

THE SPECTATOR

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Ask Dr. Doctor Bennett

Dr. Doctor Bennett Hart '16, News Editor

Dr. Doctor Bennett Hart is a professional human relationships and behavioral advisor. He received his education from the monks who raised him since his unusual birth—when over the Himalayas, several bright, puffy clouds parted, giving way to a rainbow, and the little infant floated down from the mountain. The monks named him Doctor (yes, first name Doctor) Bennett Hart. Through several years of perfecting his craft, Hart is now ready to share his unique gift with the BHS student body. Please, feel free to share your concerns with him, as he will guide you to a happy, righteous life. *To submit anonymous questions to Dr. Doctor Bennett Hart, go to ask.fm/SpectatorAskBennett.*

Is Bennet God?

I don't know. In fact, I've never met anyone with the name Bennet in my life. If you are referring to Dr. Doctor Bennett Hart, then the answer is absolutely not. If anything, I more closely resemble a prophet. If you are interested in this topic and are interested in reading more about the amazing and beautiful Dr. Doctor Bennett Hart, then I suggest you read the bio that has been provided above.

Would you rather fight one horse-sized duck or 100 duck-sized horses?

If I were faced with fighting one of these horrific things, I would chose one horse-sized duck. If I had to destroy 100 horse-sized ducks it would be difficult, because horses are extremely fast and powerful. Although, one horse-sized duck would take a long time to kill, and horses could run away and could crawl all over you. Ducks are too slow to really damage you physically, so whenever you needed a rest from hitting it, you could do that. Additionally, ducks stay in paddlings, large groups, so they would feel out of place and may not be able to function properly. Due to the fact that 100 of anything is annoying, I would choose ducks.

The Meh List:
Not good, not bad, just meh.

Corey Lipton '16, Managing Editor

- 1 . Burger King
- 2 . Wyoming
- 3 . Baked chips
- 4 . Utah Jazz
- 5 . Brown rice



Inspired by the *New York Times Magazine*'s "The Meh List"

Photo courtesy of Everyday Health, isportsweb and Wikimedia Commons user Burger King corporation.

Is it weird that I've wished I was a girl my entire life or nah

Personally, I do not believe that it is weird that you wish you were a girl. Without knowing why you wish this, it is hard to say if your wish makes sense, but I certainly wonder how being the opposite gender would be different myself. After all, both genders have their own problems, so it probably does not really matter.

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The *Spectator* Staff understands that some articles may not spark each student's interest, so we have organized a scavenger hunt for our beloved readers: look for senior Rylie Murray hidden within these pages. Once you do, bring your paper to Ms. Emily Mullins in room 165/116 and show her where Murray is! If you are the first to do so, your name will be taken down, and you will be hidden in the next issue.



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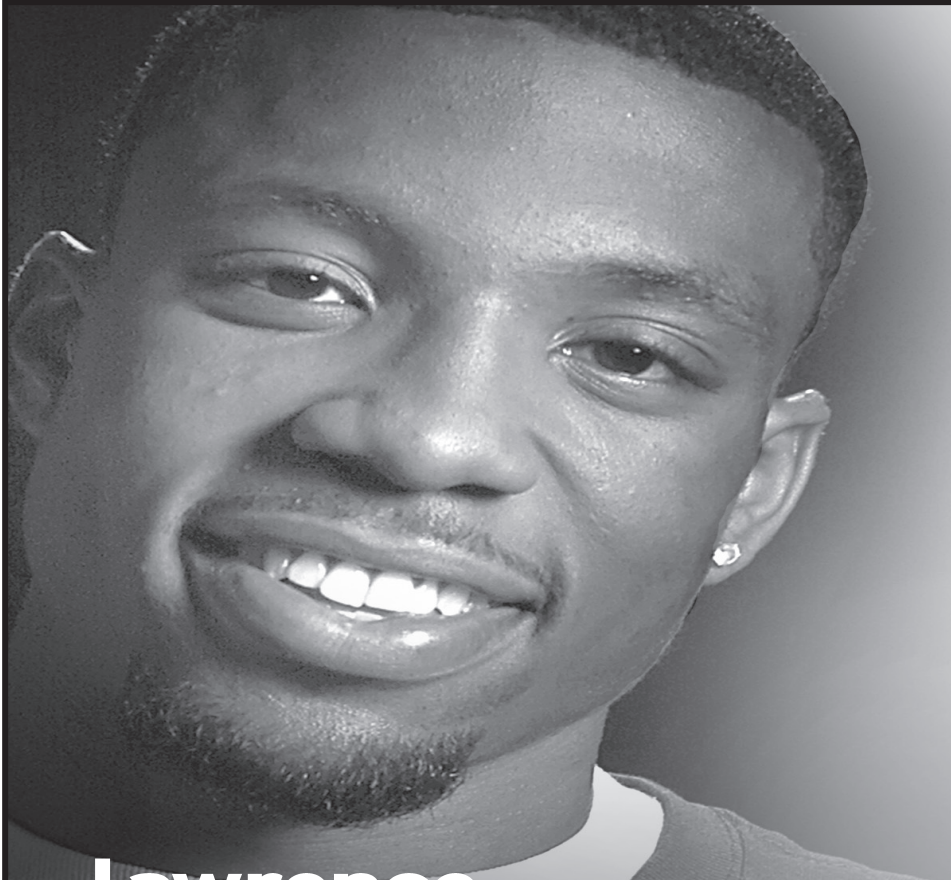


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Keep off the grass

Zoe Blake '17, Co Assistant Photo Editor

On Nov. 4, Berkley and Huntington Woods passed a law decriminalizing marijuana, with a vote of 62 percent in favor.

The dictionary defines decriminalization as "removing or reducing the criminal classification or status of, especially: to repeal a strict ban on while keeping under some form of regulation."

However, the law that recently passed is more complicated than what the dictionary defines decriminalization as. "Basically, it is legal to obtain under an ounce of marijuana [on your private property or within your personal car] if you are of 21 years or older. However it is illegal to purchase marijuana," Sergeant Andrew Hadfield of the Berkley Police Department said. The official wording of the law is "It is legal for any adult above the age of 21 to possess, use or transfer up to an ounce of marijuana on private property. State and federal laws criminalizing marijuana possession remained in effect."

So essentially, if someone is under 21 and found with marijuana, he or she can still be arrested. If someone is of any age and are found purchasing marijuana, one will still be held accountable for their actions and be arrested. "The problem with this law is that it is very confusing. People think 'oh weed is legal, let's go smoke' when that's not the case. It's not that simple," Hadfield said.

"The law really confused me and my family. We had no clue what it meant or what it would do; I think that we should have gotten more information about it," Berkley Community member Patty Tollefson said.

Although the law may be confusing, the one thing that is clear is that around the country, more and more states and communities are decriminalizing and undergoing the process of legalizing marijuana.

