AS YOU NAVIGATE THROUGH THIS VERY IMPORTANT STAGE OF YOUR LIFE. TAKE IT SERIOUSLY, BUT DON'T CHANGE WHO YOU ARE..."

computer science and engineering are two of the hardest majors to apply to at any school, because so many people want to get into those job markets. Your later life will be determined by your job and your job, or any other work you might do, is heavily dependent on what you choose to do in your post-high school life, namely, your experience in college. As it stands now, most businesses are looking to hire college graduates for their 9-to-5 posts.

professions that don't require a college degree, raises are available for degree holders.

I want to urge you to be calm as you navigate through this very important stage of your life. Take it very seriously, but don't change who you are over something that will last only four years. While the effects of high school and college will shape your life, they should not be the driving factor. The driving factor should be you and your own choices.

DIGITAL BOOKS INCREASE ACCESS TO THE POWER OF READING

BY SALLY PHAN,
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Words are such an interesting thing. We use them to communicate what's on our minds, and essentially, they're how others see and remember us. Reading, however, wasn't so easy for me. Some types of texts were boring to read. Some books had words I'd never even heard of before and so many pages that I would never be able to get through them. As a kid,

I tried to pick up reading because I wasn't good at English and it was a way for me to build up my skills. Reading was super difficult. I used to wonder why some of my friends liked to read when I always thought it was so boring.

Recently, I've tried to pick up more books to read for pleasure and I like the experience a lot more now. It's almost something I picked up accidentally. My friend and I talked about the app Libby one morning before class started and I began to think, "Well, one of my goals for 2020 was to get into reading." With Libby, you can link the app with your library card and there are a bunch of e-books you can read. I knew that I was stressed at school and I had a bunch of free time on public transportation, so I could try picking up a book and getting into the habit of reading.

According to the American Psychological Association, "less

than 20 percent of U.S. teens report reading a book, magazine, or newspaper daily for pleasure." It's not a huge shock, seeing that as teens, we're always on the move from school, extracurriculars, work, whatever it may be, so it's rare to have tons of free time. What I found when I started reading again is that it actually reduces my stress and has acted as a way for me to stay sharp. I'll use it as a break when I'm doing homework, it keeps me occupied when I'm taking the bus home and honestly, it just gives me something to keep up with. Words are timeless, and it's important to read because in a time with so much political chaos and mass media, we must remember how to think, analyze and act for ourselves.

In Alisha Rajpal's TED Talk, "Read More. Think More," she discusses how reading has been impactful on her life as a youth



in today's world. She says to the crowd, "Consider you're reading a book and there's a line that goes 'an attractive man walks down the street' ... for each of us that attractive man could look different." When we read, we have our own interpretation of the world as compared to seeing it on screen where society's norm of an attractive man would be pressed upon us and accepted. When we read, we use our own imagination, our own beliefs and, honestly, our own brain.

The app Libby is amazing. I found that my main problem with reading was that it was so hard for me to constantly pull a book out and put it away if I wanted to read for only a short amount of time. I'm on my phone all the time, and Libby has made it convenient and easy for me to search for a variety of books to read instead of doing things like scrolling through Instagram for hours. On Libby, I just finished reading "David and Goliath" by Malcom Gladwell and now I'm ending February with "The Goldfinch" by Donna Tartt.

So here's my message to you: pick up a book! Explore what interests you, go through adventures and misfortunes with fictional characters and don't fall into the societal norm of not reading. Reading lets us build our own character in this world.

FINDING STUDYING DIFFICULT? USE THESE TIPS!

BY NATEH PANYERE,
STAFF WRITER

Do you enjoy the spring? It's a time in the year when new life begins, where people can freely go outside and enjoy the beautiful, blooming flowers. But for students? Nope! We don't have a chance to do all that. Instead, we are stuck with exams such as the MCAS, SAT and finals. The best way for us to do well on these tests is to review our notes while slouching our backs at a desk, also known as studying.

Standards-based assessments, such as the MCAS and the SAT, require lots of studying. Taking these tests can be challenging for many students, especially with the fear that if they don't know the material, they could potentially hurt their grade or struggle to succeed academically. Moreover, when students stress out too much about their studies, they could perform badly as a result or put their mental health at risk. In this article, I will be sharing tips students can use while preparing themselves for exams. This way, we can all do our best without getting too stressed.

TIP 1: DON'T ONLY STUDY AT A DESK, STUDY ACTIVELY!

Hunching your back at your desk is tiring, I know. The best posture to have is sitting up straight, however, having that posture makes it difficult to reach your desk. According to Psychology Today, constant sitting puts you at risk for heart disease, diabetes, depression, obesity and other medical concerns. To avoid this, be active while studying instead of only sitting!

Put your body in an active position while studying: CBS News reports that, "Standing while learning and completing assignments improves executive functioning, or the skills you use to break down tasks like writing an essay or solving multi-step math problems." This proves that keeping your body in an active state helps us study better, because studying creates a high demand for your brain's functions. Moving will keep your brain working, making your studies effective.

Exercise! Have a stretch!: CBS News also found that regular exercise has been shown to boost verbal memory, thinking and learning. It improves alertness, attention and motivation, while helping to build new brain cells.

Make it fun!: Instead of using piles of class notes to review, add a little twist to it. You could turn your studies into a sort of

game, like a “Family Feud”-based vocabulary game, or a board game or whatever else you can think of! As a bonus, invite classmates to play your game, so you’ll not only be having fun, but studying as well!

TIP 2: BE ORGANIZED!

If you’re often disorganized, you’ve probably had the experience of being in a rush, cramming things last minute or pushing yourself to the limit while multitasking. According to Productivity 501, a website dedicated to offering productivity tips, good organizational skills lead to productivity and efficiency. Appearing organized is one thing, but actually being organized when the work gets tough will make all the difference. Here are some organization skills that should be used for studying:

Having a clean environment: Working in an environment that is neat and tidy will reduce the amount of time you spend hunting files down, and increase your ability to get things done.

Get rid of and avoid all distractions: Technology, your friends and even the environment where you study can all be distractions. Yes, studying while listening to music can help, but let’s be real, we end up doing other things on our technology instead of studying. To avoid these distractions, isolate yourself. Leave your mobile phone, tablet, PC and everything else that could distract

you out of the room. Find a quiet room that lacks any environmental noise that irritates you. Make sure that room doesn’t have anything that will detract from your studying. If it is a mess, you might end up cleaning it all up. If there are many visual distractions, you might find yourself staring off into space at something in the room. When you truly find the right space for you, there won’t be anything to waste time on and you will progress much faster in your work.

Planning out your daily schedule: Schedules are especially important for students with extracurricular activities like sports, after school clubs or jobs. Oftentimes, these students are limited in their time to study. According to the University of Michigan at Flint, the expected study time for high school students on average is around one to two hours per night. One to two hours isn’t that much, so you’ll have enough personal time to add to your schedule. Try to make sure your study time is when you feel most comfortable, or in the mood.

TIP 3: EAT BRAINY FOODS!

To those that like to eat, you’re in luck. It’s good to eat healthy while studying to give your brain a boost, but don’t leave a mess on your paper! According to topuniversities.com, the foods listed below are brainy foods you might like:

Fish: Salmon, sardines and mackerel have lots of protein and Omega-3 fatty acids, which can help your brain’s memory functions.

Eggs: Here you can find important proteins and vitamins like B6, B12 and choline, which help regulate mood and improve mental function.

Green Tea: Tea is a good alternative to coffee or sodas full of caffeine, which students normally drink to keep themselves awake while studying. This beverage provides antioxidants that help sharpen your concentration.

Fruit: Sugar is sweet and addicting, I know. But fruit is sweet and addicting and beneficial, too! It’s a healthier alternative to a candy bar and provides nutritious vitamins for your studying brain.

TIP 4: SUPPORT YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE!

You want to know what the most important part of studying is? You. You are the one that’s going to take this exam. Therefore you are the one that’s going to study all of these topics. And for this, you’re going to need to put yourself in the best condition! Take a look at these tips to help you out:

Get comfortable: According to Ameritech, a healthcare college, “Numerous studies have found that the place—or ‘context’—in which you study affects how you’ll remember that information.” The better-suited place you study

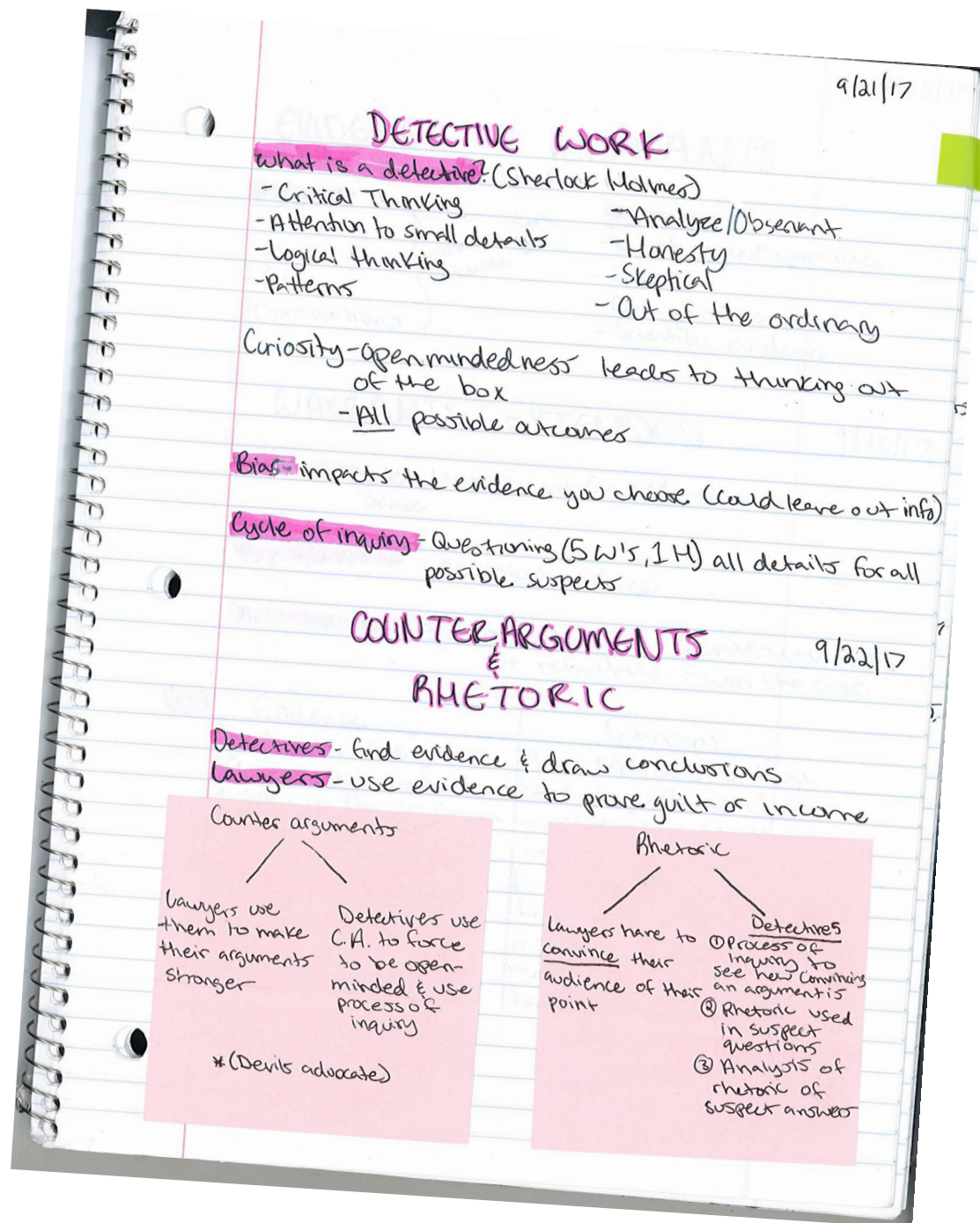
in, the better you'll remember information, while the least-suited place can lead to the opposite. Make sure your study environment is the most suited for you! Make sure it has things like comfortable lighting or nice stationery or whatever you like. Another way to get comfortable is to take breaks every so often. If you take frequent breaks every interval of study, you will stay refreshed and won't become mentally exhausted.

Combine your studies with your creativity/hobbies: You've heard the phrase "unleash your creativity" right? Well, if you want studying to feel easier, try to connect it with a hobby. Since you're already used to your hobbies, combining them with your studies can help make learning both comprehensive and entertaining. For instance, if you like to sing, then why not compose a song based on your study notes? If you like to write, why not write a story based on your notes? If you like to act, why not make a story based on your notes, and act it out? There are many possibilities, so try it out!

Study in a good mood: As I implied, no one likes to study. But even so, don't force yourself to study while you're in a bad mood! Make sure you're not overwhelmed with anything at the moment, and you are feeling completely energized and organized. Maybe even prepare a reward for yourself so you can be more motivated to

study! Psychology Today found that a positive attitude has a specific influence on learning. A good mood affects your ability to learn, especially subjects that require some amount of flexibility and creativity.

So, next time you are hitting the books, try to remember some of these helpful tips. You might be surprised by how much you improve and succeed!



CONSIDER COMMUNITY SERVICE OUTSIDE OF THE ANIMAL SHELTER

There are other organizations with more flexible volunteer schedules that need your help

BY YASMIN MOHAMED, EDITOR

Community service can be daunting. Similar to the college process, community service is often put off until we get closer to graduation. Counselors see students as invisible until senior year, and then pounce on them to demand college applications and graduation requirements.

You may be asking, what is community service? Community service is when an individual offers a service to the neighborhood or certain nonprofit organizations, like local animal shelters or homeless shelters. Community service is not paid — any form of monetary compensation means it's not community service.

Community service requirements vary from school to school. My school, Snowden International, requires students to perform 100 to 150 hours in order to graduate. But how do we find a location where we can serve?

High school youth often have a hard time finding community service opportunities. Competition with college students, age restrictions and parental

requirements all make community service harder to find than it should be. Animal shelters are the usual go-to for high school students. Shelters like ARL Boston and MSPCA-Angell take volunteers seasonally. Unfortunately, these positions tend to have a screening and application process that can make it difficult for students. The competition with veterinary-students-in-the-making makes it nearly impossible to snag a spot. However, there are plenty of places to volunteer around Boston!

First, did you know that you can get community service hours from your job? Oftentimes, unpaid work or community-oriented jobs will count as service hours. These opportunities don't come along all the time, so it's always a good idea to ask your employer. Massachusetts General Hospital, for example, offers community service hours for teens in Boston on an application basis. The application opens in the fall of each academic year.

Also, local shelters will always

take in volunteers! Rosie's Place, a women's shelter in the South End, accepts volunteers year-round. You can find flexible hours and self-schedule as an individual volunteer, and often you get free snacks too! Serving as an individual volunteer builds confidence — you can't rely on your friends to pull the weight for you. On their website, there is a short application. After it is reviewed, you'll be given an account to schedule yourself as a volunteer. Most volunteer options are doable as a teen, and there is always a supervisor available to assist with questions and teach you new tasks.

At Rosie's Place, there are two main options for youth volunteers in the kitchen: preparing and serving food or assisting in the food pantry. Youth can also help sign in visitors. In the kitchen, I alternated between washing dishes in the back and serving and cleaning up in the front.

Surprisingly, community service is broad enough to find an opportunity in the area you're interested in. Community service gives a sense of responsibility to the volunteer. Having people dependent on your work makes you appreciate the features in our communities that we usually overlook. Animal shelters are super-competitive to even get an interview, so if you're in a time crunch, applying to a local shelter is your best bet. Local shelters offer less-rigid hours, and more individuals are able to register as volunteers.

ADVICE ON HANDLING MINIMUM WAGE JOBS

BY CALEB BOVE, EDITOR

If you attend a public school in Boston, it is likely that either you or someone you know works at some form of internship or minimum-wage job. For many students and adults, these jobs are a convenient way to make money, but working in a position viewed as disposable by a large franchise can have a number of downsides. This can be especially problematic for workers who rely on the income these jobs provide and don't have the option of leaving if it becomes a toxic work situation.

Many examples of this abusive behavior can be found in a downtown movie theater in Boston. At this venue, these examples of circumvention were pretty wide-reaching, from a strong racial bias in the distribution of certain wages to superiors attempting to bully employees into accepting lower-paying positions.

In this instance, the company had developed a new work schedule for bartenders that involved

them spending less time at the bar, and more time working at the cash registers. The bartenders are paid a lower hourly rate for time spent at the cash register, so they would make less money overall with this new schedule. Since no bartender would accept what was essentially a demotion, the general manager had private meetings with each of them to repeatedly ask them to accept a new contract. This led to an awkward situation in which the person I interviewed had to politely decline the requests to meet repeatedly since he had no one else to advocate for him.

In situations like these, it's difficult for employees to advocate for themselves as their employers often see their positions as disposable. With jobs becoming increasingly more difficult to acquire, many workers would rather grin and bear such blatant violations of their rights than risk the possibility of being fired and losing a vital flow

of income. Additionally, businesses often fail to tell workers their rights. In fact, some businesses may go out of their way to stop workers from knowing them, so a minimum-wage employee may not even know when they are supposed to advocate for themselves. Because of this, businesses can get away with far more than they should be able to.

To get a better sense of the shortcomings in minimum-wage jobs, I interviewed two workers in a large movie theater franchise. The main problems they mentioned were that their superiors (one in particular) had no checks placed upon them, and were able to exploit loopholes in the treatment of their employees. What we as a society need to do is provide legal safety nets in order to encourage to report any shifty business in their hierarchies and explain to workers the steps they should take to advocate for themselves.

When asked what other workers in their position should do, the two theater employees I interviewed almost immediately said "Unionize. Get lawyers, and know your rights."

Here they referenced an organization that could provide legal representation for workers for a small fee. However, this is easier said than done, because if your employer believes that you and your coworkers are planning to form a union, they will sometimes try to fire you on the spot. That's illegal, and if it happens you can sue, but lawsuits are costly and not a realistic option for a majority of minimum-wage workers.

Some of the most important rights a worker has are the laws surrounding whistleblowers. If you, as an employee, alert the authorities to any kind of code violation in your workplace, you cannot be fired for doing so.

Just as important are the laws surrounding discrimination, which are well known but often not enforced. The main reason for this lack of enforcement lies in the fact that employees often go years without discussing things like income with their coworkers. It was in this way that the coworkers of the people I interviewed detected racial bias in wage distribution. After

discussions, the employees found that the general manager was paying white managers more. To detect unequal wages due to race, interaction among coworkers should be encouraged. While some businesses may not condone this, it is important for all workers to be aware that such discussions are in no way illegal, and they cannot legally be punished by an

there was any way provided for them to go over the head of their general manager, they both said there wasn't. One even said, "they probably don't want us snitching on them."

Minimum-wage workers and interns in Massachusetts deserve to be advocated for. As a state and as a country, this is something that we as Americans need to work towards. The first step

"MINIMUM-WAGE WORKERS AND INTERNS IN MASSACHUSETTS DESERVE TO BE ADVOCATED FOR."

employer.

As important as it is for employees to have legal support outside of the company they work for, it is just as important for workers to have a method of going above the heads of their superiors to resolve issues within their companies. Providing the contact information of upper-level management in a company is a good example of this kind of system. When the people I interviewed were asked if

towards this would be the creation of unions for all workers, which would provide legal support for anyone facing off against massive corporations.

Also, laws should be implemented to ensure that employees have a way of reporting their superiors to upper management. And most importantly, we as people should respect the minimum-wage workers who we interact with daily during their jobs.

TEENS SHOULD BE WARIER OF BECOMING GANG-AFFILIATED

BY T'AURA SMITH, STAFF WRITER

Gangs have a huge effect on our youth these days. Did you know that the average age to join a gang is just under 15? In Massachusetts, you can't even get your permit at that age! Being gang-affiliated is life-changing, and it can ruin your life.

According to Legal Match, being gang-affiliated is being associated with or close to a group of people, typically with three or more people who use certain names, signs or symbols to identify themselves; as a group or individually.

Teens are becoming awfully tribalistic when it comes to their fellow gang associates. People choose to associate with gangs because they think it gives them power, protection and easy money. It gives them

a feeling of being untouchable and highly respected because they always have these gang members by their side. Often people assume that the more dangerous the gang, and the worse the reputation, the less likely you are to get bothered by anyone outside of the gang.

Gang members often put on this act where the police and other gangs (unless they have a partnership) are their enemies. Ever heard the phrase "snitches get stitches?" That is street slang. It means that if you tattle on an ally to an opposing gang or law enforcement, the outcome will be a physical attack. This often makes people afraid of telling on other gang members. The information

that's kept from law enforcement due to this fear could be relevant to an open case, and withholding it could prevent a criminal from being brought to justice, or result in the withholder themselves going to prison.

University of Washington researchers found that people between the ages 27 and 33 that were gang-affiliated were three times more likely to receive income from an illegal source and twice as likely to have been locked up. The same study also found that former gang members are twice as likely to have substance use problems and half as likely to graduate high school. Without a high school diploma, it's extremely hard to get a job.

Even if you did find a job, people without a diploma usually work for a very low income. High school dropouts make about \$260,000 less than high-school graduates in a lifetime. That may not seem like a lot, but that's \$10,000 more than a quarter of a million.

According to

27-33

age of people who are gang-affiliated that are **three times** more likely to receive income from an illegal source and **twice as likely** to have been locked up

\$260,000

amount of money more that high school graduates make over high school dropouts in a lifetime

5,300

total number of gang members in Boston

the Boston Police Department's database, there are about 160 documented gangs, 5,300 total gang members, 2,800 active gang members and 2,500 inactive gang members in Boston. Many of these members may have joined gangs in high school. In 2010, there were approximately 772,500 young gang members in the United States. That was roughly 7% of the teen population then, so imagine the statistics now.

Being affiliated with a gang doesn't mean that someone is in a gang officially, it just means that they are associated with one. Authoritative figures shouldn't punish or nag a teen for being associated with a gang, but teens should also know what or who they are getting involved with. There can be a real danger to even being gang-affiliated.

For example, 15-year-old "Junior" Lesandro Guzman-Feliz was chased down into a bodega in Bronx, New York before being brutally killed by

several men armed with machetes. This case immediately blew up and everyone came up with their own stories.

A popular theory was that it was an awful case of mistaken identity, but his untimely death was the result of gang affiliation. A show called "True Life: Crime" found that Guzman-Feliz had been seen hanging out with members from a New York gang called the Renegade Sunset, the Trinitarios rival gang. The Trinitarios are a well-known New York gang whose weapon of choice is a machete. Guzman-Feliz was on his way to hang with some friends when he encountered some members of the Trinitarios. Since he had been seen with Renegade Sunset he was considered a target, and members of the Trinitarios brutally murdered him.

The point is, being gang-affiliated can be dangerous. Before you become comfortable hanging out with gang members, think of the outcome. Do not feed into peer pressure and be a kid while you can.

WELCOMING THE KINGS BACK TO BOSTON

BY BENDU DAVID, STAFF WRITER

We've all been to the Boston Common. Whether it was for Pride, to spend time with friends at Frog Pond or to participate in a march or a protest, Boston Common is a landmark for everyone who has visited or lives in Boston. You've seen the Brewer Fountain and you've seen the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. You know of the Frog statue and the Boston Massacre Memorial. But did you know that Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a speech on the Common? You've probably also heard the city referred to as "historic Boston," but did you know that it was King's second home? It was in Boston that King and his wife, Coretta Scott King, got a great deal of their work done.

King Boston is a privately-funded nonprofit working with the city to create a memorial of Coretta Scott King and Martin Luther King Jr. The nonprofit wishes to honor the Kings and their work together in Boston as it is not widely recognized. According to King Boston's website, the memorial will be placed on Boston Common where King delivered a speech on segregation in 1965.

Not many are aware of the important work the Kings did in Boston. In his sermon "The Drum Major Instinct," delivered



on Feb. 4, 196 in Alabama, King expressed his hope that his legacy would continue on as a call to action, driving more people to pursue justice. King attended Boston University in 1951 and met Coretta Scott King in 1952 as she attended the New England Conservatory of Music for graduate school.

Christina Demard, a 17-year-

old senior at Boston Latin Academy, said she did not know of the Kings' influence in Boston throughout her 17 years of living in the city. "I did not know they did anything here," she said. "I didn't even know they came up here — I thought all their influence was in the South."

Demard is not alone. I first heard about King Boston's

initiative after taking part in Twelfth Baptist Church's annual MLK Convocation where Marie St. Fleur, executive director of King Boston, spoke about the plan and its importance.

"It is most definitely a good idea," Demard said. "It will be eye-catching and force people to pay attention. It will push people to acknowledge what they have done."

Na'tisha Mills, an associate at King Boston, said the initiative was established about three years ago. Paul English, who is the founder of King Boston, was on his way back from Chicago where he had seen a memorial that honored Martin Luther King Jr.

"So on his way back, he started talking with multiple leaders in the Boston area, and decided that he wanted to create a memorial that would honor the history of MLK," she explained. "In a conversation with a lot of community members, they said they wanted to do more than just bring a memorial to the city. They wanted to do something that could actually be a call to action; it could further the work of the Kings and the work for economic justice. That's when the idea for the King Center was brought up."

The current initiative is a two-piece living memorial: a monument that will be on Boston Common and programming at the Center of Economic Justice in Roxbury.

Funds for both the memorial and the Center of Economic Justice — about \$12 million — are now being raised. The center will be located in the reopened Boston Public Library branch in Nubian Square. A lot of funds have come from community members who play a large role in this process and its talks.

When talking about memorials, always a question about what they mean and what the importance of any sort of monument or memorial is.

"THE KING BOSTON INITIATIVE IS SOMETHING THAT WILL HOPEFULLY SERVE TO SHED LIGHT ON THE HISTORY AND THE WORK OF THE KINGS DURING THEIR TIME IN BOSTON..."

"As a history teacher, I think monuments are a way to remember people and moments throughout history and I think they matter as kind of a reminder of our collective history and what that means to us," Anthony Mathieu, a history teacher at Boston Latin Academy said. "I think those who control history will remember those who either share a common identity or background with the writers of history or we strive to idolize people who represent our ideals."

The King Boston Initiative is

something that will hopefully serve to shed light on the history and the work of the Kings during their time in Boston, a history that isn't known or learned by most residents of this city. The memorial and the Center of Economic Justice are both resources that will serve the black community and the greater community of Boston as a whole.

As Mills put it, "I think our biggest hope is that we are bringing community members that are most affected by many

of the economic disparities in Boston, together with the providers, together with the servers and the policymakers to advance a mutual economic justice agenda."

"And what that means," she said, "is that we are giving those that are most affected by these disadvantages the opportunity to lead the strategy around what is best going to work for them, around what they need to succeed, to thrive, to live happy healthy lives in Boston."

A TRAVELER'S GUIDE

**BY: EDDIE CONLEY + PHAIDON
ATHANASOPOULOS, STAFF
WRITERS**

Have you ever asked yourself: what is Oak Grove? What's at Forest Hills besides more trains? Questions like these probably surround young travelers who are just trying to go from Point A to Point B. What if we told you, you could slow down and take in the area around each stop?

Yes that's right, there is actually stuff around Forest Hills besides countless bus stops and train tracks. Please continue reading to get 'The Traveler's Guide to the Orange Line', one of the MBTA's most traveled lines.

1. FOREST HILLS TO ROXBURY CROSSING

Let's start with the southernmost stops which include: Forest Hills, Green Street, Stony Brook, Jackson Square and Roxbury Crossing. Honestly, the best thing Forest Hills has to offer is its connections. There are more bus connections than any other Orange Line stop and it also connects to the Commuter Rail. Forest Hills is also directly connected to the Arnold Arboretum, a beautiful park that is home to various types of plants and a great place to visit with friends or family. If you are looking for something to eat around Forest Hills, Mike's Donut Shop sells breakfast and is located right in the station. On the street, the Oriental House provides Chinese food and Achilito's Taqueria provides Mexican food.

Green Street and Stony Brook are only a short trip away from Forest Hills and much of the same pros and cons apply in terms of connections. The Green Street stop leaves you within walking distance of Centre Street which is home to good ol' J.P. Licks.

Jackson Square is at the intersection of Centre Street and Columbus Ave, making it a traffic hellzone. Despite this, Jackson Square not only provides access to il Panino Cafe and Grill, but also a shopping center further down Centre Street.

TO THE ORANGE LINE

2. RUGGLES TO TUFTS MEDICAL CENTER

Jumping over to Ruggles, you can expect to see a Forest Hills-looking station, surrounded by large new developments and a whole bunch of bus connections. If you are really hungry and find yourself at Ruggles or Back Bay, all hope isn't completely lost. Back Bay is in the heart of Boston's South End, which is highly populated by restaurants and tiny shops. My personal favorite coffee shop, Pavement Cafe, has a location on Newbury Street. The rest of the businesses are really nice restaurants and bakeries. Your wallet might hurt a bit after but at least your stomach won't.

Just looking to have fun? Ruggles is right near the Emerald Necklace, a large, expansive, skinny strip of green that is a pretty nice bike ride or walk. If you're in the Tufts area, the Boston Public Gardens and Boston Common are only a short walk away. Weekends can be hectic with an influx of tourists but generally these places are definitely on the bucket list of places to go in Boston.



3. CHINATOWN TO NORTH STATION

Our third section brings us from Chinatown all the way to North Station, the heart of Boston. This is a pretty expansive area, teeming with history, fashion, culture, cuisine, shops and entertainment. From Chinatown, not only can you explore the Chinese-owned and inspired restaurants and shops, but you can also easily access Boston Common, including Frog Pond, the Swan Boats and the Public Garden.

Next up is Downtown Crossing, which immediately surrounds you with mega stores such as Macy's, Primark, T.J. Maxx, Marshalls and Old Navy. It also connects to the Red Line, the only stop on the Orange Line to do so. Downtown Crossing is super close to Escape the Room Boston, which is self explanatory so check it out!

Right after Downtown Crossing is State Street which is close to the Old South Meeting House, a staple in Boston's history. State is the only



Orange Line stop that connects to the Blue Line. Haymarket is situated right across the street from City Hall and also right next to, you guessed it, Boston Public Market. The Public Market is chock full of organic, local individual businesses that put great care into their work. From seafood to apple cider, there is something for everyone at the BPM.

Our last stop in this section is North Station. While Haymarket makes room for plenty of

bus lines, North Station houses four Commuter Rail lines and just like Haymarket, it houses two Green Line tracks. North Station has what scientists call “superior position” as it is on the edge of the city, making it a great place to start any commute. Of course one of the biggest draws of North Station has to be TD Garden, the

home of the Bruins and Celtics. If you can snag a ticket, go! Finally, North Station is located in the North End, obviously well known for its Italian influence and the delicious food!

4. COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO OAK GROVE

What lies beyond North Station is a mystery to many Bostonian travelers. Few riders of the Orange Line have ever been to Oak Grove, and if so, definitely not frequently. Well, we decided to take the plunge and go all the way from Forest Hills to Oak Grove. Having gone the whole way we can say for a fact that there is very little to do at Oak Grove. If you want to head in that direction looking for something to do, definitely stop at Malden Center instead where there is a lot to do. Before we get to our experience in Malden, the stops in between need to be covered.

Wellington and Assembly are on opposite sides of the Mystic River. Wellington is an important station as it is the repair hub of the Orange Line, making it one of the larger stations. Assembly is home to the noteworthy Assembly Row, sprawling across 45 acres of shops, restaurants and other entertainment locations. Some notable mentions include the AMC, Legoland, Mike's Pastry, Banana Republic and Lucky Strike Social, a cool arcade and bowling alley. Sullivan Square is another stop worth mentioning due to its proximity to Assembly Row and its own row of local shops.

Going north into Malden there is lots more to do. We encountered the Wanyoo eSports Center,



a gaming cafe funded by a Chinese gaming company. You pay per hour of play. We had lots of fun with the racing simulator and the virtual reality setup. We were also given a quick tour of the facilities. The cafe is equipped with high quality gaming equipment and has multiple private rooms for private parties. There is also a menu of Asian imported cuisine. Speaking of which, Asian cuisine dominates downtown Malden, giving you plenty of delicious options.

The Orange Line is one of the busiest lines in Boston and rightfully so. There are tons of great places to check out and you are truly missing out of what makes this city so great if you're not getting out there.