Michigan unveils new standardized test to replace the MEAP

Maisy Cece '15, Copy Editor

In Lansing, on Nov. 13, the Michigan State Department of Education (MDE) unveiled a new online exam that will replace the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), beginning next spring. The new Michigan Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) was created to meet current standardized test mandates put into effect last summer by state lawmakers who vetoed original plans to use a computer-adaptive test known as Smarter Balanced.

According to members of the MDE board, the MEAP test, which has been used across the state for nearly 44 years, has become outdated and unsuccessful when portraying a student's abilities to think critically while solving tough problems. The new M-STEP test will be an online exam based on more demanding standards that will cover grades 3-8. Still, a paper-pencil version of the exam will be offered to schools that are not yet technologically up-to-date.

The M-STEP test is setup like any other basic multiple choice exam, but will include a section consisting of open-ended responses that will require students to provide detailed written explanations showing their thinking process. According to Amber Arellano, executive director of the Education Trust-Midwest, a nonpartisan think tank in Royal Oak, the new assessment will be a promising replacement for the antiquated MEAP.

"We know from leading education states that the path to a brighter educational future for all of our students begins with raising educational standards and implementing an aligned assessment," Arellano said. "It's not just about picking out an A, B, C or D answer. It means essay questions. It means thoughtful, deep thinking and original thinking in order to be really good problem solvers." School districts have been very anxious to see what the new exam has in store for their students and their schools, especially after the Smarter Balanced test was scrapped and lawmakers ordered education officials to hastily create a revised version of the MEAP for this school year while also creating the entirely new M-STEP exam for the 2015-16 school year.

Problems concerning the Smarter Balanced assessment

began when the MDE stated that it would be an exam solely taken online. Michigan conservatives associated in the lawmaking process behind the new test compared M-STEP's online aspect with Michigan's Common Core. After extensive review, they ruled that the M-STEP's online characteristics threatened local control of education.

Michigan's state school Superintendent Mike Flanagan believes that this controversy and the changes in the law diverted what the department and local school districts had been developing test wise, for the last three years. "It put schools in some unwelcomed limbo while our experts scrambled to find testing content that met the legislative requirements," Flanagan said.

The solution to the political discord surrounding the issue has been the M-STEP test, which is comprised of questions specifically developed by state officials and educators along with some that were made by the Smarter Balanced consortium of states. By combining certain aspects of the M-STEP and Smarter Balanced tests, the new exam will assess grades 3-8 in math and the English language, grades four and seven in science, and grades five and eight in social studies.

The test has also been partially created to better prepare junior high students for vital standardized testing that they will eventually face later on in their high school careers when they take the ACT and MME. The M-STEP test has been designed to get students comfortable with the multiple-choice setup and wording similar to the ACT and MME. Educators are hopeful that this will help develop their students overall testing abilities, while getting them comfortable taking tests alike to the ACT and MME. Altogether, they aim to produce more test-prepared students and thus, better scores on present and future tests.

Currently, educators around the state are ambitious for the success of the new standardized M-STEP test. However, the assessment is suspected to have many flaws in its first distribution. With this unpromising expectation, educators will continue to develop the test further and for, according to the MDE, the next decade.

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House approves Keystone Pipeline Proposal

Maisy Cece '15, Copy Editor

In Washington D.C., on Nov. 14, the current Republican-led House of Representatives passed recent legislation, voting 252-161, approving construction for the Keystone Pipeline. The debate over the pipeline has been an extremely controversial subject over the past five years and has reached new and contentious political heights as rapidly rising gas prices has begun to plague the American economy.

Construction for the pipeline has been delayed for nearly four years as stringent political and environmental opposition against its building has overwhelmed the matter. Altogether, the Keystone pipeline would stretch across 1,179 miles of land transporting crude oil from the tar sands regions of the Canadian West, to areas of the U.S. Midwest, and down to refineries on the Gulf Coast for then, potential export overseas. After the pipeline's building, the Canadian oil currently sent to refineries in Illinois, Ohio, and other Midwestern states would end up being diverted to Keystone, chiefly for export to foreign markets. This is what could potentially raise gas prices even further for the U.S. and many critics believe that the pipeline would raise prices most significantly in the U.S.'s Midwest territory.

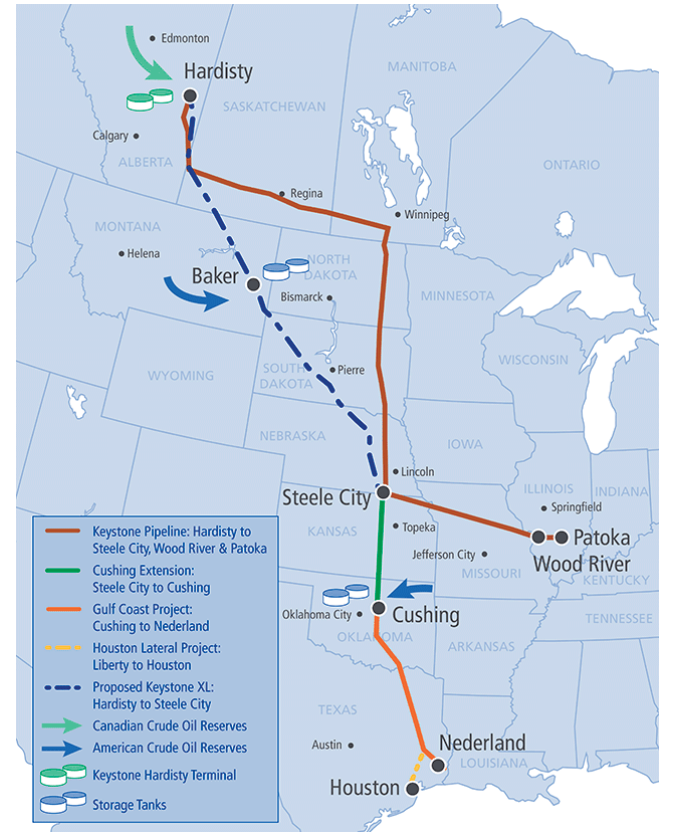
According to Consumer Watchdog, a nonprofit public interest group, "increases at the pump could range from 25 cents to 40 cents a gallon, depending on how regional refineries respond to paying \$20 to \$30 more, per 42-gallon barrels of Canadian crude oil." And, according to a 2011 report by Cornell University's Global Labor Institute, it is suspected that the Keystone's rerouting of

oil from the Midwest would, ultimately cost Midwestern states approximately \$4 billion in higher gas prices.

However, supporters for the pipeline believe that even though the Midwest may suffer from higher prices at the pump due to Keystone, the pipeline could benefit the overall North American crude oil market. Even without the Keystone Pipeline, the U.S. already imports record amounts of Canadian oil. It is estimated that the U.S. brings in nearly three million barrels of crude oil a day, much of it coming from the oil sands in Canada's province of Alberta. This in turn, supporters argue, brings the nation more fiscal opportunity and economic stimulation.