CAUCUS CONUNDRUM: THE BALLAD OF THE IOWA BALLOT

BY JACOB DOWNEY, EDITOR

On a drab winter day in the 56,000-square-mile cornfield colloquially known as the state of Iowa, the Democratic Party took its biggest “L” since that time they lost to George W. Bush twice. The Iowa caucus, the first in a long line of mini-elections staged by the Democratic Party to select a candidate for president, would end with intense scrutiny on the Hawkeye state (yes, like the worst Avenger).

The caucus works by having residents report to their assigned voter precinct. In the same manner of voting used to decide the prize pig of the county fair, voters are sent to sections of the room meant to represent their preferred candidate. A headcount is taken and the candidates with less than 15% of the vote are removed from that poll site. The process repeats until a winner is decided. In between rounds, supporters of other candidates are allowed to run over and try to persuade losing sides to their own.

This year, in an effort to modernize the proceeding, an app was created to streamline the vote. Rather than the glorified game of red rover that’s been historically played, the app

would count votes automatically. However, the app did not modernize a tradition as old as the state itself; instead, the country was collectively reminded why we vote on paper ballots.

The cause of Iowa’s fiasco is mainly attributed to the voting software. The developer of the app, Shadow, is a

\$21,150

amount Buttigieg campaign paid Shadow for “software rights and subscriptions”

for-profit tech start-up hired by the Democratic National Committee to produce the app. And yes it’s called Shadow and it’s not suspicious in any way whatsoever. Either:

- A) The pollsters were unable to work the app
- B) Shadow made an app that fundamentally did not work
- C) Both

If you’re too cynical, too invested or just inclined to pick C in all cases,

you would be correct. Thanks to a slew of coding errors, a lack of stress testing and poll officials who were both uninformed of the change and unfamiliar with the tech, interpreting the data quickly became impossible.

As Shadow’s CEO Gerard Niemira put it in a statement: “As the Iowa Democratic Party has confirmed, the underlying data and collection process via Shadow’s mobile caucus app was sound and accurate, but our process to transmit that caucus results data generated via the app to the IDP was not.” Essentially, he suggested that the app worked fine but the results got lost in the mail.

This point is contrasted by takes from critics. “I would say this company failed, not technology failed,” Jason Erickson, chief operating officer at ThinkSpace IT, told CNN. “Everything had a single point of failure ... our phone solution is not only on redundant servers but at redundant data centers across the U.S.”

In case you’re not big on tech, Erickson is saying that this was not a glitch in the matrix but willing incompetence on behalf of Shadow which has drawn scrutiny and even talk of a rigged system from critics.

It wouldn’t be until February 20, more than two weeks after the caucus, that CNN dropped the final results with former South Bend mayor Pete Buttigieg taking a slight .1% lead over Bernie Sanders. However, Buttigieg’s team, which has since dropped out from the race, shot out an ever ominous tweet that

“Tonight, Iowa chose a new path. #IowaCaucuses,” when only three percent of polls were reporting back mere hours after the caucuses started.

A 2020 candidate saying something out of turn is hardly news, but what makes things especially interesting is Buttigieg’s established relationship to Shadow. Last September, the Buttigieg campaign paid \$21,250 to Shadow for “software rights and subscriptions.” What does that mean? Great question! One we have not and probably will not get a satisfactory answer to.

So what does any of this mean? For Iowa, its 2020 elections should not be done via red rover. For the Democratic Party, maybe make sure your tech actually works before you kick off the most important election of the century, with a strong reminder of both how inept our elected officials can be and the ever-present shadow of big tech completely fumbling our information.

It is imperative that we continue to hold accountable the people we’re relying on to bring about much-needed change. If the Dems can’t even count votes without a state’s worth of infrastructure falling apart, how are they going to win in November? Furthermore, we need to take a closer look as to how votes are counted as, while it does seem more efficient, events have proven that maybe pen and paper is the way to go.

IMMIGRANTS DON’T ‘STEAL JOBS’ AND THAT RHETORIC IS DANGEROUS

BY YANIRY BAEZ, STAFF WRITER

Immigration in the United States has a long history. Most immigrants come to the U.S. for the “American dream” because they think they’ll have more opportunities here than they did in their own country. However, it’s very hard to be an immigrant in the U.S. because you are constantly being treated horribly. Some racist Americans call immigrants lazy and say that they steal American jobs and should go back to their country. But that’s not actually true.

Americans have been more openly stating their opinion starting back in 2016 when Donald Trump was elected into office. Trump seems to really hate immigrants and has called them rapists, drug dealers and other hurtful insults. These insults and accusations are especially directed at immigrants from Latin America. This is relevant because in Boston there are a lot of immigrants. According to a City of Boston demographic report, Massachusetts has the seventh largest immigrant population with a total of 772,983 immigrants that make up 12.2% of the state’s population.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, immigrants do not take away jobs from American workers. Instead, they create new jobs by forming

businesses. In Boston, there are a lot of Dominican, Puerto Rican, Cuban and Jamaican restaurants. Everywhere I turn, I see a restaurant run by an immigrant family. Immigrants put their blood, sweat and tears into businesses to share their culture and work hard so that they are able to feed their families. Instead of blaming other people for your nation’s problems, focus on fixing the problems.

Immigrants come to the U.S. for better lives. They don’t have as many opportunities in their home countries to help their families, so they come to the U.S. and try to build new lives here. As Brookings senior fellow Vanda Felbab-Brown explains, “Undocumented workers often work the unpleasant, back-breaking jobs that native-born workers are not willing to do.”

Immigrants will take any opportunity they can to better their lives. If Americans aren’t taking the jobs, who will? Immigrants usually take jobs that Americans are too lazy to do like working in factories, or in construction.

Everyday immigrants are treated poorly because of their race, class and citizenship status. They are treated poorly for being a normal human being. Americans should not be putting down other people who are different from them.

AMERICANS SHOULD CELEBRATE INDIGENOUS CULTURE IN OCTOBER INSTEAD OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

BY MICHAELLE MOTA, STAFF WRITER

We are all homo sapiens right? Correct! We, as human beings, have evolved all over the world with our own many cultures and manners of speaking over many thousands of years. The United States has been a country for almost 250 years, but the people and

1492, looking to find a shorter route to India. Instead, he accidentally landed in North America, which he began to colonize. Since the local culture did not perfectly align with European ideas of advancement, Columbus and other colonists thought

already.

Given that Christopher Columbus was a greedy abuser who used inhumane treatment to extend his power, we should not honor him with a holiday. It makes no sense to celebrate a man who forced people into physical and sexual slavery and separated families. Instead, the second Monday in October should be recognized as Indigenous Peoples' Day to honor and commemorate the Native American peoples and cultures who existed in the U.S. long before Columbus.

Although Columbus initially sought trade with local populations, he quickly began to take advantage. He saw that the indigenous people worked hard, and they were knowledgeable about the local environment. As a result, Columbus maliciously decided to use and exploit them for personal gain. Noted Spanish historian and Catholic priest, Bartoleme

de las Casas, transcribed his accounts of inhumane acts committed by Columbus in his "History of the Indies" writings. His writings have resurfaced in recent articles that condemned the celebration of Columbus Day in the United States.

According to the Huffington Post, Columbus abused local people physically and emotionally, ultimately enslaving many of them. Girls as young as nine were forced into sexual slavery and were considered desirable by European colonists. Philadelphia Magazine reports that Columbus brought weaponry and attack dogs in his travels to the "New World." If Native Americans tried to escape captivity, he would send his dogs after them. If the dogs were hungry and they ran out of meat, he would reportedly use stolen Arawak babies as food.

These committed atrocities were not widely known by much of society

"IT MAKES NO SENSE TO CELEBRATE A MAN WHO FORCED PEOPLE INTO PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL SLAVERY AND SEPERATED FAMILIES."

land that we live on has been around for much longer. No single culture or person deserves complete credit for "discovering" the United States as we know it, because people have been living here for thousands of years. Christopher Columbus had no right to try to "give" indigenous people culture — they already had one.

Columbus was an Italian explorer who set sail in

they were doing indigenous people a favor by forcing their own ideas upon them. This, in effect, destroyed the local culture that already existed. Columbus had no right to invade someone else's land, take advantage of people and resources and force his own culture onto others. If he really wanted to help, he could have found a way to do so that didn't completely dehumanize everyone living there

when Columbus Day began to take hold as a national holiday. According to CNN, Tammany Hall first recognized Columbus as a heroic figure in 1792, 300 years after Columbus landed in North America. President Benjamin Harrison suggested the idea for a Columbus Day holiday a century later in 1892 and Columbus Day ultimately became a legal federal holiday in 1971.

Those who decided to implement the holiday wanted someone for their children to look up to, and apparently Columbus was the only person they could come up with. Even though he is often credited for discovering America, Columbus was only one of many explorers to “discover” North America. Leif Erikson, a Norse explorer from Iceland is the first non-native person to have arrived in North America around 500 years before the time of Columbus. Not only that, Columbus never set foot in America, he landed in what he called the “West Indies,” known today as the Bahamas.

Around the country, advocacy groups are working to see Indigenous Peoples’ Day officially

recognized as a holiday instead of Columbus Day. Since 2016, the cities of Cambridge and Somerville have officially celebrated Indigenous Peoples Day according to their websites. The holiday allows for the local Indigenous communities to not only celebrate their culture together, but also to hold events where they can educate the public about the actual history of their community and gather with other Native Americans. People in these communities can share perspectives with each other, mourn the tragedies and celebrate their shared progress and successes with people who understand their collective experience.

The Indigenous Peoples’ holiday itself can act as a celebration and a safe haven for a deserving community that has been marginalized for hundreds of years. I support Indigenous Peoples’ Day because I believe Columbus deserves no recognition as a hero after treating Native Americans so poorly, and a holiday for him degrades their worth. I hope others spread the word and take a stand to reject Columbus Day in favor of Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

RENTING VS BUYING: A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING HOW TO PAY FOR A HOME

BY TONI MOSLEY, STAFF WRITER

When considering housing, there are two different routes people can take: renting or buying. Many people will argue that buying is better than renting because it’s a good investment that allows for more financial freedom. Similarly, for people who rent, they’ll say that there’s more mobility with renting than buying, because depending on the lease, you may be able to leave if you need to. These are all very important considerations to take when deciding on a new home, but there’s more you and your parents should know about renting and buying before choosing which option is best for you.

When you rent, the landlord has to make sure the property is safe and sanitary. If you break or damage anything in the property the landlord has to fix it, but you have to deal with the bill for that broken object. On the plus side, you can

distribute your money to other investments like stocks or anything else because you won’t be wasting all of your money on a mortgage from your house. But, a problem with renting is the cost. According to Rent Jungle, in Boston the average rent in 2020 is \$3,472 for a 2 bedroom apartment, while, in Manchester in 2020, the average rent is \$1,317 for a 2 bedroom apartment. Where you rent also depends on the city. Some people might say to renters that you’re throwing away money on rent to some landlord. But isn’t that better than paying a mortgage to some bank?

Owning a house comes with a lot of responsibilities, because you have to deal with whatever breaks or gets damaged in the house. And if you don’t pay your bills on time, the bank could foreclose on you, and you could eventually get kicked out of your house and

be on the streets. On the plus side, you'll have a mortgage deduction. In Boston a mortgage is 100% tax deductible, and Mass Real Estate says that you can exclude up to \$250,000 as a single filer and if you're married, you can exclude up to \$500,000.

What this means is that whatever extra money you paid on your house you can take out to put into your pocket.

At the end of the day, you should make sure you know all the considerations before making your final decision, because this will be the biggest financial decision of your life. And you have to make sure if you plan to move to larger cities to do a lot of research to know which option works best for you and your budget so you won't end up in financial debt and unhappy with your living conditions. You should also talk to a banker not a real estate agent because they know the amount of money you have and they can give you all the information you need to make the best choice.

In the end, it's your choice whether to rent or buy, but make sure to see if it's in your budget and it's in a location that works for you.

IN THE DEBATE BETWEEN RELIGION AND LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES, THERE IS MORE COMMON GROUND THAN EXPECTED

BY NATHAN DEJESUS, EDITOR

Religion is impeding the decisions of too many people choosing to love who they want. Several depictions and interpretations of the Bible point to same-sex attraction in a negative light. But, the Bible nor God ever mention being gay as sexual orientation wasn't an established idea yet. Regardless, churches have debated the appropriate response to an increasing number of LGBTQ+-identifying members for years.

On one side, there are affirming churches that actively celebrate people's identities and sexual orientations. On the other, churches that believe an LGBTQ+ identity and a Christian faith are inherently conflicting, and people who experience "same-sex attraction" must choose one or the other.

On both sides of this stale battle, there are religious leaders who want to create a safe space for people who experience "same-sex attraction." They both believe that God wants you to live a life of faith, but approach this issue in different ways.

A church that follows the affirmation model is the Old South Church in Copley Square. Katherine Schofield is

the interim associate minister at Old South and has been a member since 2006. When I sat down with Schofield, my fear of churches was bubbling inside me. I didn't grow up in a religious household, so this issue doesn't apply to me in any life-changing way, but I'm gay. I know that an unaccepting faith can cause distress and self-hatred in teens and adults, to the point of driving people to suicide, so sitting down with church officials naturally made me nervous. I also knew Schofield identifies as a lesbian though, and I thought if she's made it this far within an institution that may consider her a sinner, maybe it wasn't as bad as I thought.

"I definitely had fear, fear around coming out, fear around being accepted," she said. "[But] I never felt that God didn't love me, which is a blessing for me — that I grew up being taught that God is love."

When I started this article, I planned to prove that it was impossible to be ex-gay. During the interview I brought that up, assuming Schofield would agree, but I assumed wrong.

She removed the issue from the

context of faith and explained how anyone could go through an experience that changes how they see the world or how they love altogether. That opened my eyes because I never thought of looking at without the lens of faith. People's experience and identity can both change for many reasons, and that's all someone's sexual orientation is. I now believe that anyone could go through anything and potentially be "ex-gay," but let's not use that term as it's been disavowed by people in all communities.

As good as this mindset is that God loves you just the way you are and it does not matter how you live, not everyone agrees.

Brenna Kate Simonds is the leader of a Christian ministry called *Alive in Christ*, which aims to "offer hope for those who are impacted by same-sex attraction." *Alive in Christ* hosts weekly support groups for Christians who are distressed by their attraction, as well as their family and friends. It's important to note that they do not actively recruit members — instead all of their members have come to them looking for this type of support.

Simonds is an amazingly interesting woman, who lived a part of her life identifying as a lesbian. She was both romantically and sexually involved with women, but then these temptations as she calls them were gone. She now chooses to live in a wonderfully committed heterosexual marriage.

I felt some hostility while gathering background info on Simonds and *Alive in Christ*. The website was somewhat outdated and plain,

which gave it a cold feeling, but seeing Simonds sitting in the Starbucks where we met had an instant calming effect. Through a computer screen, I couldn't see her personality well — I could only see her beliefs. Meeting her in person with a coffee and a smile on her face reminded me that she's a human just as I am, even if her beliefs conflict with my lifestyle.

Simonds explained that *Alive in Christ* is designed for people that want to reconcile their faith with their sexuality.

"I want them to feel like there are people who understand," she said. "There are people who've been where they are. And [I want them] to feel heard, because I do think that's kind of a problem in the church in general."

This statement made me happy because she was giving people a space to say what was on their minds. I just wasn't exactly keen on the title of "Strugglers" that these people are given through AIC.

From both sides of this conflict, there was one thing that stuck out in a good way. Both Schofield and Simonds believe that knowing someone in the LGBTQ+ community as a person, regardless of their faith, is so much better than worrying about if they believe they are a sinner.

"You could go back and forth about biblical interpretation and what the text really means, but that won't make as much of a difference as actually knowing somebody who's LGBTQ+ and getting to know [them] as a person," Schofield said.

I can write this article and argue

with anyone who disagrees with it, but at the end of the day, we're all just humans who have the same characteristics and share the same world. We can still get to know each other and become friends regardless of how we choose to live out our faiths. Though Simonds personally believes that she couldn't follow her faith and be in relationships with women, she thinks accepting others' choices is also part of her faith.

"Whatever your beliefs are — [Nathan] you have rainbows on your ears, and because you contacted me on Facebook I looked at your Facebook page, and you have a rainbow flag," she said. "I kind of assume you identify as gay or queer or something like that. If I want to have the right to live my life, the way I feel God is telling me to live it, I need to give you the right to live your life, the way that you feel like is best."

Both Simonds and Schofield believe they are doing what God intended for them to do. I think this is important as God may speak to everyone differently. Personally, I draw the line at changing or twisting someone's thoughts, and I'm sure they would as well, though one may argue that's what Simonds does.

I started this journey trying to find out why Christianity is incompatible with homosexuality and I think I got an answer. At the end of the day, no one can save you but God. You were not born into this life to compete with the others for the worthiness of God's love. You already have it. Remember that.

TEENS NEED TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF INSENSITIVE MEMES

BY LESLIE GONZALEZ, STAFF WRITER

The year 2020 kicked off with news about a potential World War III and the spread of the coronavirus. Despite the severity of these situations, everyone had a meme to share and laugh to have about everything going on in the world.

For example, the meme of Michael Jordan laughing in the first image and then crying in the second, with a caption that reads, “Me laughing at all the World War 3 memes Vs. me when I get that draft letter.” Then, there are all the coronavirus memes. I’m not going to lie, some of them are funny. However, it’s not okay to create racist memes, such as one that reads, “It’s a simple, we uh, eat the batman,” with a picture of the Joker wearing an Asian conical rice hat. You can clearly see the racism here.

All around the world memes have been posted, shared, talked about and laughed at. Why is it that in today’s society, we make funny memes of situations that are serious or dangerous? While I feel

that memes are acceptable in general, when we use them to poke fun at serious topics it stops being funny.

Mohammed Elamin, a 14-year-old freshman at Fenway High, said “I don’t care. I mean if the joke is really funny, I’ll laugh. However, you can’t tell an autism joke in front of someone who has it.” Like many teenagers, Elamin doesn’t quite understand how jokes can affect someone. Teenagers don’t really understand the whole message behind the memes — they mostly look at them and just laugh.

Some of the World War III memes went as far as bringing up the topic of women’s rights. For example, a popular meme joked about how women have no rights, so they also can’t be drafted into the war. However, not everyone was laughing. Twitter user Ryan Knight (@ProudResister) wrote, “War is not a [expletive] joke. It is a destructive and selfish act. 4,424 U.S. soldiers and an estimated 600K Iraqi

civilians died in the Iraq war over WMDs that did not exist. So please stop with these #WWIII memes and instead call your Congress members and tell them #NoWarWithIran.”

A potential crisis that would actually mean something awful for our country’s future is not something to joke about. It shows incivility. You are being the definition of a jerk. Soldiers at war risk their lives every day. They are waking up and going to sleep with the fear of it being their last day. For teens to create memes and laugh at the idea of war is just plain cruel.

More recently, the coronavirus memes are amplifying stereotypes against Asians. Some people are refusing to eat Chinese food or be around Asian people at all. On the one hand, it’s understandable to be cautious. But, at the same time, you have to realize that while the virus started in China, that doesn’t mean that every Asian person has it. It made me very upset to hear that people are being rude to Chinese people. I can’t even lie, I also began to avoid Asian people when I first saw the memes, but

I stopped doing it because I realized that it made the person feel hurt.

Teens have been insensitive to other topics that aren’t as timely as well, such as making fun of autistic people. It is highly disrespectful to make fun of a group that is already discriminated against. One meme shows a smiling Spongebob with no eyebrows and a caption that reads, “When the school shooter knocks on the door and the autistic kid opens the door.” This “joke” is that people with autism would be the first to die in a school shooting. Not only does it make fun of people with a developmental disorder, but it also makes light of mass shootings. This is highly ignorant and heartless.

Teens need to stop being so apathetic and actually try to understand the real message they send out when sharing and posting hurtful memes on topics. We can’t always fix the world and people, but being able to notice things that aren’t right is the way to help out. So when you see something fishy with a meme that teens are posting, call them out on it. Don’t like it or share it.

UNDERSTANDING CHINA'S BRAINWASHING CAMPS

BY MARIA O'MALLEY, STAFF WRITER

Ever since 2014, the Chinese government has employed sophisticated surveillance technology in the Xinjiang region, according to The New York Times. The technology designed for struggling cities and impoverished communities to crack down on illegal actions. But in 2017, China began sending Uyghur Muslims, a small Turkic minority-ethnic group, to “re-education camps.”

Over the past three years, about 100,000 Uyghur Muslims have been detained and brought to camps in Xinjiang, according to the BBC. The dormitories in these camps can hold up to 10 people per room, with only a thin sheet of fabric as bedding along with one pillow. The detainees are forced to reject their religion and beliefs. For example, most Muslims are forced to eat pork and drink wine, which is forbidden in their religion.

If a detainee decides they don't want to leave their religious beliefs behind, the Chinese government reportedly puts that person into solitary confinement. This means they are separated from all of society and it's just them, a bathroom and a bed in a small cell. Some Muslims contemplate suicide after a few weeks in the facility.

When Jannet Hasan, a 10th grader at the John D. O'Bryant, first heard about the re-education camps, she felt sick to her stomach.

“How can they sleep at night knowing they're ripping families apart?” Hasan, a Muslim herself, asked. “In all honesty, I am in no way surprised that this is

“HOW CAN THEY SLEEP AT NIGHT KNOWING THEY'RE RIPPING FAMILIES APART?”

-JANNET HASAN, 10TH GRADER

happening ... ever since 9/11 Muslims have been targeted and it escalated when Trump got elected.”

China believes that it is stopping “terrorism ... and separatism” by running the camps. According to the BBC, “[China] claims voluntary training schools for Muslim-majority Uyghurs are in fact heavily policed re-education camps.” In November 2019, 400 pages of leaked files were exposed to the public. In response, the Chinese government said the leaked files are “fake news.”

“China is a communist country and, with that said, the leader

runs the whole show and has the view that most, if not all, of China should be Hun Chinese,” Christian Scott, a history teacher at the Patrick Lyndon Pilot School explained. “If not, they are looked at as lower than anybody who is.”

In the past, China has done other human injustices, such as the Tiananmen Square massacre. The Tiananmen Square protests were “student-led demonstrations calling for democracy, free speech and a free press in China,” according to The Human Rights Watch. This protest ended with

many fatalities caused by the government, and thirty years later Chinese authorities have not acknowledged the atrocity or provided justice. While the goal of communism is to create a classless society, in practice, a single authoritarian party controls state-owned means of production, making it hard to get unbiased information.

As of right now, we still don't have definitive data about the situation in China. We should continue to pay attention to the issue, though, and look to established news outlets.

AWARENESS OF THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE IS CRUCIAL

BY AAYANNA STEVENSON, STAFF WRITER

Kids all around the world experience abuse. They face it from day to day — not all kids have a sweet friendly life. Child abuse is overlooked by some because everyone has their own opinion on what child abuse is.

Types of abuse include physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Part of the challenge is that it can be hard for kids to ask for help. For example, if a kid tried to call someone, they might get abused worse by their guardian. Although the incidence of child abuse and neglect has been decreasing, at least 678,000 children in the United States were abused in 2018, according to the Children's Bureau. Child abuse happens everywhere from wealthy families to poor. It can occur in any race or religion.

According to Healthy Place, the largest consumer mental health site, some of the long-lasting effects of abuse are eating disorders, anti-social behavior, apathy and lethargy, depression, and sometimes even attention problems. As you

can see, it's not something kids should be going through. Kids can become very anxious and fearful, and it can also be hard for them to express their emotions. They won't have the sweet, loving life of a kid. Instead, they will be traumatized.

Imagine being hit or touched in a way you don't like. Imagine having to relive that day or year or even having to experience it now. Not only do these experiences have an impact in the moment, but those effects often stay with children who are abused.

In school, children are often asked to put on a pretty face to show nothing is wrong. While with friends, they may not be able to have the fun they would like to have. School can actually be a triggering space for many kids because their peers don't really know what personal space is. For children who have experienced abuse, their tolerance for touching is often very limited.

Furthermore, trauma can negatively impact

social life as well. When a student's friends talk about their lives, it's often difficult for students who have experienced abuse to just open up. Many kids find it hard to form long-lasting and real relationships. They tend to struggle to trust people in ways that may seem easy to others.

Across the nation, child abuse is a vast issue and many kids are affected by this issue. Depression, PTSD, concentration difficulties and many other conditions can be caused by trauma. The youth are stripped away from the childhood that they thought they'd have. Instead, they are terrified of the ones that are supposed to give them that security and warmth. Without addressing this it will become more of a problem than it already is. Stop abusing your children, stop making their self-esteem and confidence dissolve into nothing but ash. Love your children whom you swore you'd protect and love unconditionally.

WE NEED TO STOP USING LGBTQ+ SLURS



BY HANNA GUMMER, STAFF WRITER

Imagine walking through the halls of your school, your hands gripped tightly onto the straps of your worn out, heavy backpack. Excitement and happiness flow through your veins as you feel unstoppable. Today is your day. You're going to accomplish the hardest of tasks. You walk into your homeroom with a prance, a proud one at that, but you stop, your feet glued to the ground as soon as you hear the word linger off of one of your classmate's mouths.

"Get off of me, f---t!" a boy yells to one of your classmates, forcefully shoving him out the way. The two are just playing around, or so it seems. Your eyes widen with shock, your mouth not able to utter a single word as it feels as though it's sewn shut.

Suddenly, your world feels like it's crumbling down. All of your hopes

of today being a good day clash into the fact that today is ruined. You feel hurt. No, you feel angry. Angry that someone would use such a degrading term. As you finally free your feet from their glued position you walk over to your seat and sit down with a huff. You try to hold back the tears, a lump forming in your throat. Today is ruined and you can't do anything to fix it.

Some people believe the "f-slur" is an acceptable word, but it's not. People who are not in the LGBTQ+ community may think that saying the word will make them popular and cool. Some kids in this society just want to fit in, so they do or say disrespectful things. People in the LGBTQ+ community work on their self-confidence to tell themselves that they're normal and nothing is wrong with them. If someone who doesn't identify with the community uses the slur, it can damage LGBTQ+ people's self-esteem and confidence, putting them into a deeper hole than they were before.

Ethan Smith, a 17-year old student attending

TAFE, a vocational school in Australia, identifies as a queer male. "[People using slurs] makes me upset because I don't think people understand how much it hurts other people or the impact it has," he said.

These words that people use so freely make people feel excluded, uncomfortable and out of place. "When I was younger I had a friend named Joel," Smith recalled. "He was kicked out of our friendship group because the kids kept calling him LGBTQ+ slurs."

People also don't know what this term means. The dictionary definition of the f-slur is "a bundle of sticks or sticks bound together as fuel," but over time, it came to mean, "a male homosexual." In a Huffington Post article, writer Casey Cavanagh explains the atrocious history of the word.

"They used to burn the witches at a stake, but they thought the homosexuals were too low and disgusting to be given a stake to be burnt on, so they used to just throw them in with the kindling, with the other f---ts," she

writes. "So that's how you get 'flaming f---t.'"

The history of this word reflects the horrible events occurred in the past. People who don't know the definition of the word don't know the impact it could have on someone when they use the word freely.

People in the LGBTQ+ community work so hard to accept themselves and their gender or sexuality. Building up their self-confidence to finally come out to their loved ones is hard, and hearing someone say the f-slur in a disrespectful manner is discouraging.

Many people in the community — or those who are just assumed to be — have been targeted with hate crimes because of their identity. According to the Clarion Ledger, 28-year-old Trevor Gray was beat by two men who believed he was gay in Wayne County, Mississippi. The men met Gray at a bar and beat him senseless, leaving him with a broken jaw. One of the attackers, Tomos Sion Brown called him a queer, which is another slur, though some have chosen to reclaim it. This shows why people who are in that community

might be scared or uncomfortable to come out because of the hate crimes being committed.

Hannah Kibirige, author of an education guide on tackling homophobic language, states, "... the unchallenged use of 'gay' to mean bad or rubbish has a profoundly negative effect on gay young people's self-esteem." In this generation, since youth are exposed to so much negativity on social media platforms, the words people use affect us more and we take it to heart.

People need to stop using these words because of their horrific history. LGBTQ people are often scared to reveal their true selves because of how others use this term in a joking or disrespectful way. If people knew the actual definition of the word maybe they wouldn't use it. After knowing the history and telling people how many community members have been physically and emotionally hurt you shouldn't say it in a joking or disrespectful way. Instead of calling people this term, use their real name, or refer to them the way they identify themselves.

UGLY DOESN'T EXIST. HERE'S WHY.

BY AMIR RIVERS, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

“As I looked in the mirror, my mother placed her hands on my shoulders with disgust filled eyes,” student Dani Adams recalled. “She sighed before saying, ‘We will just have to fix your face later,’ then left the bathroom.”

Adams stood there crying, telling herself that she wasn’t enough. She thought it was true because her own mother didn’t think she was good enough, then who would?

It hurt me to hear this story not only because one of the most beautiful, sweet, caring young ladies I had ever met had such low self-esteem, but also because the woman who told her she “wasn’t good enough” was also the one she called “mom.” That made my blood boil. People like my classmate’s mother have set beauty standards for the younger generations that force us to create and uphold a certain image that is “perfect.” Anything less than perfect is not accepted. So what is “perfect?”

Perfect is something or someone having all the required/desirable qualities, elements or characteristics. This definition can change based on the country you’re in, and the mindsets of

the people surrounding you. Here in America, the definition of “perfect” has more to do with looks than anything else.

faces have to look a certain way, no double chins allowed, only straight, white teeth, and women can’t wear anything above a size six.

I spoke with Denise Tench, a woman from my church, about the beauty standards and trends that were relevant when she was in her teens. “Every female was trying all types of diets, waist



Throughout history, a majority of the people that live here fancy skinny women, or buff and muscular men that have money. Of course, they also have to be white or at least light-skinned. Their

trainers, fasting and other weight-loss methods to get the glass Coke bottle or hourglass figure,” she explained.

We aren’t taught to love the jelly rolls or different pigmentations

of the skin. We aren't exposed to the beauty of melanin, all of the different eye colors, the many imperfections of the face that make us beautiful.

We are taught things like "being fat is bad because it causes so many health problems," but that's not completely true. I myself am fat, and I have no major health issues besides being fat. Why does the fact that I'm a little bit bigger than other people have to be a problem? It doesn't have to be. Appearances are nothing compared to what's on the inside. And yeah, it's a cliché, but your beauty truly does shine from within.

This is partially our fault for enforcing these ridiculous standards on others constantly. Not only are some of us still trying to squeeze into those old jeans that we know are way too tight, but we're also just starting to tell others how the way that they look doesn't matter. Sadly, it was too late for our generation. We have already been exposed to the pressures of society, and the idea of making ourselves as "perfect" as possible, just so we can make it through their day without much judgment.

"Everyone is beautiful, period," said Vivian Snow, a 16-year-old student at Dearborn STEM Academy. "There is no 'beautiful in your own way,' nor is there any such thing as 'perfect.'" Snow was labeled the "ugly" child at school and bullied on a daily basis, but that didn't stop her from keeping

a smile on her face. While she accepted a boyfriend who only liked her for her body when she was younger, her perspective has changed.

"I was only 12 when I started dating him," Snow said. "I was young and dumb, but I truly thought that that was love. Now, whenever I think about that relationship, I think of all of the people like me who were in a toxic relationship because they were afraid that nobody else would love them. Us 'ugly' people don't get much of a choice anyway, or at least that's what people make you think."

Snow is right, us "ugly" people are made to think that we have to stick with anyone who shows any interest in us, even if they're literally one of the worst people on the planet. That's why so many of us try our best to become something that everyone wants, but not what you want for yourself.

We as the people of the world — and specifically the younger generations, since the future is in our hands — should start to end this cycle of overrated, and fairly boring beauty standards. It's time for a change, don't you think? Let us make 2020 the first year of full acceptance of all people, regardless of what they look like. Let's try to agree that everyone is beautiful (and if you want to add the "in their own way" thing, then do that) and just start being real to ourselves.

THE TRUTH ON PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS AND THE STRAIN ON THEM

BY ANESHIA ALEXANDER,
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Singer-turned-reality star Ray-J got into an online spat with his pregnant wife Princess Love in late November last year. The couple was in Las Vegas for an event when Ray-J allegedly had an affair in a separate hotel room. Love began posting passive-aggressive messages about her husband on her Instagram story prompting Ray-J to go on Instagram Live and tell millions of people that he was still in Las Vegas, trying to prove his innocence and get people off his back.