If building for the Keystone Pipeline is approved in the near future by the Senate, many economic experts believe that it would likely raise the value of Canadian crude oil while pushing the global price of oil lower, due to an overall influx in its supply. This would be an advantage for Canada in terms of higher prices, but could altogether lower the global price of oil. Nonetheless, it is still unknown how it could overall affect America.

With modern gas prices largely the result of worldwide economic demand, along with the fact that the Keystone Pipeline's building technically would not go into effect until several years after its approval, it is difficult to guess whether or not oil prices will rise or lower because of the pipeline. However, it is safe to say that with its approval in the House, the Keystone Pipeline will be a definite reality for America in the near future.



The pipeline will span from Canada all the way down to Southern Texas in the Houston area.

Photo courtesy of TransCanada Keystone XL Pipeline

Students disappear in Mexico

Cobian Gleason '16, Assistant Copy Editor

Recent events in Iguala, Mexico have led to the disappearance of 43 Mexican college students. The students were in the city to protest against discrimination in the Mexican government, but their efforts resulted in unseen consequences. The students were confronted by police when they hijacked buses in order to help them protest. Police then opened fire on the buses and killed two of the students while others fled.

According to an online news article provided by CNN, investigators believe that the students were arrested by police on orders from the mayor, and later handed over to a criminal organization known as the Guerreros. They are suspected of executing the students, burning their bodies and putting their remains in plastic bags, which were thrown into the San Juan river in Cocula. Four alleged members of the Guerreros were arrested and then led authorities to mass graves where they collected the potential remains.

After this discovery, Mexican Attorney General Jesús Murillo Karam held a press conference in which he relayed the uncovering of the graves to parents. *USA Today* reports that he showed video of charred bones pulled from the river as well as confessions from suspects. However, the remains have not yet been identified, since the damage of the burns has made DNA tests difficult.

Due to the lack of scientific proof, the families do not believe the claims that their children were found dead. They think the government just wants to put an end to the protests and still hold on to the hope that their children will return home alive.



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Death with dignity: the right to die

William Shulak '16, Assistant Student Life Editor

The Death with Dignity Act is currently passed in New Mexico, Vermont, Montana, Oregon and Washington. As of mid-November, assisted suicide is being discussed for Pennsylvania. This legislation allows terminally-ill residents of those states to end their lives through the voluntary self-administration of lethal medications that have been prescribed for that purpose by a doctor.

This law has sparked major controversy throughout the United States and the world, as physician-assisted suicide has been noted to go against many moral and religious values. According to the Death with Dignity National Center, doctor assisted suicide conflicts with Catholicism due to the idea that the “killing of a human being, even by an act of omission to eliminate suffering, violates divine law and offends the dignity of the human person.” Other religions with similar views include Islam, Mormonism and Sikhism.

Religion should not be the driving force against doctor-assisted suicide, since it is very subjective and one religion does not pertain to everyone. The beliefs of some people should not rule over everyone else. This is particularly relevant to atheists and other people who do not adhere to a specific faith, since it would be unfair for them to have to follow along to something that does not pertain to them.

Doctor-assisted suicide has affected people not only globally and nationally, but it also impacts people on a local level. The AP government and economics course at BHS conducts a project at the end of each school year that requires students to debate current controversial issues, with assisted suicide being an option. “States have legislated the ability to have someone medically evaluated, and if they meet certain criteria, they can end their life early on their own terms and with dignity. When you look at the individual states, [the bills] are things that came out of voter initiatives...and if [students] feel strongly about it, they can be the voters that are initiating this issue on Michigan,” government and economics teacher Mr. Ira Goldberg said.

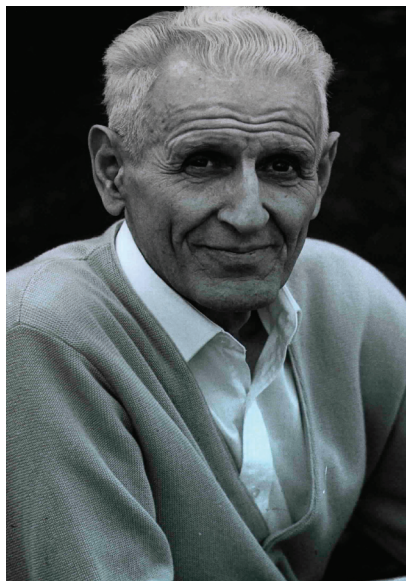


Photo courtesy of Mavericks of the Mind

Jack Kevorkian, the face of assisted suicide.

It is clear that the issue is more and more relevant to the average citizen, and people need to be educated in order to make a decision. “I think that in order to really understand Death with Dignity, one has to put oneself in the position of someone who is dying with a critical illness,” Goldberg said, explaining the ignorant assumptions of the many people trying to restrict assisted death. “When you do so, that it helps you get a better idea that being able to end your life on your terms with dignity and respect should be an individual choice,” Goldberg added. A wide consensus aligns with Goldberg’s thoughts, and this is the right way to ensure these people have their own sense of nobility and in the end, suffer the least amount.

When thinking of major proponents for doctor-assisted suicide, the mind immediately turns to the late Jack Kevorkian. Kevorkian brought worldwide attention to the issue and put a face on the Death with Dignity movement. As a doctor with a lot of experience, he practiced early forms of assisted suicide on terminally ill patients and sparked widespread controversy. Kevorkian asserts to be relieving his patients from pain and suffering. He served eight years of a 10 to 25 year sentence on a second-degree murder charge for his controversial practices. Many who opposed him felt that there were moral barriers that he was breaking. To him, he was doing what he needed to help patients who were denied the end to their pain by other physicians.

The right to die of one’s own accord in specialized cases should not be denied to those whose life causes them suffering. It is difficult for an outsider to understand a circumstance where death is the preferable course of action. Whatever the case, people should be able to decide their fate for themselves without government interference.

Less of a punishment, more of a vacation

Jake Kreinbring '16, Photo Editor

Give the average high schooler the option to have a seven day break, and most will run with the opportunity. The concept of missing seven days of school will get some people so excited that they would literally jump up and down. This is how students are starting to view suspensions, and this brings to question the validity of out of school suspensions. Schools all over the country are beginning to change their policy regarding suspensions, some eliminating them completely, and Berkley should follow their lead.

If one looks at students who get suspended, they will see that they are most likely students who based on low grades, already poor attendance and a lack of credits, cannot afford to miss school. Whether it is issues at home, grade problems, or just personal things, most of these students cannot miss numerous days of school at a time. The disciplinary system that simply puts those students farther behind is one that needs to be changed. A simplified solution to this would be to start issuing more in-school suspensions. The simple facts are that when a student who struggles with school spends more time in school, they will perform better than if they spend their time at home.

The problem that presents itself with in-school suspensions is that schools are struggling with money and management. When asked about his opinion on in school suspensions, principal Randall Gawel said “While in-school suspensions could be effective, the management makes actually doing them tricky.” The implementation of a system where in-school suspensions are more common than normal ones could lead to a raise in grades, but a system where there are no suspensions would be one that may not truly benefit the students and their safety.

A system where the type of suspension (in-school vs. out of school) are issued based on the offense, would be a great system for Berkley to have in place. Due to the varied cases in which someone gets suspended, it would be a huge step for schools like Berkley to integrate in-school suspensions into their current system. The punishments could be determined on a case to case basis, and the school could maybe

have a conversation with the parent or guardian. They could talk about the best thing for the kid to do, whether it is a in-school or a conventional suspension. In some cases there will be no option but to have the student taken out of school for a few days, but in the cases that are minor, an effort should be made to keep these students in school. Right now, this system is one that really is hard to change due to the simple fact that there really is no alternative that provides a quick fix. When asked if there was anything that could replace suspensions, assistant principal Mr. Ronald Kane said, “There is no alternative...[right now as] we have nowhere to keep in-school suspensions.” While a system that utilizes alternatives to suspensions may be far from being an option in the next five years, it could be one to come in the future.

With futures on the line, is it really right for an institution such as a school to hang their students out to dry? These school days missed may seem small in the grand scheme of things, but missing school is serious business. With so many teachers preaching the importance of students to be there for every class so they do not fall behind, it seems almost hypocritical for the same people to look at kids and say they made a choice and will miss school as a consequence. While it may seem impractical for a school to baby these students, some of these kids may have no one on their side, nobody pushing them to do well, and no one helping them up when they fall.

Schools should begin to strive towards a system where students are helped through their problems as opposed to being removed from the building. The start of small programs designed to help students with their problems, whether it be at home or at school, or even somewhere in between, could save futures while keeping them in school. As much as teens may like to deny it, school is their job, and to not help a student through his issues to better perform at his job is ludicrous. When the students are helped as opposed to being removed, the school system will be looked at in a better light, and will be able to watch those kids prosper and know they made a difference.

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Photo by Ms. Emily Mullins

Students with poor grades cannot afford to be suspended.

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Turmoil in the North Pole

Corey Lipton '16, Managing Editor

BREAKING NEWS: Christmas may be cancelled this year. All was fine and dandy in the North Pole until the elves got fed up.

Recently, waves of elves took to the streets to protest their low wages and long hours. Elves have been rioting nonstop for days now. One cannot even walk outside without being hit by a chocolate bomb, candy cane sling shot or gumdrop bullet. The elf riots really took storm through Twitter, where #StopSanta was trending on twitter to raise awareness for the elves' cause.

These flash riots were caused by years of tension that built-up from Santa supposedly treating the reindeers as though they are better than the elves. According to Mittens the Elf, the leader of the rebellion, "Santa has been denying us our basic elf rights for as long as we can remember. We only get one vacation day a year.

We are fed up, and will continue to protest until we see change." Mittens continued, "I am personally calling on all countries, militant groups and any other organizations to send in whatever you can to help our cause. Water, medicine, guns—we'll take it all."

Santa has responded in an exclusive press release saying, "The allegations against me are false. I have always treated the elves with respect, given them fair pay and fair working conditions. If this strike doesn't end soon though, Christmas might have to be postponed, or worse, [sniffles] cancelled."

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer has offered to be a mediator between the two parties, and if his mediating skills are as good as his nose is bright, hopefully we can get this issue resolved and Christmas will be saved.

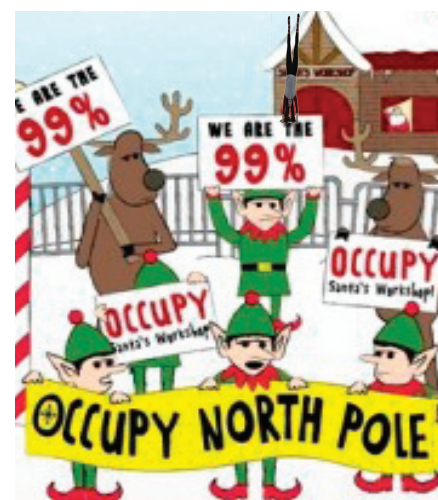


Photo courtesy of Tiny Prints

Elves protest mistreatment and low wages.

NA: Netflix Anonymous

Kit Charlton '16, Opinion Editor and Jake Kreinbring '16, Photo Editor

The following is a genuine transcript. In the interest of the privacy of all involved, personal information has been redacted and replaced with false names.

Advisor: Hello! Welcome to Netflix Anonymous. If you are new here, please introduce yourself and the conditions of your addiction.

Rick: H-hey guys. M-m-my name is Rick, and I love to watch *Scrubs*. I-I [ahem] have seen all the episodes, of every season, ever. Thrice.

Group: Hi, Rick.

John: My fellow Americans (motions to group with hands), my name, is John Howard MacArthur. My trusted advisors recommended that I come to this meeting. I recognize that I have a problem. That problem, is with *House of Cards*. I do admit that I have watched *House of Cards*, but let me be clear, I have never binged.

Group: Hi, John.

Stacy: Hello My name is, like, Stacy. I would not really call it a problem, but I really, really, really like *Orange is the New Black*. And sometimes, I like to watch American Horror Story, but that one is like, really, really, too scary, so..... yeah.

Group: Hi, Stacy.

Thaddeus: Hello group. Uh, my name is Thaddeus, uh, Thaddeus Mugsy. I watch *Lilyhammer*, *The Walking Dead* and *My Little Pony*. Uh, yeah, that's it.

Group: Hi, Thaddeus.

Advisor: Thank you! The first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem. Now—

Stacy: Um, excuse me, I do not have a problem, I just like to watch tv sometimes, that's all.

Advisor: If you can't admit you have a problem, you can't begin the healing process. Wait, what are you doing on your phone?

Stacy: Nothing! I'm just—just texting my friend. Uh, my friend Piper.

John: I do believe (pause) that she is watching Netflix on her phone.

Advisor: Stacy! You can't have that here! Give it to me!

Thaddeus: Stacy, that's not very respectful to the rest of us...

Rick: I GOTTA HAVE IT!

Stacy: Noooooo! You [redacted]!

At this point, Rick tackled Stacy to the ground, stole her phone and ran out the door. He has not been seen since. The police believe he is either dead, or worse: bingeing.

As the holiday season approaches, remember: this can happen to you. High school students are considered a high risk demographic for Netflix addiction. If boredom begins to take hold, step away from the television or laptop, put down the phone and find a safe place away from an Internet connection.

In extreme cases, cancelling one's Netflix subscription and burning all devices with the ability to connect to the Internet may allow one to cast off the oppressive chains of Netflix. Please watch responsibly this holiday break.



Photo by Jake Kreinbring

Netflix addiction can take hold quickly and with little warning.

'I Am' just human

Nicole Doctoroff '16, Feature Editor

Recently, it was recommended to me by a friend to watch a documentary on Netflix called *I Am*. Being the person who only watches *How I Met Your Mother* and *Grey's Anatomy* on Netflix, I silently shot down the suggestion. Why would I ever watch a documentary for fun? However, that very night, I happened to find myself completely engrossed in one.