Both fans and the press were questioning him about what happened between him and his wife. If he said anything to those people, his words could have been twisted, which is something social media likes to do. Then he would have to explain himself to his 2.2 million followers on Instagram when, frankly, the only person he should have to explain his actions to is his wife, not his followers. This is a problem we could all avoid if we stopped blowing things out of proportion. The toxicity when it comes to public relationships is so real, and very few see the strain that social media puts on relationships.

Some couples put themselves into this situation by putting everything about their relationship online, inviting vulgar accusations. I'm not saying they deserve this, but they could avoid some of it by keeping things more private. Even couples that do keep things private face accusations and get dragged into scandals. Unfortunately, not a single couple on Instagram is safe from the way we publicize online spats and make them worse.

YouTube makeup artist and entrepreneur Jeffree Star and his partner Nathan Schwandt split in January after being together for five years. Star stopped posting on Instagram and Twitter for three days until Jan. 11, when he posted a video on YouTube titled "We broke up." In the video, he talks about his and Schwandt's relationship and the breakup. He explains that Schwandt never wanted to be famous, but he would appear in videos because Star asked him to and because he believed in everything that Star was doing.

"Me and Nathan are friends," he said. "I feel like I need to say that because I think the internet spirals and creates so many false stories." In this specific line, he addresses how social media makes up false stories about relationships during sensitive times.

The problem is before he put out this video, fans were speculating if he and Schwandt really did break up because Star took the phrase "Nathan's wifey" out of his Twitter and Instagram bio. False stories and speculation about a couple's status can ruin trust and communication, while also discouraging them from dating again in fear of hav-

ing to go through a huge scandal.

Most people don't realize that the couple controls what we see and we don't always get to see what happens behind the scenes. There could be problems that are legitimately affecting the relationship and people on social media have no idea, leading them to say or do things that only make it worse.

"I know that sometimes social media can be the source of arguments being bigger than need to be," said Jorge Murilleo, a 15-year-old student at the Dearborn STEM Academy. Social media and its users have a tendency to blow things out of proportion by twisting words, making up rumors and false claims.

I believe that relationships on social media should be less targeted when it comes to drama and scandals. I'm not saying that couples shouldn't be on social media, I follow a variety of couple accounts myself. All I'm saying is that social media shouldn't break up couples or blow arguments out of proportion. Having that much vulnerability on a big site with people who don't exactly share your views or don't know the value of "if you don't have something nice to say don't say anything" can damage any relationship no matter the strength and established trust.

We make relationships work for us by establishing trust and understanding that every relationship is going to have problems or arguments and a lot of times social media makes these things worse. We need to let people be and let them handle their business so online couples can be two happy peas in a pod.

UNDERSTANDING FRIENDSHIP

BY MADDIE FARNKOFF,
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

One time there were tears running down my face, and my friend Jayleen saw me crying. I was standing near the front door of the bus about to get on. She asked if I was okay and let me sit next to her on the bus ride home. Her being there made me feel much better. You have to be there for your friend. If your friends don't treat you right, then they don't deserve you. It is okay to let your friends go sometimes. It doesn't mean you are a bad person at all. Some people aren't cut out to be your friend. Think about it, do you have good friends or not?

Did you know it's good to have friends in preschool? Both girls and boys form strong attachments to others, and both need social and emotional support. Good friends can be anyone: big or small, strong or weak. If they have your back and have a big heart, they'll be a good friend. They can also make you a better person, and a good friend will challenge you to do new things. If you need advice, friends give good advice.

A good friend is someone who won't judge you based on your appearance, and won't want you to change who you are just to be their friend. If they are a good



friend they will learn to accept you for who you are. A good friend will be there for you if you need a shoulder to lean on or a shoulder to cry on, or just someone to support you when you are not feeling your best. A good friend will listen to you, and won't push you into something you don't want to do. They will support you and help you reach your full potential. And they will help you be your best self. Even if all else fails and you feel like the world is ending, they won't give up on you or let you down.

A really good friend is someone who will come running to see what's wrong when you shout their name — just like a superhero! My best friend is my own superhero and has always been there for me when I needed her. Even when we get into

arguments we always end up making up in the end. I don't know of any BFFs that don't fight—do you?

If you have a real friend, a true friend, then they won't get you in trouble. And the real ones keep in touch with you throughout your life. However, the fake friends will leave when they don't need you anymore. They will use you to get what they want from you because they know you're an easy target or you're just vulnerable and emotional. Fake friends will try to use your vulnerability to manipulate you to get what they want. Your real friends would never blackmail you. Your real friends are like family and they will fight for you. The point is, fake friends cannot be trusted and are toxic. If you have a fake friend, do me a favor and please get rid of

them. They're a waste of time and you do not need them in your life. I don't think people realize that we have the power as a civilization to make other people feel good. We can make a huge difference if we just ask someone to sit with us if they look lonely. It wouldn't kill you to be nice, and you'd probably make that lonely kid's day. It will also make you feel good to do something nice for someone else. You can make the world a better place by being nice and making sure that there's one less kid who doesn't have a friend. Our choices, good or bad, have consequences on other people's lives, and could influence others to make bad choices in the world. Just because you see someone doing something bad doesn't mean you have to do it too. Don't be a follower. Be who you want be—not who someone else wants you to be.

You might think people are not watching, but they are. Kids or adults will start to notice how you treat your friends, and even your friends will start to notice too. If you're lucky, they will stick around. Friendship is about understanding. You need to understand the other person to have conversations, and you need to understand their feelings, too. A lot of people take other people's feelings for granted, and that can cause problems in your friendship. Friendship can sometimes be complicated, but once you establish a good friendship, you will figure out how to make it work along the way.

THE AFROFUTURE IS NOW

BY MAKAYLA ROBINSON, STAFF WRITER

Afrofuturism: familiar to some, confusing to others. Afrofuturism is a concept used in a lot of books and African American artists' music videos. It uses magical realism, Afrocentricity and elements of science fiction to emphasize the importance of black excellence. Some examples of this include Janelle Monáe's visual album "Dirty Computer" and Beyoncé's visual album "Lemonade."

I took a black history class at school and participated in a program called Birthright Birmingham, where stu-

"AFROFUTURISM CAN INFLUENCE MINORITY STUDENT GROUPS IN SCHOOLS..."

dents go to Alabama and Georgia to learn about black history and go on a civil rights tour. Seeing black-owned places is impactful for me because it speaks to the importance of black excellence in the modern world.

Afrofuturism speaks to this same idea only set in the future where this level of black excellence will continue to thrive.

The most common Afrofuturistic elements in media are strong, powerful black Americans working hard to inspire others to achieve as well as make

the world a better place for everyone. "Black Panther" is a great example of afrofuturism because it is about a successful, strong, thriving African civilization which maintained its independence. Even though "Black Panther" is a great example, there is no uniform understanding of what Afrofuturistic media is. "A Wrinkle In Time" doesn't feature a thriving civilization that is very successful and Lil Nas X is not a fictional character in his music videos, but they both feature very successful people of color who have influenced others and helped make a better world for themselves and everyone else.

The holiday Kwanzaa is also an example of Afrofuturism because it is rooted in seven different African values. The holiday is seven days long, starting the day after Christmas and ending on New Year's Day. Kwanzaa speaks to African American people reclaiming their identity and taking pride in it. It ties into Afrofuturism because it is people using part of their past as a way to influence their future; a plan for them that takes all the good pieces of their culture and identity from the past and makes the future even better.

Afrofuturism can influence minority student groups in schools because it provides students with an opportunity to see and understand the aspects of their culture that are interesting and directly related to themselves.

PLASTIC AND WATER SHOULDN'T MIX



BY CRISTIAN DUBON SOLIS,
STAFF WRITER

You're shopping at a local convenience store and grab a cold Poland Springs plastic water bottle. You chug the water 'till your heart's content and casually throw the bottle into a trash bin. You may not have realized it, but you have likely just contributed to groundwater pollution, which is the contamination of underground water by outside waste. "How?" you may ask. I'll explain.

According to PBS NewsHour, humans have created over 8.3 billion tons of plastic waste, as of 2017. Even today, 60% of the plastic we make is still on our planet somewhere. Boston alone produces about 1.2 million tons of waste every year, according to WBUR. The waste production is expected to keep increasing year by year as the population increases, but Boston Mayor Marty Walsh wants to cut that amount by 20% by 2035.

Items like plastic water bottles, disposable coffee cups, tea bags and even clothes made from nylon or polyester — all of which contain plastic — are thrown away by the thousands every day in Boston. When plastic waste is thrown in a trash bin, it may get dumped in a landfill, and since plastic takes hundreds of years to break down

naturally, the plastic will remain in the landfill. However, as the plastic degrades over years of weathering, elements like carbon, nitrogen and sulfur start to seep into the ground and pollute the natural reservoir of groundwater beneath the landfill.

Boston, as well as cities like New York and Chicago, use these groundwater sources as drinking water. I don't think anyone would want to drink trash water, at least not me.

Contaminated water can result in serious health problems often causing the spread of diseases such as typhoid. According to a study conducted by The Lancet, contaminated water caused 1.8 million deaths in 2015 alone worldwide. In addition, plastic also harms the environment around us. It is evident that plastic is a leading environmental problem, particularly

in the oceans where unimaginable mountains of trash harm marine wildlife such as turtles, fish and local birds like seagulls. According to the Sea Turtle Conservancy, over 1 million marine animals, including mammals, fish, sharks, turtles and birds, are killed each year due to plastic debris in the ocean.

Nicolette Pocius, environmental science teacher at the John D. O'Bryant School explained that plastic waste produces microplastics that

easily escape through water treatment plants and enter the ocean.

"These microplastics can be ingested by animals that are lower on the food chain and then go through something called biomagnification so that they're in small amounts in small animals and then larger animals eat the smaller animals and get more," she said. "So by the time we eat those large animals we're actually eating a greater amount of the plastic than the



small animals."

Essentially, we are not only drinking trash water, we're eating trash as well!

So now that we get why plastic is a problem, what do we do? Jahlis Bruton and Felix Yanes, seniors at the O'Bryant and co-presidents of the O'Bryant Recycling Club, say there are many things someone can do. "I've seen a lot of people with Hydro Flasks or reusable cups and bottles," Bruton said. "Since a lot of students

go to Dunkin' Donuts in the morning, rather than ordering on the go you can ask if you can put this in my cup instead of getting a plastic cup." Something so small can really help. A standard 18-ounce Hydro Flask sells for around \$30 each, so instead of buying non-reusable plastic bottles, invest in a Hydro Flask or other reusable water bottle to be more eco-friendly!

If everyone in Boston used reusable straws or bottles, we would produce far less plastic waste. The thousands of pounds of plastic that would have been used to make those straws and bottles could instead be used to develop Boston infrastructure or provide more insulation to homes that may not have it. There is so much we can do. However, with modern culture emphasizing luxury and comfort, getting everyone to use reusable straws and bottles is highly

unlikely. That doesn't mean people shouldn't try. Maybe limit your plastic use for a week, or just use a reusable straw on certain days.

So the next time you're walking in the market aisle, you may want to consider where that plastic bottle will end up and get a reusable water bottle instead. Get a personalized one if you want, so you'll be looking stylish and being eco-friendly!

And remember what Pocius said: "No action is too small!"

WE SHOULD EXPECT WILDFIRES UNTIL WE TAKE OUR CLIMATE MORE SERIOUSLY

BY RICHIA JEAN-BAPTISTE, STAFF WRITER

You're walking down the street and see big chimneys attached to a working factory. You look up to see the beautiful blue sky being rapidly consumed by thick plumes of smoke turning it a midnight black. Your chest tightens up, then you start coughing, violently. As you cough,

either, until now.

The Earth has warned us about our doom many times. This is important to realize this because someday we'll look back and regret not doing something about it. It's not too late, we can still do something about it now.

Some recent warnings

ate, leaving tens of thousands of people homeless and a total of 85 casualties.

The Camp Fire was caused by a faulty electric transmission line by company PG&E and lasted weeks because California was facing a drought caused by climate change. Since the fire burnt for so long, a bunch of carbon dioxide was released into the air, which will make climate change and global warming worse. The 150 thousand acres destroyed means that there are fewer trees to help us breathe. This fire felt predictable because electric company PG&E was responsible for 10 fires in 2019, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Then, there were the Australian bushfires which started in September 2019. According to Time Magazine, the fires scorched millions of acres, killed two dozen people, and killed an

estimated half a billion animals in the country in only a few months. Again, these fires create a lot of carbon dioxide that is heating up the Earth more and that, on top of all of our bad habits, will lead to the destruction of our planet with us on it.

If you're unaware, let me tell you, climate change is a real thing and it isn't pretty. Climate change comes in different forms, but it all results in destroying our earth. For example, the global average surface temperature has increased by more than 1.6 degrees Fahrenheit, according to National Geographic. Our daily habits contribute to global warming, such as driving to school or work or just throwing trash on the ground when you can't find the nearest trash or recycling bin.

According to NASA's website, the increase in temperature is "a change driven largely by increased carbon dioxide

"THE EARTH HAS WARNED US ABOUT OUR DOOM MANY TIMES. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THIS BECAUSE SOMEDAY WE'LL LOOK BACK AND REGRET NOT DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT...."

you suddenly realize how the word has changed. You see dead trees and animals, people wearing face masks while looking down at their phones watching videos on YouTube. Nobody is paying attention to what is happening around them. You didn't notice what was happening around you

are the 2018 California wildfire, The Camp Fire, which started in Butte County, California. According to the Washington Post, it lasted two to three weeks destroying over 150,000 acres of land and around 18,800 buildings. It caused \$16.5 billion of damage, forcing 52,000 people to evacu-



and other human-made emissions into the atmosphere.” Global warming then leads to extreme weather events and natural disasters. According to NASA, the number of record high temperature events in the United States has been increasing, while the number of record low temperature events has been decreasing, since 1950.

It’s important to dis-

cuss these warnings so that action can take place. In the past, we started using more fossil fuels to create things, focusing on how bright and lovely our future will be with a bunch of new technology. But if we keep treating our Earth like this, the only one we have, we won’t be able to replace it like we can replace a broken iPhone. We should work together

and help fix it by doing little things like throwing your waste in the trash can, using more reusable items and only driving a car when necessary. It would make our world a much better place to live with cleaner streets that we are proud to walk across, better air to breathe and less trash in the ocean.

When people ask if we understand what’s

happening to the planet we say yes, but we often don’t do anything to help make the world better. Let me be the pair of glasses you need to see the world, because before you know it there won’t be anything else to see. I know this is scary to think about, but it needs to be said before it’s too late. And it’s almost too late.

Another thing we can do to address fires is advocate for post-fire seeding. According to National Geographic, it helps suppress and put out fires before they become big. It happens often in North America, but is rare in other parts of the world like Australia. Planting forests with non-native, fire-resistant vegetation can help with land management, as those new plants will be much less likely to burn and therefore spread fire.

Let’s make a commitment to actually doing something about the climate. After reading this, reflect on how your own behavior contributes to climate change, and try and dial it down. It’s the only way to help our planet.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM AUSTRALIA'S WILDFIRES

BY MADELIN SANCHEZ, STAFF WRITER

The forest fires in Australia have tremendously affected people, animals and their homes over these past several months. Millions of animals have been killed and thousands of homes destroyed. Due to these scary statistics, I want to share some tips on what we can do to help out those affected and protect ourselves if there is ever a fire here.

While Australia's wildfires became much more severe in January 2020, the bushfires started in June 2019. According to BBC News, a reported 1,600 firefighters were needed to put out the fires. This is something people should care about because people and animals are getting hurt. Animals are affected more drastically because their habitat is in the forest, and they cannot all relocate on their own. Houses were also destroyed by fire, which spread faster and faster throughout the country.

We might not have ex-

perienced a wildfire, but we can still help others that are in need. Even though we might not live in hot climates, knowing what to do if you are ever in a fire or near a fire can be helpful.

"I just watched a show over the weekend about wildfires in Africa," Keith Magni, a science teacher at Fenway High said. "It's less of a problem for the humans than it is for the animals."

In some parts of the world, planned and controlled fires are used to reduce the risk of a bigger fire.

"I've heard of controlled fires—every couple of years [they] are done to make sure things don't build up to the point where there's a lot of fires," Magni said. Unfortunately, Australia's wildfires were not controlled and put many lives in jeopardy.

People that live near the wildfires are affected differently than animals, but the impact is still negative. Humans

Here are some ways you can stay safe when you are near a wildfire, according to Little Things magazine:

- Prepare your home before wildfire season. You want to have your garden hose as close to you as possible. Regularly clean your gutters and roof and move any stacked wood or newspaper away from your house.
- Make an evacuation plan. Prepare for evacuation by having a bag or a suitcase that contains the important things that you'd need to stay safe
- Limit your exposure to smoke
- Leave immediately when evacuation is ordered
- Don't go home unless you're told to by the authorities
- Clean your home safely after the fire
- Help others when you finished cleaning your home and you know that you and your family are safe
- Call 911 if anyone got injured during the evacuation

have cars to distance themselves from fire and masks to help them breathe better. Even with these quick solutions, some people are left homeless from the fires. They may sleep at a hotel if they have the money or stay with friends and family that have not been directly affected. Oftentimes, they need to take advantage of resources that will help them stay safe and supported long after the fire takes their homes away.

The government in Victoria, Australia established a fundraiser for families and communities who have been affected by the fires. You can donate directly to the State Fire Authority or to the Australian Red Cross, which has already helped over 18,600 people stay safe after the fire. People can also donate to fundraisers that support healthcare and rehousing for animals. To find more information, visit the websites of the Australian Red Cross, Pray for Australia, About Australia and the Australia Zoo Wildlife Warriors.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE HAS LESS POLLUTION

A take on environmental waste

BY AYAN MOHAMED, STAFF WRITER

Remember when society said we should feed animals plastic? No? Well, me neither. However, it seems like humans don't mind eating celery for the rest of their lives in order to be healthy, so why are we ruining our wildlife and planet Earth by not taking care of it?

The effects of environmental waste on animals are devastating. These effects are slowly making animals go extinct. Seals, turtles and crabs are eating our plastic waste and it is destroying their bodies. Nobody should be eating plastic but animals do not know any better, and it's not like they are seeking out this source of food. We are literally dumping our plastic waste into their oceans because we are not properly disposing of our trash. The Ocean Conservancy states that the U.S. adds 160,000 metric tons of plastic to the ocean every year. This is extremely upsetting because there are trash cans everywhere that are easily accessible. For example, on the short walk from my school to the nearest train station, there are at least 10 trash cans.

Environmental waste affects our land and our health. Environmen-

tal waste is man-made trash or junk that is not disposed of properly and can damage our environment. According to Green Choices, toxic gases like dioxins, when released by incinerating plastics, can cause air pollution and create

***“THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE EARTH IS
FADING AWAY AND SOON WE WILL NOT BE ABLE
TO REMEMBER THE THINGS WE USED TO ENJOY.”***

acid rain. These toxins pollute and destroy the environment. Do you want to live in a barren wasteland caused by polluted air or somewhere with a healthy environment? The barren wasteland will be boring with no wildlife, and the outside world will no longer be safe for us. The natural beauty of the Earth is fading away and soon we will not be able to remember the things we used to enjoy. Future generations will be far less active because they won't be able to enjoy activities like apple picking or climbing trees or simply appreciating the beauty of nature.

In the example of a healthy environment, there would be a clear sky, a soft breeze and fresh air. This path brings us to a world that is similar to life before technology. People used to enjoy outside activities like riding bikes and going to parks and being active. Even if you don't want to be active, it's still nice to live in a world where you feel comfortable because it is clean and the outside environment has been taken care of.

A healthy environment leads to healthier relationships. We don't

want future generations to miss out on the beauty of nature. But let's not worry about the future too much — we have a lot on our plate right now. We have factories polluting our wildlife and our health, and we see our animals slowly dying. But we can prevent such horrors by not buying unnecessary items, not buying over-packaged things, buying reusable bags and reusing glass or non-perishable items. Many items have the recycling symbol that means you can cycle or reuse that item. Embrace the green life and accept the celery.

WITH TEEN SUICIDE RATES INCREASING, AWARENESS MUST INCREASE AS WELL

BY PHAIDON ATHANASOPOULOS, STAFF WRITER

Teen suicide has become an increasing concern, especially quite recently. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide rates have risen 30% since 1999. The LA Times reports that the suicide rate amongst young gay men hasn't been so high since the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and 90s, currently at an astonishing rate of 17.9 completed suicides per 100,000 young men. And as of 2016, suicide is the second leading cause of death for people between the ages of 10 and 30.

Vanessa Prosper is a psychologist and therapist at Boston Latin School who speaks to students dealing with suicidal thoughts on a daily basis. High school is a place where teens from all different backgrounds meet, so this conversation is important. Prosper first wanted to acknowledge a misconception: the idea that suicide is caused by one thing.

"That's not true," she said. "Suicide is caused by the interaction of many risk factors. So the more risk factors one has, the more one is vulnerable to suicidal thoughts."

Prosper then began to draw

three circles, all crossing over each other and labeled as biological, social and psychological fac-

tor. Biological factors that could contribute to suicide risk include a history of suicide in one's family, while psychological factors could be mental illnesses such as depression and social factors could be anxiety the person has during interactions with other people. She explained that if all three of these factors are present in one's life, that person is more vulnerable to having suicidal thoughts.

"Why people have suicidal thoughts is the following: try to think of a time when you had a bad headache," Prosper prompted.



tors. Biological factors that could contribute to suicide risk include a history of suicide in one's family, while psychological factors could

ed. "How did it make you feel? ... Could you think or focus?"

She then explained how emotional pain can impact people

similarly.

“You want this pain desperately to go away, except, you can’t think clearly or problem-solve effectively,” she said. “So one thing that might first pop into your mind is to end your life as a solution to end your emotional pain.”

For teens who haven’t dealt with suicide in their own personal lives, the issue is still an important one.

“I believe suicide is a big problem,” said Issabel Goodrich, a 16-year-old student at Boston Latin School. “In the U.S.A., suicide rates are

the highest they’ve ever been. It’s very scary — it’s real.”

Students believe that it’s important to discuss the issue.

“I think that suicide is a problem that definitely needs to be addressed,” said Anna Rekatas, a 14-year-old at Brooklyn Latin School. “One loss to suicide is one too many, and the least we can do is spread awareness about it.”

The thought of possibly ending one’s own life is something that a teen, or anyone, should never experience. However, research has reported that suicide is becoming an even larger contributor to young people’s deaths day by day. It affects all people, in one way or

another; whether you are a parent, relative or friend of a person who took their own life, your life has been changed.

People like Prosper dedicate themselves daily to fighting suicide. Clinics and hospitals that specialize in treatment for people struggling with self-injury and suicidal thoughts are growing in number to help people who have considered killing themselves by giving them hope and aid. The suicide hotline is one of the most accessible and trustworthy places to find help. But it is also the

unsung heroes that help win this treacherous battle. Friends and family members that offer their support are one of the most important things one

could have; they are a reminder that someone does love and care for you, even if you think such a person does not exist. And that is how we will win: reminding each other that we love unconditionally, and through offering our support to anyone who needs it.

If you are in crisis, you can find help by calling the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1.800.273.8255 or texting “Home” to 741741. If you are looking for mental health care outside of a crisis, visit twloha.com/find-help.

If you are in crisis, you can find help by calling the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1.800.273.8255 or texting “Home” to 741741

“WATER IS COLORLESS AND TASTELESS, BUT YOU CAN LIVE ON IT LONGER THAN EATING FOOD” – AFRICAN PROVERB

BY SAMIIR MUHAMED,
STAFF WRITER

On so many corners in the city of Boston we can get clean water to drink. If you go to the store the cheapest liquid you can purchase is water. There is even access to free water as there are fountains placed across the city, and many of us have refillable water bottles which means access to water is pretty easy here. But, don’t think that everyone can get fresh water every day. Imagine if you didn’t have water, what would happen? No water to drink, no showers or no water to cook with. Would you be happy as you are now?

In 2010, the United Nations officially announced water was a fundamental human right and declared that “the right to water and sanitation is contained in existing human rights treaties and is therefore legally binding.”

Water is a basic need that must be available in order for humans to survive as we need it for blood circulation, respiration

and converting food to energy. After oxygen, water is the body's most important nutrient. It's simple, you need water to move your body.

Africa has a serious water crisis across the continent. The World Health Organization estimates that the Sub-Saharan African population of 319 million still lacks access to water. According to the United Nations, lack of access to clean and safe water has complicated poverty reduction efforts greatly as Sub-Saharan African countries spend 40 billion hours searching for water. This time and energy could have

***“...IT'S TIME WE
REALIZED WE MUST
STOP WASTING WATER...”***

been used for other productive activities.

Since water in Africa is a core ingredient for sustainable development like farming, washing food and making electricity, its availability is key to human survival. There are limited sources available that provide clean and drinkable water for the entire population of Africa. According to The Water Project, surface level water sources in Africa are not only highly polluted but creating pipes that brings fresh water to arid areas is very expensive. Furthermore, groundwater is the best resource to tap into to provide

clean water to the majority of areas in Africa but this is also an expensive endeavor. Women and children in Africa walk for miles to obtain water from streams and ponds that often contains disease-causing organisms, like those that cause cholera, typhoid fever and infant diarrhea.

Africa also has other obstacles, one being decreased rainfall. According to the United Nations, Southern Africa is expected to face a decrease in precipitation of 20%. It is difficult for local populations in some of these areas to continue their traditional lifestyles or farm because of the decrease in rainfall. Some people are turning to cutting down and burning trees to create charcoal to sell as fuel in order to make a living. The consequences of no clean water or access to adequate sanitation are widespread. Young children die from dehydration and malnutrition because of diarrhea which is something that could be prevented by clean water.

Adelina Docanto, an immigrant from Cape Verde, works with students at the Massachusetts Department of Students and Families and is from one of the 10 islands that make up Cape Verde off the west coast of Africa. Her experience of the water crisis in Africa is that “lack of water is causing droughts because it's dirty water.”

“Well, I think kids in America are very spoiled,” she said. “They don't understand hardship like a youth of Africa having to walk three miles

to get fresh water. That kid in Africa might not be wearing shoes or having food in their belly, so here in America we have the land and a good plenty. We can walk to the corner grocery store and get whatever we want to eat, like cake, candy and sodas. In Africa they don't have all those resources — they might be lucky if they eat breakfast or lunch.”

How can teens in Boston help this situation? “First of all, make them aware of what's going on in Africa,” she said. “If they don't know what's going on there, it's a low chance they'll understand the water crisis in Africa. Second, we should teach them how water is important to human life, and maybe take some youths in Boston on an internship to Africa to see with their eyes how people are struggling to get water.”

The issue of water scarcity in Africa is one that we all can learn from. As the water crisis in Africa becomes more widely known, more people are stepping forward to help make a difference in the lives of millions of families struggling to find water. You and I are responsible for not only reading or writing articles but we are also responsible for finding a way to help people get water even if they are thousands of miles away. Mother Theresa said, “Not all of us can do great things, but we all can do small things with great love.” So it's time we realize that we must stop wasting water and appreciate the things that we have, and teach our children how important water is to mankind.

IT'S TIME TO DRIVE LESS

Car pollution is a critical threat to our health and environment

BY ADRIAN RAMIREZ-DIAZ, STAFF WRITER

On a cold, rainy Saturday night, I was walking to the corner store to buy milk when I saw a bunch of cars driving by me. There was a lot of smoke coming out of the engines, and I began to cough and have a horrible feeling in my stomach. The smoke was gray and looked like it carried dirt particles in it. It smelled putrid like burnt plastic. I felt like throwing up.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, cars pollute the air by burning fossil fuels. To better understand car pollution in Boston and the impact it is having on our environment, we need to understand the health risks. The effects of driving a car in our current environment are dangerous because car pollution affects our lungs and it increases the risk of diseases like asthma and heart disease. Car pollution can also cause cancer, breathing problems and eye irritation that damages your vision.

Cars have been affecting us for a

long time, especially near highways and where there is a lot of traffic. In some cities, the pollution levels are higher, like New York City and Los Angeles. Over a 24-hour period, air pollution in Los Angeles measures PM2.5 36($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)



whereas in Boston it is 8.9($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), according to an EPA air quality report from 2018. LA has a lot of pollution because there are a lot more cars than in Boston. While Boston has fewer cars than LA, car pollution still affects us.

Cars have the most impact on air quality, and when people breathe

the air coming from the tailpipes it goes directly to the lungs. According to sciencing.com, the exhaust is dangerous to infants and people that suffer heart disease because it affects the blood's ability to move oxygen. Car pollution also affects the weather, according to National Geographic. Smog created by car pollution limits visibility and acid rain can damage vehicles and buildings.

We should try to help out future generations by thinking deeply about the way we use cars. One

thing we can do is drive electric cars because that won't damage the environment. Also, we can be more careful about how we use normal cars. If we all commit to not abusing cars, like using them to race, then we all have a higher chance of living a long life. Also, people can choose not to use cars at all and instead ride a bike or just walk.

At the end of the day, car pollution is dangerous for the environment because it's smoke that we breathe. Some people might not care about the world and people in it beside themselves, but it's important to take care of the environment and people. If we don't take this seriously, then a lot of kids can get diseases or become sick.

AJ AND THE QUEEN: IT'S A HIT AND A MISS



BY MALIA MCCLERKLIN, EDITOR

At the beginning of this year, Netflix quietly released the dramedy, “AJ and the Queen,” starring the paragon of drag herself, RuPaul. RuPaul’s name carries a legacy people only vaguely understand. People hear the name and often think “Oh, the drag queen,” and don’t give it a second thought. You’ve probably seen her in a gif or heard her name as an answer to a jeopardy question. However, RuPaul is credited for heightening the drag scene by exposing people to what a drag queen is, with her charting dance songs from the eighties and her appearances on talk shows, and her fire has not died since then. Along with her Emmy award-winning reality television show, “RuPaul’s Drag Race,” the self-proclaimed “glamazon” is now starring in a Netflix show. An accomplishment, of course, but it would probably be more commendable if the show was good. Maybe that’s while it was canceled on March 6.

The premise of “AJ and the Queen” is ridiculous to say the least. The viewer is forced to follow drag queen Ruby Red/Robert Lee (RuPaul), who goes on a cross country road trip to escape a crazy ex-boyfriend and, along the way, befriends a 10-year-old who snuck into Ruby’s RV with the motive of finding her father in Texas. An immediate question

that should come to mind is: How is a 60-year-old man able to get away with traveling miles with an unattended, homeless 10-year-old? Let’s not think about that.

Overall the show’s visuals are loud, assaulting and colorful to remind us that this is a show about a glamorous drag



queen. The dialogue is obviously trying its hardest to be “hip with the gay youth, *okurrrr*.” The plot is so simplistic it’s almost infantilizing and the acting borders on atrocious. So why is this show so fun to watch?

Despite everything it clearly does not have going for it, the show, surprisingly, carries some charm. When you’re not too busy laughing at RuPaul’s attempts at making a facial expression, the char-

acters aren’t difficult to root for. Ruby’s elementary school-aged best friend has a compelling storyline about abandonment and the struggles of parenthood and drug use, which almost makes up for the bizarre main plot of Ruby escaping an evil ex-lover and his eye-patch wearing sidekick. The conversations about what family means are important and sweet, and the growing bond between two people who are traveling together under extreme circumstances is almost possible to invest in. Also, watching our protagonists jump from drag bar to drag bar and seeing what performers they meet along the way is fun, if you ignore the fact that a 10-year-old would never be allowed backstage at a drag show. “AJ and the Queen” does a great job showing the feel-good and entertaining parts of drag, with the glamor, the quips and the best aspects of the art. Drag as an art form seems so taboo behind closed doors, but “AJ and the Queen” sheds light on how unique and compelling a form of entertainment it has always been.

So no, I am not going to pretend the show is good. Giving it the benefit of the doubt, it could be said that “AJ and the Queen’s” ridiculousness is tongue in cheek, referencing the campy nature drag has had since the beginning of the underground club scenes. In order to enter into the acid-trip wormhole that “AJ and the Queen” is, it is important to leave yourself a reminder to never, even for a second, look at it under a critical lens. “AJ and the Queen” is only tolerable if you realize how horrible it is, and go into it for a laugh.