Tom Shadyac, the director of several popular films such as *Bruce Almighty* and *Evan Almighty*, had recently gone through a life threatening accident that took a major toll on his career and altered his thoughts about the world in which we live. As he stared death in the face, he realized that he wanted to do something to help better the world by making a meaningful documentary. To begin, he asked many philosophical and scientific experts two questions: "What is wrong with the world?" and "How can we fix it?". From the answers to these questions came the thought-provoking documentary *I Am*. Shadyac achieves his goal of affecting lives as he takes his viewers on a journey to help understand our world better, and what we can do to make improvements.

While answering the questions, many of the philosophers came to a similar conclusion: a major flaw of humanity and more specifically, of America, is that we have the misconception that the amount of money one has equates to their level of happiness. Yes, it takes a certain amount of income to be happy, however, that does not mean if your income is doubled, your happiness will double as well. After years of studies, it has been proven that if someone makes \$70,000 a year, they will not be any happier than a person who makes an annual income of \$140,000 a year. There is not a direct correlation between money and happiness.

It was mentioned at one point in the film, that as a result of this common misconception people have evolved to become too ambitious

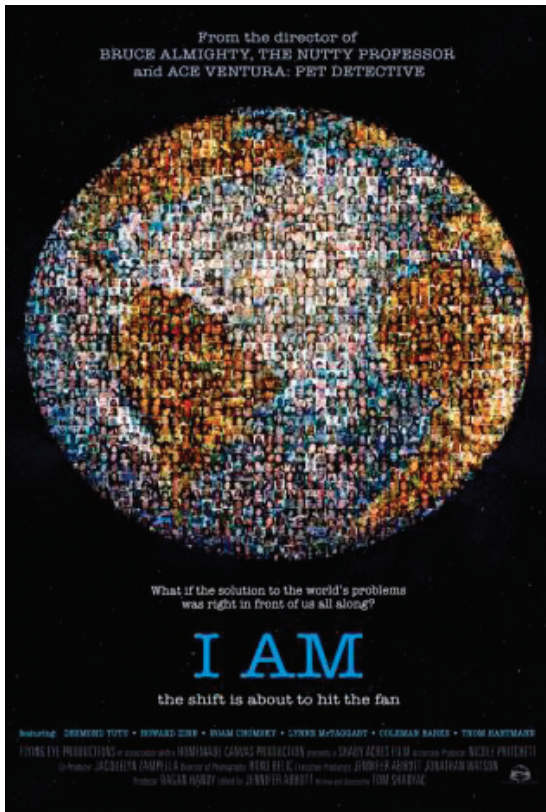
in order to have a high paying salary. Our ambition can often times lead to unhealthy competition in the workplace, and can result in us valuing individuality more than we should. This causes us to care about connections with other people less.

Throughout *I Am*, it is explained that human nature can be, to some extent, co-dependent. According to studies, we instinctively rely on our connections with others to bring us happiness. Therefore, our extreme ambition is only making us less happy since we begin to care about connections less, even though ambition is supposed to be leading us to a

lifestyle that will bring great joy. It is a part of human DNA to have the ability to empathize, sympathize and love. As it was mentioned in the film, humans have become the most successful species not because we are the strongest, or even the smartest, but because we are ultimately able to connect and communicate with one another. It is human instinct to want to help one another in times of distress. We have the ability to work together to turn a

tragic event into one of unification, like 9/11. When we become too ambitious, we are going against basic human nature.

By the end of the movie, the question that was being answered was no longer, "What is wrong with the world?" but it evolved to being "What is right with the world?" As most teenagers do, I tend to revert to a pessimistic outlook on the world at times. The film made me realize along the way that humans are inherently good. Although people do have selfish tendencies, and there are bad people in the world, it does not define us as a species. Most people are filled with love, and they want to help one another. We are all human.



The movie poster promoting the documentay *I Am*.

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

A society changed by 140 characters

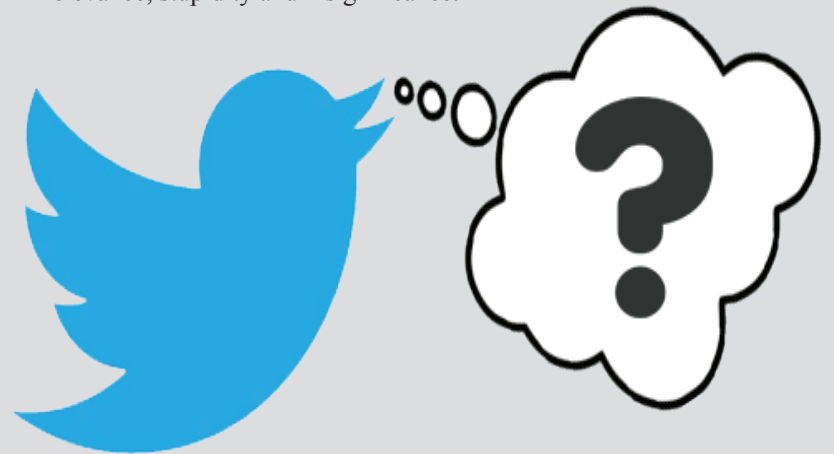
Katie Wolberg '18, Co-Business and Ad Manager

Twitter has its ups and downs. Yes, it is filled with millions of people, hilarious accounts and even Twitter-famous celebrities, but not everything on Twitter is great. Today, many teens cannot live without checking up on Twitter every 15 minutes. People tweet the most irrelevant things. Currently, people live by the 140-character standard, and this not only forces one to think overly concise, but it causes people to sink to writing meaningless tweets about uninteresting things.

Twitter is a way for people to procrastinate or become distracted as well as one account explains, "Can't sleep at night, can't get up in the morning." First, get off twitter. That will be a step in the right direction. Instead of tweeting about how late you stay up, go to bed so it's easier to wake up in the morning.

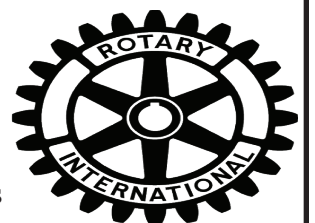
Twitter is also the ideal social network for stupidity. Someone on Twitter, actually tweeted the word "almond." Just that word. That was it. This is an example of probably one of the most pointless and unneeded tweets out there. People who create these kinds of tweets are perfect examples of what our society has come to. Tweeters try to be "cool" or "funny," when in reality, they seem as though they lack the ability to think real thoughts. Twitter used to be a way to interact with friends online, but it has evolved into a place where people share all of their 'thoughts,' and after seeing the *deepest* of our generation's thoughts, it has lessened my faith in humanity. It is a 140-character depiction of ignorant drab and irrelevant, uninteresting statements.

All of this has shown me that even though Twitter is a way to connect to others, it also is full of stupidity and distractions. So please, go outside, read a book and do anything but tweet. People should do more important things with their lives instead of staying on a website that is full of irrelevance, stupidity and insignificance.



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HOLLY JOLLY HANUKKAH

Zoe Blake '17, Co-Assistant Photo Editor and Annie Silver '17, Co-Assistant Photo Editor

The *Spectator* staff decided that it would be interesting to see how little the BHS students and staff know about each other's religious practices. We chose to interview eight students at random, not only because their answers are funny, but because they are complete guesses from BHS students.

Note, Christians will answer questions on Hanukkah, while Jews will answer questions on Christmas.

Questions	Daniel Sklarr	Leah Frankel	Chaya Krolikowski	Ryan Schildcrout
Why do Christians celebrate Christmas?	Birth of Jesus	To respect Santa	To get presents from Santa	To celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ
What does Santa Claus represent?	Saint something	Your Grandpa	Reincarnation of Jesus	Saint Nicholas
What does the star on top of a Christmas tree represent?	No clue, the specialties of the holidays?	Honestly, I don't even want to guess.	Star of David	The star that lead the three wise men to Jesus
Where was Jesus born?	In a barn by Mary, cause god got her pregnant and Jesus Christ was born	Santa's sleigh	Jerusalem	Jerusalem? Or was it Flint?

Questions	Gwen Wibbelman	Chloe Lister	Eric Braun	Sakina Toure
Why do Jews celebrate Hanukkah?	I could not tell you	I have honestly no idea	To celebrate the candle burning for seven days	Isn't it like Christmas?
How long does Hanukkah last?	Eight days	Seven days	Seven days or is it 11?	A week or ten days?
How many candles are on a menorah?	Eight	Seven	Eight	Eight
What does the lighting of the eight candles symbolize?	I don't know	I don't know	The eight days	Each day

Snowboarders vs. skiers

Malindi Lubinecky '15, Editor-in-Chief

It is a battle that has been fought since the beginning of time. The rivalry between snowboarders and skiers has destroyed friendships, caused physical brawls and tested the cattiness of all girls participating in this sport. For years, the animosity between the two sports has mounted to an all-time high. Every athlete is competitive, snowboarders and skiers included. Anyone who has been to a ski lodge, like Mt. Holly, can witness the hostility between the two. Skiers and snowboarders get along just as well as cats and dogs do; they share the same turf, but do not usually enjoy one another's company. "Like, there is no contest. How could anyone misconstrue French frying down a hill as better than snowboarding?" snowboarder and senior Andy McIntire asked.

There have been cases where this unfriendliness has taken a turn for the worse. In the past, there have been reports where a rather aggressive skier has 'accidentally' bumped into a snowboarder while going down the hill, resulting in an injury or vice versa. What started as harmless teasing has snowballed into an obnoxious rivalry.

While some are extremely heated over this disagreement, others believe that the feud may be fading out. "I think the contest between who is better is pretty ridiculous when what you do is really just personal preference. There's enough hill to go around," snowboarder and senior Tatum Kenrick said. Contrary to the popular belief, many skiers and snowboarders live in harmony, sharing the terrain with little to no conflict. Although many hot-headed boarders and skiers are still duking it out on the hills, others have hung up their poles and have become comrades with their arch-nemesis: the snowboarders. This dispute will continue to ensue, and while some think that a truce is unimaginable, others believe one is already put into effect.

Despite the rivalry, the two sports have learned how to coexist. While some keep the tradition of tomfoolery alive, others see no point in partaking in the age-old feud. But remember, everyone is there for the same reason: to shred some snow and enjoy the slopes.



On the 5th day of Christmas: Five golden holiday lessons hidden in classic Christmas movies

Lily Upp '15, Freelance Writer

Though certainly cantankerous, even the infamous Grinch from Dr. Seuss's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* can offer a very useful moral: appearance doesn't matter...providing you have the same ideas and principles as everyone else. In Whoville, it doesn't matter if you are short, tall, young, old, green and fuzzy and naked with cat eyes, or human as long as holiday spirit oozes from your every pore. All shapes and sizes are welcome to sing in unison holding hands around the Christmas tree or attend the all-city feasts and celebrations. The acceptance that the Whoville citizens so admirably practice towards those who also love Christmas should be a lesson to everyone. We all should be able to look past others' images and accept them based on their ideals and beliefs but only if we deem them to be acceptable to ours.

Though the dropping temperatures and snow flurries make time spent outside less than pleasant, they also make a perfect excuse to stay snuggled inside and watch some classic Christmas movies. As I reviewed my personal favorites this year, I realized that there were several valuable lessons hidden within these cinematic masterpieces. If you, too, wish to be enlightened this holiday season, I offer the following list of most valuable tips, tricks and morals to be learned from the most reputable source around: Christmas movies.

Of course, with Christmas time comes a few scrooges. If you tend to be the one raining on others' holiday parades, take a warning from Scott Calvin in *The Santa Clause*: being a rude, arrogant or otherwise unpleasant person like he is will earn you a magical punishment from the karmic universe, namely in the form of the job of being Santa Clause. This position, of course, comes with excessive weight gain, unwanted hair growth and a gang of insistently cheerful elf friends. If this career path is not what you intended for your future, I advise that you learn from Scott's (a.k.a. Santa's) mistakes, and check your attitude immediately.

If you have seen *Elf*, starring Will Ferrell as Buddy the Elf, you may recall the scene in which Buddy, newly arrived in New York City, begins to eat the chewed gum stuck to the undersides of railings and benches on the street. Watching his eyes widen in delight as he chomps enthusiastically, you may have come to the same conclusion that I did: ABC, or already been chewed, gum is just as good, if not better, than a fresh pack. In the midst of the holiday season, it only makes sense to save your gum money for gifts or other holiday luxuries and choose previously owned gum for all your chewing needs.

After three heartwarming and clever films, it is clear that the *Home Alone* series wants viewers to recognize one central theme: hardened criminals are just as softened by the holiday spirit as everyone else. Sure, they may hide behind the felonious façade, but do you really think such seasoned criminals would let a young child like Kevin McCallister ruin their robbery schemes with simple household items haphazardly strung around the house? Of course not. They just wanted to keep their reputation intact while playing a little catch-me-if-you-can with the neighborhood kid. In this spirit, it is only right that we all accept thieves into our homes around the holidays, even if it is only for a quick game of hide-and-seek.

Most importantly, from *Miracle on 34th Street*, we can all be assured that Santa Clause is in fact real. With a sweet Christmas card and an inspiring belief in the unknown, six-year-old Susan wooed the court enough to render the evidence unimportant and set her friend, Santa, free in time for the holidays. If such sentiment can prove Kris Kringle's authenticity to the glorious American justice system, then surely we can all believe in his existence as well. After all, how else would the presents appear under the tree?

Humanity in a time of war

Kit Charlton '16, Opinion Editor

In 1914, Europe was engulfed in war. Young men left their lives and took up arms to fight. Nearly 100 years ago, there was a glimmer of humanity in what would become a bloody and brutal conflict. On Dec. 25, 1914, German and English soldiers ventured into No-Man's-Land with a proposal of temporary peace. For a few days, the gunshots and mortar fire faded and was replaced by singing and storytelling.