PAX EAST BRINGS TOGETHER GAME DEVELOPERS AND FANS ACROSS CULTURES

BY JACOB DOWNEY,
EDITOR

Founded by Penny Arcade in 2010, PAX East has been Boston's premier gaming convention for a decade now. Hosting games of all genres, platforms, and console generations, this year's showcase had something missing — PlayStation developer Sony Entertainment. Sony canceled its appearance and pulled "The Last of Us 2," a game about a deadly virus, while the world grappled with the spreading. Despite its absence, the convention floor hardly felt at a loss as smaller international studios more than picked up the slack.

The U.S. and Japan host the most prolific developers with names such as Nintendo, Rockstar Games and SquareEnix routinely pumping out quality content. However, there is

much to be said about the smaller studios popping up across the flat Earth, creating virtual worlds for us to lose ourselves in and get away from our lives for a while. While attending the showcase on Feb. 27 and 29, I set out on a mission to explore past "Animal Crossing" and "Final Fantasy" to talk to the little guys, the international studios changing the game — of, well — games.

First on my trek through the wild west of gaming was a sharp turn to the far east with Nodding Head Games' "Raji," an action platformer inspired by Hindu Mythology. You play as the title character, "Raji," on a quest for the gods to slay demons and save your brother. The game possesses a traditional shadow puppet art style during cutscenes and a familiar top-down perspective during gameplay. When most people think India, they think more along the lines of outsourced work rather than game development. This is something that Art Director Shruti Ghosh is keen to change, addressing that while Norse and Greek pantheons are over-represented, you rarely see Hindi lore in gaming. "Raji" seeks

to change this by combining the cultural styles of the Hindu world with game mechanics prominent in western games.

I then stopped by the Indie Games Poland Foundation, a super-booth of Polish dev's dripping with Slavic swag. Big-name developers such as CD Projekt Red have blown minds recently with the announcement of "CyberPunk 2077," but it's not all augments and androids in Warsaw, as proven with Klabter's "Help Will Come Tomorrow." The game is set following a train crash during the boiling point of the October Revolution, and you must keep a cast of revolutionaries, aristocrats and non-politically minded survivors alive in the harsh Siberian wilderness. Though my survivors ended up considerably less alive than when I decided not to play the tutorial, there was fun to be had finding balance in the survivor's clashing personalities and managing resources to keep everyone alive to see if the game's title holds true.

Lastly, I met with Astragon Studios, a German developer who primarily makes simulator games. While most American

gamers would rather mow through zombies, over in Germany, laid back simulation titles such as Astragon's own "Bus Simulator" offer a unique experience perfect for rounding out your day. While I was skeptical going in, expecting something along the lines of the playable meme, "Surgeon Simulator," what I found was a calming ride through metropolitan Europe as your friendly neighborhood *Busfahrer*. While American audiences see simulators primarily in their meme potential, European audiences see them as a mellow alternative to the chaos of titles like "DOOM" or "Battlefront." While years of "GTA Online" compelled me to immediately try for vehicular homicide, I quickly found myself enjoying the simplicity of simulating a bus.

Video games, like literature or cinema, are an art form and like any other, regional tastes and cultural ideals play a role in what we look for. That being said, there is a shared love for the craft of game design that keeps events like PAX happening so that we can come together to celebrate how similar we are within our vast differences.

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB

BOSTON'S CALLING: YOUR LOCAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

BY MARIELLA MURILLO,
STAFF WRITER

There's something entrancing about the pulsating beat and pounding bass that shakes the ground beneath your feet during a live concert. The bond between you, the artist and the crowd is a force to be reckoned with as you stomp and scream your favorite lyrics at the top of your lungs. However, music festivals, like our local one known as Boston Calling, can be a bit of a mystery to young people like myself. You don't really know what to expect, with names of dozens of artists descending into tiny font and thousands more people bound to show up and support their favorites and newfound music. It can be intimidating, especially when your mom is grilling you about the details you don't have. Last year, I went to Boston Calling and lived

to tell the tale. I'm here to tell you (and your mom) all about it.

According to an article by WBUR, Boston Calling has changed a lot from a small event in City Hall Plaza in 2013 to a large scale festival taking place at the Harvard Athletic Complex in Allston. The likes of Foo Fighters, Rage Against The Machine, and Red Hot Chili Peppers were headlining in 2020, and Travis Scott, Tame Impala, Paramore; and more have in years past. There are also performances from Boston Ballet and comedians. You can make a pitstop at the arena and laugh with the likes of Micheal Che, Melissa Villaseñor and Lamont Price. The festival is also known for the food and drink vendors that you can preview before using the official Boston Calling app. There is much variety to be found, and something for everyone interested.

Franz Criscione, a 17-year-old at Boston Arts Academy, has been twice, and planned on going for the third year

in a row. "My overall experience was very fun," he said.

I thought that the multi stage platform

The Boston Calling website provides a handy list of things to bring in their FAQ, including:

- Sunscreen (non aerosol)
- Hats
- Sunglasses
- Non-professional film and digital cameras
- (1) Factory-sealed bottle of water (non-glass container, up to 1 gallon in size)
- A small clear plastic bag (no backpacks are allowed inside the festival)
- Valid Driver's License for will-call and/or to purchase alcohol
- Comfortable footwear (shoes or sandals must be worn to enter festival grounds)

really created a super cool atmosphere of music all the time. That specifically made

me listen to so many artists I hadn't heard of before that I ended up liking a lot." Like many big events, it's always better (and more fun) to bring a few friends, as Criscione recommends. "You want to have a crew around you at all times, there is a lot going on and being alone with so many people in one place can be disorienting," he explained. "Having a group of people to be able to check in with and have fun with will improve your experience overall." Even with conflicting tastes, having another person drag you to an artist that you'd never hear can help you discover artists you never would have without them.

The festival provides lockers that can be reserved and recommends comfy and lightweight clothes and lots of water. It's a practical list and something your mom would recommend. Is everything absolutely necessary? No, but no one wants to be walking around in grass fields in heels or without your own water or some sunscreen to protect from the May

sun.

I was lucky enough to have been a volunteer last year, meaning that while I spent a decent amount of time serving food to those who spent money for the experience, I was able to go and escape to jive to Logic's swift and lyrical flow and MARINA's joyful pop beats. So if you see the ticket price of \$399.99 plus a \$46.99 fee, trying to volunteer and offer your services can get you places. We all know the feeling of wanting to attend an event and stressing out about how to save up. But in trying to volunteer, you can rack up some community service hours and just be a general help during this hectic time.

Going to a festival is an ideal experience for someone who wants to be able to chill, bounce around and hang out with friends in a musically fueled space. And at the end of the day, the festival isn't that overwhelming. The only overwhelming part is figuring out what to explore next.

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BUYING YOUR FIRST GUITAR

BY RHYS MCALLISTER, STAFF WRITER

Do you think there is such a thing as a beginner guitar? If there is, then why are there so many different ones out there? I don't think there is one single beginner guitar because there are so many different types that are specific to the genre of music you play. As someone who plays guitar, I, of course, think there are certain guitars you should stay away from if you are a beginner — guitars with nine or 13 strings, or weirdly shaped or sized bodies. A basic guitar has six strings, a fretboard — the lines on the neck — a head where you tune it, a neck and a body.

So, which guitar is best for you to learn on? If you don't know, then you're in luck! This guide will tell you about different guitars and which one

I think you should get depending on the genre of music you like to play.

If you like playing rock with heavy beats but simple melodies such as "Purple Haze" and "Thunderstruck:"

Squier Stratocaster (\$150+): This is an electric guitar with a double-cutaway, meaning it has two cuts in the body so your hands can reach the whole fretboard, six strings and a "horn" shape for balance. Electric guitars are different from acoustic as they plug into an amp and can have a very clean or very distorted sound. This is a

very popular guitar with a popular shape. I think this guitar is good for rock because many rock musicians use it like Jimi Hendrix, Buddy Holly and Eric Clapton. It has a rock sound, but it's not good for heavy metal because it can hit hard beats but not heavy beats.

If you like playing pop with good rhythm and a catchy melody:

Squier Telecaster (\$180+): This was the first successful solid-bodied electric guitar with six strings. Instead of a two cutaway it has one cutaway. I think you should



use this guitar for pop because a popular pop player, Prince, used this guitar. It can hit beats ranging from pop beats to hard beats. This versatility makes it a good choice for pop musicians.

If you like playing hard rock (highly amplified harsh-sounding rock music with a strong beat), heavy metal with a heavy use of aggressive vocals, distorted electric guitars, bass guitar, and drums or grunge (rock music characterized by a raucous guitar sound and lazy vocal delivery):

Epiphone Les Paul (\$200+): This is a solid-bodied guitar with six strings. This is also a very popular guitar to play. I think this is a good guitar for these genres because many hard rock bands, heavy metal bands and grunge bands use this guitar. Some are Metallica, Guns N' Roses and Nirvana. This guitar can hit soft beats up to really heavy beats.

Epiphone SG (\$175+): Another solid-bodied guitar with six strings that is very popular today. It has a two cutaway and two prongs that look like horns. I think you should

use this guitar because many rock players chose this guitar. One famous guitar player that used this is Angus Young. This guitar can also hit beats ranging from soft up to heavy.

If you like playing folk which originates in traditional popular culture or that is written in such a style:

You can check out these guitars on guitarcenter.com. If you don't like any of these guitars then checkout these guides:

- Choose the Guitar Style For You: Six Genres to Try
- The Best Electric Guitars For Each Genre
- The Best Guitars For Rock: 6 Options You Need To Try
- The Best "Beginner Guitar" is...

Fender CD-60S (\$200+): This guitar has six strings, a mahogany back and sides, and a rosewood fingerboard. The dreadnought-sized body provides a traditional full-bodied tone. I recommend

this guitar because I have this guitar! This guitar can hit soft beats up to smaller hard beats.

Yamaha APX600 (\$300+): This is a thinline acoustic-electric guitar with a thinner body. It is comfortable and easy to play. I recommend this guitar because it is rated well on the Guitar Center website and from what I know, people really like it. This guitar can also hit soft beats up to smaller hard beats.

If you like playing Blues which traverses a wide range of emotions and musical styles:

ES 335 (\$400+): This is a vintage semi-hollow guitar with great playability and warm tone. It is a bigger bodied guitar but is still a very good one. Even though this is more expensive than the other guitars on this list, I still recommend it because it is a very popular blues guitar. This guitar doesn't just play a warm tone, it can hit hard beats too!

I hope this gives you some advice about picking a guitar. With the right guitar, you will definitely become the musician you want to be.

YOUNG CRITICS' PASCALE FLORESTAL AMPLIFIES THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY IN POP-CULTURE CRITICISM

BY MALIA MCCLERKLIN, EDITOR

When considering going to a new restaurant down the block or checking out a play that just came to town, chances are the first place you'd turn to are the reviews. Critics serve the important purpose of giving people an initial impression of art and culture, becoming a bridge from creators to appreciators. Their words can determine a product's reception.

With critics carrying so much power, how important is it for their demographics to be diverse? In the modern world of theater, the contributions from

artists of color have been growing exponentially, with the likes of Jordan Peele, Lin-Manuel Miranda and Kehinde Wiley to name a few. While the types of media are diversifying, critics have not been able to keep up. According to a report from Variety, 82% of critics who reviewed the top 100 grossing movies in 2017 were white.

“How are white reviewers able to understand and contextualize the experience of artists of color?” Pascale Florestal, director of Young Critics Organization, asked herself. Florestal noticed that works by people of color are often judged more harshly, or are not understood by critics. In theater especially, she describes how reviews can be “the only documentation of these experiences, so what happens when the majority of people reviewing do not represent the community or the stories being told?”

Hoping to spark a change in the world of

professional criticism, Florestal founded the Youth Critics Organization with WBUR’s “The ARtery” to focus on training young adults of color in criticism. The Young Critics Program now trains 12 young adults by taking them to theater



performances to critique. It strives to teach youth about criticism and reporting, and how to exercise these skills while viewing performances all around Boston.

Pascale has been surrounded by the arts

since the age of three and was shaped by theater after being put in dance classes by her parents. Her love for theater intensified after she participated in backstage work for community service in high school.

Eventually, she was inspired to get a BA in

Theater at Ithaca College. After immersing herself in the industry for so long, she began to notice an imbalance in the reviews that different types of art receive.

“[In the] last like four years, a lot of new work

has been happening, which has been so exciting and there’s also been a big surge of theater of color,” she explained as we sat in the Boston Center for the Arts. “And one of the things I kept noticing is the people who are reviewing [these new productions] are mostly old white men.”

One she noticed, she realized the lack of diversity hurt both the audience and the artists.

“I felt it was imperative that we have younger voices to talk about the work because they’re going to be the next people coming in doing this work, seeing this work, hopefully investing in it,” Pascale said.

With the help of top New England writing consultants, participants will become more familiar with criticism, while also getting to leave with a nice check after each review. Encouraging a more diverse group of people to pursue this type of reporting opens up an opportunity for a much-needed ripple in the world of criticism.

Expect a boom in the world of critics and a long overdue one at that.

'ANIMAL CROSSING: NEW HORIZONS' BRINGS CONTEMPORARY MECHANICS TO THE BELOVED SERIES

BY MARIELLA MURILLO, STAFF WRITER

You sit on a train, the gentle rumble almost lulling you to sleep. A few seats away, an anthropomorphic cat with big eyes and a sweater vest asks you for the date and time and introduces himself as Rover. You soon come to establish your own name, learn about the town you're traveling to and become aware of your own animated appearance. Are you dreaming? No, you are playing "Animal Crossing: New Leaf," an addicting game from a Nintendo franchise that has been around since 2001.

Over the last 20 years, fans of the cutesy, calming and collectively charming games have been starved for content. The Nintendo eShop Animal Crossing Plaza was discontinued in 2014, and Animal Crossing Amiibo Festival was disliked by fans when it came out in 2015. The 2017 Pocket Camp game was limited to mobile devices but became wildly successful. In fact, one of the game's lovable animal characters, Isabelle, even became a playable Super Smash Bros character in 2018. Now, in 2020, Nintendo fans waited excitedly for the next chapter in "Animal

Crossing," released on March 20.

Animal Crossing is an open-ended social simulation game. Since its initial release in 2001 (known as Dobutsu No Mori in Japan), it has developed a global cult following. In the new installment: "New Horizons," Tom Nook, a raccoon you owe a crippling amount of debt, and

works projects like constructing new buildings, installing landmarks and enacting town ordinances. In "New Horizons," players are able to engage even more with the game and go several steps further.

WHAT'S NEW

In "New Horizons," you start on a deserted island, with only Tom Nook and his "nooklings" there to help you. You set up your tent wherever you'd like, and build your residence from the ground up. Starting from essentially nothing, this game allows players to build their own island town in their own way. "New Horizons" introduces crafting, in which items like twigs, rocks and clay can be taken from the environment and fashioned into tools like shovels, nets or even vaulting poles. Materials can also be

made into customizable furniture, a feature similar to previous games.

The game gives you a special Nook Phone filled with apps. One such app, Nook Miles, is an in-game reward system designed to inspire more gameplay by giving out miles that can be used to help pay off debt. There are also apps that allow for



his company Nook Inc. are offering players a Deserted Island Getaway Package, where they can transform their own untouched island into a home.

In previous games, players were able to affect changes slowly in their towns. In 2012's "New Leaf," they acted as the community's mayor, which allowed them to initiate public

social interactions like calling other players and inviting them to play on your island. Others allow you to access recipes for crafting new tools and furniture.

Additionally, “New Horizons” allows you to engage with other players in a brand new way. You can play up to four characters on one Switch at the same time in “party play,” with a leader system that allows players to help each other out and explore and create together. Up to eight players can visit one island at a time, and eight are allowed to inhabit one island on one Switch.

WHAT'S GOOD

The amount of freedom offered in “New Horizons” is easily the most appealing part of the game. Not only can you decide where you and other villagers place your homes, but you can also make choices to upgrade into fully functioning towns with shops.

One of the most notable upgrades in the game itself are the high-quality graphics. The soft, almost dreamy look has improved greatly from the now-aging, pixelated nightmare that is “New Leaf.” There’s a new attention to detail that people cannot help but notice, especially in the fluid and detailed movement of everything from fish to leaves to glistening water.

WHAT'S BAD

The biggest complaint people

have had about this game is the lack of cloud-saving capability. One game can only ever live on your one Switch. You cannot back your game up, and you can only have one island per Switch. This has drawn some criticism from fans, who believe that the only reason to block backups is to prevent cheating. This might make more sense for other games, but many fans of “Animal Crossing” are not competitive. Rather, “Animal Crossing” is a game that encourages community-based collaborations and necessitates backup capabilities. People spend hundreds, sometimes even thousands of hours on this game and want their work to be saved. Nintendo has said that they will have a way to recover the lost data if a Switch is lost, damaged or stolen. While this is reassuring, these restrictions are still frustrating for many simply because of how unnecessary they feel.