Pope Benedict XV originally proposed a ceasefire for the celebration of Christmas, but neither the English nor German government would agree to one. The soldiers in the trenches near the Belgian city of Ypres took it upon themselves to bring peace to the front lines, even if for only a few nights. "On Christmas Eve, their officers told them not to shoot unless the Germans did, and not a shot was fired. The Germans were singing and shouting 'a merry Christmas to you'... soon their parapets were lined and our chaps went out and met them and exchanged gifts, cigarettes, etc," Private H. A. Amy of the 2nd Devons at the front said in a letter to his brother, published in *The Exeter Express and Echo* on Jan. 7, 1915. Soldiers, who were enemies just a few hours prior, exchanged greetings, food, beer, cigarettes and stories. Rifleman C. H. Brazier wrote in a letter home, "All through the night we sang carols to them and they sang to us and one played 'God Save the King' on a mouth organ." That night 100 years ago, the young men on both sides learned that their enemies were not monsters intent on destroying their lands, but just men, exactly like them.

Perhaps the most famous event of the Christmas truce was the soccer game between the English and the Germans. An anonymous major is cited in a letter published in *The Times* saying, "The Regiment actually had a football match with the Saxons, who beat them 3-2." Other sources say it was just a general kickabout, with no real organization. Company Sergeant Major Frank Naden of the 6th Cheshire Territorials said in an interview with the *Newcastle Evening Mail*, "The Germans gave us some of their sausages, and we gave them some of our stuff. The Scotsmen started their bagpipes and we had a rare old jollification, which included football in which the Germans took part."

Other areas used the ceasefire for a more somber task. It was difficult to find time to bury the dead who littered the No-Man's-Land between the trenches, so some took the opportunity to give their fallen comrades a proper send-off. Staff Sergeant Clement Barker described the beginning of the truce in a letter to his brother. "A German looked over the trench - no shots - our men did the same, and then a few of our men went out and brought the dead in and buried them..." Barker said.

The Christmas Truce was a rare instance of chivalry in a time of hatred and destruction. A display of humanity like this would not be seen again for the remainder of World War I. Even today, friendliness toward strangers, let alone people who are supposedly your enemies, is becoming an increasingly outlandish occurrence. On the 100th anniversary of this remarkable spectacle, remember the unparalleled humanity of the soldiers in the trenches and strive to show the same kindness they did this holiday season.

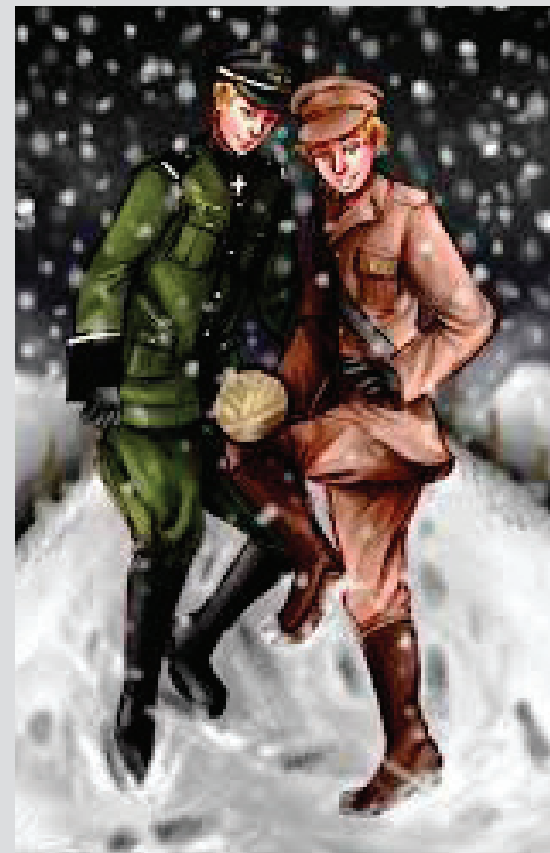


Photo courtesy of Deviant Art

An English soldier and a German soldier stand side by side on a snowy, winter night

The Yule Lads of Iceland

Cobian Gleason '16, Assistant Copy Editor

Christmas time in modern America is easily associated with Santa Claus and the giving of gifts. However, we do not realize just how different our holiday times are from other countries. Iceland, in particular, has an unusual tradition known as the 13 Yule Lads.

While modern day depictions of the Yule Lads are similar to Santa Claus, they have not always been nice and jovial. The original Yule Lads were rumoured to be the sons of trolls that lived in the mountains. Rather than spread Christmas joy, they would come into houses and either harass townsfolk or steal their food.

One Lad who is interested in annoying the public is called Hurdaskellir. His name means "Door-Slammer," and he will enter people's houses just to slam their doors during the night. The mischievous activities of other Lads include



stealing milk, leftovers from pots, smoked sausages and looking through windows to find things to steal. In the middle of the night, "Spoon-Licker" licks peoples' spoons for food scraps while "Bowl-Licker" lies in wait under kids' beds for their bowls of food to steal. Another creepy Lad is the "Candle-Stealer" who is believed to follow children so that, as his name suggests, he could steal their candles. The candles were considered food as they were edible at the time.

While the Yule Lads may sound like the polar opposite to Santa Claus, at their core they are almost the same. The Yule Lads would punish misbehaving kids, much like how Santa leaves coal. Even though they come from different cultures they manage to share main ideas. Maybe they are not that different after all.

Do you know your holiday trivia?

Sloan Elie '18, Assistant Feature Editor

A. What brown, short-tailed bird is in the beginning of a very popular christmas song?

B. What year were electronic lights for trees first used?

C. True or False: Eggnog has eggs in it.

D. Where did 'St. Nick' originate?

E. How many christmas trees does Europe grow a year?

F. How tall was the worlds biggest snowman?

G. What ancient city was Christmas first celebrated in?

ANSWERS
A. 1985, B. Germany, C. True, D. Partridge, E. Almost 60 mil., F. 113ft, G. Rome

Photo courtesy of Ranker.com

twitter trends of 2014

Justin Flood '17, Co-Circulation Manager and Adam Yaker '17, Assistant Opinion Editor

Throughout the year, social media sites such as Twitter, have consumed the lives of many BHS students. Whether they tweet on a daily basis or simply check all of the interesting tweets their timeline has to offer, one sees the trends that are filling up their feed. During the many interesting trends that have occurred in the last year, there are few that are especially eye-catching. Here are the top twitter trends of 2014:

LetsMakeItAwkward

An old picture of your sixth grade dating life would typically fall under the #LetsMakeItAwkward category. This is a great hashtag used to bring back old memories and to embarrass a friend.

SlideIntoYourDMsLike

This trend happens most often late at night when people attempt to expand their horizons and confidently talk to other people in means of direct messaging.