OVERALL?

It seems like “New Horizons” will go down as “Animal Crossing’s” best installment for those who have been begging for total freedom in the game. It’s beautifully designed, it provides rewards and incentives to motivate play and many of its lovable character personalities and design aspects remain true to previous games.

SCP FOUNDATION WIKI: READER'S DREAM OR NAVIGATIONAL NIGHTMARE?

BY CALEB BOVE, EDITOR

Sometimes the most interesting stories start not with a hook, but with a government-ordered file number. Such is the case with most stories on the niche SCP Foundation Wiki, a site that parodies government websites. The wiki is a fictional catalog of cool people, places and things, and the stories that surround them, à la “The X-Files.”

Some bizarre stories include a woman who can stick her hands into photos, an alternate-dimension version of the Foundation that is attempting to invade the multiverse and a giant unkillable lizard. The main story of the wiki is that “The SCP Foundation” attempts to capture these beings and keep them secret from the world. To keep a record of these beings, they catalog them on the wiki, which is designed to appear as a secret government website.

Those who would make comparisons to the somewhat more mainstream Creepypasta wiki — another site that lists scary events and things — would not be wrong to do so. Both sites use the Wikidot website platform, a collection of forums and pages that catalog information on a number of topics. They also both have thousands of writers who use them as outlets for their creativity — and both stem from horror themes, referencing urban legends and

popular science fiction. However, any person who has visited both wikis would see glaring differences between the two. The Creepypasta wiki has a low standard for the written works on the site, which leads to many poorly written, repetitive stories. In contrast, admins who run the SCP wiki are quick to criticize or even remove works they view as “not up to par” or unoriginal, and the community itself views the entire wiki as an opportunity for all members to improve their writing skills. Many people revise their stories and SCPs after posting them on the site’s main logs. This striving for originality and constant improvement can lead to an amazing reading experience, as writers will expand their stories into other genres such as action and drama. When it comes to expanding on cliché ideas in interesting ways, this wiki gets a passing grade.

The wiki is also open to new readers, with full book-length stories that are often made to introduce new readers to the “SCP Lore.” These stories include diverse casts of characters, such as members of the LGBTQ+ community and diverse races. Stories can include lesbian witches, nonbinary wizards and transgender wendigos. I guarantee that if you can imagine it, one of the nearly 1,000 writers on the wiki has written something like it. Also, if you are looking for a more audio-based introduction to the community, there are plenty of YouTube channels explaining and reading the wiki to listeners.

The community is quite cohesive, as writers and readers are often very

accepting of each other’s so-called “headcanons” — or personal interpretations of characters and stories — in the universe, with the phrase “no real canon” getting thrown around a lot when discussing things and events in the “Foundationverse.”

There has only ever been a few problems with writers not respecting admins, and in those situations, writers were banned and articles were removed. When it comes down to it, the SCP community has weathered any and all drama that has come its way, and shows no sign of ending this pattern in the future. If you are looking for a stable fandom to join, with a welcoming attitude towards new readers and writers, this is the place for you.

However, any person who has visited the SCP wiki will see a problem that community support cannot fix. The site is frustrating to navigate. Like many wikis, the SCP Foundation wiki isn’t made in a creative way, and is built from a cookie-cutter framework. Also, the admins and most people in the community aren’t exactly skilled when it comes to site design. This, combined with the sheer amount of information that is saved on the site, makes it dense and difficult to navigate. For this reason, I would give the site a failing grade for ease of navigation.

As I’ve said before, if you have a certain reading itch you want to scratch, be it sci-fi, fantasy, horror or any other niche fiction theme, you will most likely find it on the SCP Wiki, as long as you are willing to search for it.

A BAJAN DO'S AND DON'TS

BY HASINA WHITTAKER,
STAFF WRITER

Have you heard of the country Barbados? It’s an island in the Caribbean. When I say Caribbean island, what do you think of? Playing on the sandy beaches, having a fun time in the crystal-clear water, amazing food and upbeat music may come to mind. But, you should also think about getting eaten alive by mosquitoes, ants infesting your home and random stray cats asking for food at your doorsteps! If you ever plan on visiting Barbados, follow my tips on how to make the best out of your trip.

THINGS TO DO: VISIT IN THE SUMMER

If you’re going to Barbados, go during the party months of June, July and August because that’s when Crop Over, also known as the Harvest Festival, happens. Crop Over is a 200-year-old tradition that celebrates the end of the sugar cane season. There is a lot of partying in the streets, parades and food. Crop Over ends with the biggest festival of them all, Kadooment, where people dress up in colorful and feathery skimpy garments to march in the streets and party all day.

HIRE A TOUR GUIDE

It's easy to get lost in Barbados! The island has rocky, narrow roads and you have to drive on the left! But, if you get a tour guide, you can ask them to take you to places like Harrison Cave and beaches with pink sand and clear water, according to US News & World Report Travel Guide, which will make your trip more fun. My mother, Medina Jones, said, "It's best to get a tour guide. If you're really new, find a map or local."

CARRY BUG SPRAY

The bugs in Barbados are going to be wild! According to Barbados.org, there are flying cockroaches, ants, sandflies and the notorious mosquito, all which you can combat with the bug spray. Make sure to buy the bug spray in Barbados because the bug spray in America isn't strong enough to kill all of the bugs. Jones said it would be great to bring bug spray, but don't expect it to work all the time. "Usually bugs come out at night, so be more careful then."

PACK ACCORDINGLY

When packing, the first thing you want to do is get proper summer clothes, the lighter the better. Another thing to do while you're packing is to exchange your American money for Bajan dollars — the rate is approximately two Bajan dollars to every American dollar. Also, bring an umbrella because when noontime hits, the sun will be beaming and make you hot and

sweaty. You also need the umbrella because it rains randomly and then stops at least 10 minutes later. Be sure to pack sunscreen to prevent sunburn and tan lines.

EAT THE LOCAL FOOD

When you go to Barbados, try the food. Cou cou and flying fish is the national dish. It's cornmeal with a side of tomato paste sauce with fish in it. You should also try macaroni pie. No, it's not macaroni in a pie, it's just baked macaroni and cheese. This is a big staple in the country's diet. Another food you can try is a fried savory food called fish cakes. It's made with saltfish and dough batter, seasoned with scallions and other seasonings, then fried to a golden ball of perfection. According to Crane.com, it's the most popular food for tourists in Barbados. Other staple foods are rice and peas and a fruit called ginaps, but in Barbados, they call them Bajan ackees. Not to be confused with the Jamaican ackee, it has the shape of a grape with a hard outer skin that you have to bite off. It's very sweet and sour. You can get them from street-side vendors in Barbados. "If you're new to the island I really would recommend the food, there's a lot of flavor and spice that will make you feel very very excited," Jones said.

THINGS NOT TO DO:

BEWARE OF THE ANIMALS

Barbados is full of animals like the green monkey, bats, lizards and rabbits. There are also animals like

wild cats and dogs. To combat these tricky animals, don't feed them! Yes, they may seem cute and cuddly, but they could have rabies, ticks or fleas and they could come back for more food if you feed them. I fed the cats and for sure they came back! Not sure about the dogs, but on the safe side don't feed them either! If you see a monkey, don't get too close. They can feel threatened and attack you, resulting in serious injuries. That said, animals aren't all that bad, but don't go out your way to bother them. If you bother them, they'll bother you. "Be careful too, and take awareness if you get bitten by an animal. Get medical treatment as fast as possible," Jones said.

AVOID POISONOUS TREES

In Barbados, there are many trees and fruits that look pretty and you may want to eat its fruit. However, you have to be aware of one tree in particular: the manchineel tree. Known to grow near coastal beaches, it is a poisonous tree that grows a deceiving fruit that looks edible, but could lead you to your short-timed death!

DON'T WEAR CAMOUFLAGE

When you get to Barbados, it's best that you keep your camouflage clothing at home! It's the Bajan Law that you can't wear camo clothing because it's only reserved for the Barbados Defense Force. This isn't limited to just green camo, any color camouflage can get you detained!

BLACK.

BY GEANNA PATTEN, CONTRIBUTOR

everything we do is a
crime,
it's been like that for a
whole lifetime.

black is a color no one
wants to see,
police are shooting so
“quietly.”

once we die, no one
hears a sound
whites on the news but
blacks are nowhere to be
found.

making it to 18 is a
blessing,
in the life we're living
everyone's stressing.

police make their way
out of a crime,
whereas if blacks did
they'd be facing time.

murder is a small six-
letter word,
but we have to yell just
to be heard.

tears running down
mommas' faces,
“those police took my
baby now they need to be
put in their places”

you have to stretch to
make life out here livable,
hoodrats on every
corner yelling “we need a
miracle”

working hard is
something we all do,
we have to budge into
places you guys just walk
through.

no one cares enough,
everyone's living alone.

you all persist, cuffs
around our wrists,
while families are
missed.

your fist in my lip,
remind me of when you
guys used to whip.

if you put a c in front
of opp you'll know the
biggest threat
but the sad part is,
you all have your own
mindset.

a jail cell is where most
of us are held,
behind bars, serving
time, the judge compelled.

lack of opportunity has

broke our unity,
defined our identity
and marginalized
minorities.

black lives matter
caused a whole lot of
chatter,
so all lives matter
was rathered.

sirens wailing,
blacks are failing.

i can't believe you'd all
have the tendency,
the answer is not white
supremacy.

take a look in your rear-
view, and all you see is the
color
blue.

“keep your hands visible
and make no sudden
moves,”
police make the calls
then say we're all fools.

whites reach for the
stars,
while blacks remain
behind bars.

right before dinner
some families pray,

wishing that they'll live
to see another day.

being black can
sometimes get hard,
carrying the burden of
all whites wanting you
dead in a graveyard.

by the second more
lives are being lost,
and those officers need
to pay the cost.

if you flipped the script
you'll see what life is like,
waking up to a world
where everyday you have
to fight.

our ancestors were
slaves,
beaten and abused
i'm conveyed that we'll
always lose.

what did they do to earn
so much disrespect,
we're always the number
one suspects.

we all bleed the same
blood,
so why can't we all just
equally love?

up to this day,
racism continues
i hope in the future this
doesn't cause any issues.

black.

WHAT COLOR AM I?

BY JAKAYLA FURR, CONTRIBUTOR

Behind the naked eye
We are the same
The way we cry
It's still the same because life is no game.

Whether I am red, blue or black
I am the exact same as you

With that being said you are the same as me
Beneath the flesh, you are no better
So don't pray on my downfall, cause I'm the best I can be
So don't be alarmed when I have on a dark sweater.

We are built in the same skeleton
Our veins carry the same blood
The color of my skin is irrelevant
Just because I'm black, I get judged.

The color of my skin holds history
People believing it's a sin to love someone who looks like me
Certain features, Certain triggers, Certain chemistry
People just like me always end "in memory..."

THE BODY OF A WOMAN

BY JAKAYLA FURR, CONTRIBUTOR

My body, My power
That's what they say anyways
Beauty like a sunflower
No matter how much we weigh.

Beautiful from our head to our toes
Including our mismatched curves
What we wear is a form of expression, a way of
life, and showing growth
It does not matter what you think you deserve

I can't control the uncontrollable
Like the size of my chest or the size of my figure
Your opinions are disposable, unlovable, un-
knowable
They should be reconsidered, 'cause they just
make you sound bitter.

I won't dress to make you happy
OR do what you want me to do
If I don't want to do my hair, who cares if it's
nappy!
But I live in a society where none of these mes-
sages get through.

The way I sit is none of your business
Whether my legs are crossed or not
If I'm taking up space, I'm sorry but I'm not
asking for your forgiveness.
I'm not the woman of your imagination, But of
course, that's something you never thought.

My body, My power
So I'm going to do what I want and wear what I
please
Through every day and every hour
I am a woman, who else agrees?



THE LOVE WE POSSESS

BY JAKAYLA FURR, CONTRIBUTOR

Family

The people we grew up with
The people you talk to happily
The people who have loved you since birth.

Love we grow up on
Bonding awaiting to be learned
The first portrait that you draw with those colorful crayons
Unconditional love that comes unearned.

A type of love that we possess
A type of love that we inherit
You will always have those people to caress
And you don't even have to declare it.

The only people who will never leave your side
The people who won't turn their backs on you
The grieving and pain TOGETHER when someone dies
The ones who entertain the fantasies we once knew.

Family

The ones who have been there since the beginning of time
Until the moment you close your colorful eyes.

THE CLIFF

BY STELLA SMITH, CONTRIBUTOR

An enticing escape
Yet selfishly destructive;
A fear grips my heart
As I take the step,
Prepared to fade
Into the distance,
Into nothingness.

A deafening silence
Surrounds me,
Encasing me
In the cage
Of self-created thought.

A silent plea to stop,
To return home,
Enters through
The open window
Of my mind.

I push it away
Denying any emotion
Wishing to forget
Hoping to be forgotten.

The end I sought
Now stands facing me,
A promise of liberation
From all endured
From all to come.

A new strength
Washes over me
Pulling me back,
A forgiven soul,
A forsaken wish.

THE WARNING

BY CLAER JESTIN, CONTRIBUTOR

Mama said don't play with matches.
She told him not to touch those
knives.

So why is the world on fire, sweetie?
Why are my ears haunted by their
cries?

Can you hear my brethren screaming,
The poor children with bullet
wounds?

What happened to peace and harmo-
ny, honey?
Who spawned Mother Earth's doom?

Are those dead bodies not enough?
How many more children will it take
To break your impenetrable wall?
When will you listen to your people's
pleas?

Don't you know that I lost my friends
To those fingers that pulled the
trigger?
Don't you know this problem
Could not possibly get any bigger?

So please listen to me before the next
shooter snaps
Before it's your children's blood that
stains the concrete floor
Don't kill another sacrificial lamb
Just because you like your purses a
tiny bit thicker.

JOY

BY MADELEINE FARNKOFF, CONTRIBUTOR

My little brother brings me joy. His name is Desmond. I remember the day he was born: I was in the second grade. I was 7 years old. My little brother and sister are each six years apart from each other. My little brother is now 7-years-old. I remember when he was born, I stayed with my uncle in my grandparent's house, because my mom had to stay overnight at the hospital. My brother was born in the morning when the sun rose. I was really tired, and I was sleeping when my uncle came into my room and woke me up. He told me that my brother was just born, and I got dressed really fast and he drove me to Brigham and Women's Hospital. When we got to the hospital, we had to check in at the office and we got red bracelets that basically said we were visitors. The nurse showed us to the room where our parents were staying and all of my family was crying. My brother was wrapped in a blue blanket. The hospital has a lot of blue and pink blankets they

give out when someone has a baby. If it is a girl, you get a pink one, if its a boy, you get a blue one.

My brother is going to be in a play this weekend, and I can't wait to see him

***"I KNOW MY BROTHER
LOOKS UP TO ME, SO
I HAVE TO BE A GOOD
EXAMPLE FOR HIM. I LOVE
HIM SO MUCH AND I AM
HAPPY HE WAS BORN."***

in it. He worked hard, and I can't wait to see him grow up. I know for now, he likes playing with buses and cars, and he said he wants to be a bus driver when he grows up. He loves going on bus rides with my dad. I think it's weird, but he also loves Hallmark movies and mysteries. I know my brother looks up to me, so I have to be a good example for him. I love him so much and I am happy he was born. He fills my life with joy.



AMPLIFY YOUNG VOICES & SUPPORT WRITEBOSTON

writeboston.org/amplify

Teens in Print is possible thanks to the generous support of:

Linda Walsh and the Walsh Family

Boston Business Journal | Boston Bruins Foundation | The Boston Globe | The Calderwood Foundation
The Cummings Foundation | Emerson College | Highland Street Foundation | Mabel Louise Riley Foundation
Massachusetts Convention Center Authority | Massachusetts Service Alliance - Commonwealth Corps | Paul & Edith Babson Foundation
People's United Bank | Plymouth Rock Foundation | Summer Fund | Wellington Management Foundation | Wells Fargo

See more at bostontip.com and follow us on social media @teensinprint.