ThingsOdellCouldCatch

This trend started from the mind blowing, one handed, two fingered catch by Odell Beckham Jr. of the New York Giants. The legendary photo of his catch has been continuously pasted into other pictures in a humorous way.

Oookillem

When this trend is brought up, the well known Vine star, Terio, comes to mind. Since Terio's iconic video where he mentions "ookillem", people have been using the term widely for insults or other sarcastic jokes. Mostly used as a catchy phrase for insulting someone when they have been embarrassed by you or themselves.

Yeet

Originated from the vine gone viral consisting of a young male's dance, the "#yeet" tweet became a way to describe a majority of physical interactions. For example, a dodging of a punch or crossing someone up in basketball would all be a necessary time to yell out "yeet".

GloUpChallenge

One of the more recently used hash-tags, this trend is a collection of pictures of an individual, portraying their physical growth through four photos of their life. These pictures span from cute baby pictures, awkward middle school years, to a brand new school picture.

ThingsTimHowardCouldCatch

Similar to Odell's, this hashtag was mainly used during the summer at the time of the world cup. USA goalie Tim Howard had a very successful tournament, with many saves that no one believed he would be capable of making. For the next few weeks, many photoshopped pictures were posted on twitter featuring Howard saving random things.



Screenshots by Justin Flood

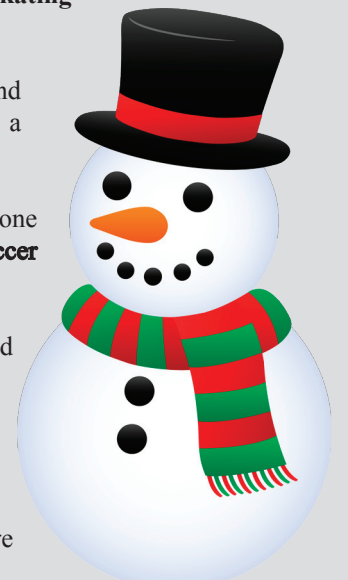
Avid twitter users tweet to display the current trends with pictures and hashtags.

Ways to a winter wonderland

Drew Leshman '17, Hot or Not Editor

During the month of December, one will constantly hear the voices of excited students throughout the halls of BHS. The hype for winter break is rapidly growing and students are looking forward to it with each passing day. However, when the day finally arrives students do not always do exactly what they had planned. It often consists of eating on the couch or watching Netflix while your parents encourage you to get out of the house. There are many things to actually do this winter break to overcome the annoying noises of elders.

1. **Campus Martius Park**, located in the heart of downtown Detroit is a great way to get rid of the bedroom and go **ice skating** on a famous rink with friends and family.
2. **Skiing** resorts such as **Pine Nob**, **Alpine Valley** and **Mount Holly** are filled with great runs and are are a fantastic way to spend your holiday break.
3. The always exciting concept of **sledding** can be done at many places around BHS such as the **Catalpa Soccer** fields and by **Temple Emanuel** in Oak Park.
4. **Wild Lights** at the **Detroit Zoo** is a fun and exciting way to spend one of your nights for this winter break. You can experience anything from live entertainment to ice carving.
5. Last but not least **snowball fights** never disappoint throughout the winter and can be done anywhere where snow is available with friends and family.



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The Grinchiest of gifts for this Christmas

Katie Wolberg '18, Co-Business and Ad Manager

Receiving socks or a toothbrush may seem like the worst gifts someone could ever get for Christmas. Sadly though, this is not the truth, there really are worse gifts than socks or a toothbrush. These gifts are probably the “grinchiest” gifts to have ever been given.

1 Animal lovers adore spoiling their beloved animal, so this gift is ridiculous for anyone who actually loves them. The Pet Petter is a device that pets your pet for you. The Pet Petter takes away the one essential thing that animal lovers do—actually petting the animal. On that note, if you have a friend that loves animals, please do not get them a Pet Petter.

2 Another awful gift is the banana protector guard. The banana guard is exactly what it sounds like; it holds your bananas and keeps them fresh. This gift is honestly pointless, who. Wants a banana guard for their Christmas present? Please, don't go bananas and buy this gift for a friend.

3 Wasabi lip balm. A very weird and unlikely pairing. Yet, someone has made a wasabi-flavored lip balm. The spice has been turned into a disgustingly flavored chapstick. If someone you know is spicy, give them this lip balm to match their personality or, the other option, is to give this to someone you do not really enjoy.

4 Who wants to get rid of unwanted bugs this Christmas? Of course, no one. The Electric Fly Swatter zaps bugs such as mosquitos, flies, and much more. To use the Swatter, just turn it on and swat bugs to your heart's desire. Usually, getting a gift to swat and kill unwanted bugs carries little excitement. Anyone in their right mind would never get someone this bad of a gift for Christmas.



To be honest, these gifts carry little appeal. There are hardly any people who would be grateful to receive these absurd gifts. They are the perfect example of a truly horrible gift. Do not be the Grinch of Christmas, and buy something nice for a loved one that shows you care.

Emma and Nicole's 'believe it or not'

Emma Weisberger '16, Assistant Editor-in-Chief and Nicole Doctoroff '16, Feature Editor

Humans are the most advanced creatures to have ever set foot on planet Earth. As a species, we have the ability to defy nature, and explore the un-explorable. Over the years we have become Earth's top predator. Yet, if we are really so great, could any of the following stories be true? Well, believe or not, they are.

The Great Emu War

Lasting over a month long, farmers (some of whom were soldiers) in Australia were determined to defeat the emus during The Great Emu War. Crops had been failing, and the most logical and reasonable explanation for this tragedy, was the presence of emus. They decided to declare war, yes actual war, against the bird. Sadly, their efforts were not successful due to the fact that the emus launched a guerrilla warfare attack. In short, the emus had spread out across the land, making it nearly impossible for the farmers to efficiently attack the birds. The farmers of the 20th century lost a war against a bird.



Worst Driver Ever

When a person has gone through 75 years of their life, you would usually think that they would know a little something about driving. However, a certain 75-year-old evidently did not. He had managed to receive 10 traffic tickets, happened to drive on the wrong side of the road four times, committed four hit-and-runs, and caused six accidents all within 20 minutes.

Thanksgiving War

Cooking an entire Thanksgiving dinner can be a stressful task for even the calmest of people. One woman took the anxiety of the holidays to a new level when she stabbed her boyfriend for eating before he was allowed. This Pennsylvanian woman was charged with assault for the vicious attack and should probably take some time to herself. Thanksgiving dinner is hard to prepare, but one should take a break if they reach the point of stabbing another person for eating a little turkey. Remember, the holidays are meant to be enjoyable, so do not stab your loved ones.



Crazy Squirrel

In Great Britain, a 'bold' squirrel managed to be the reason for a preschool playground to be evacuated. This lone squirrel was seen as serious threat to the staff and students of the school. The squirrel went as far as scratching one of the staff members. While humans have the ability to fight in strenuous wars, this group of people, sadly, let one squirrel terrorize them.

The ~~HOT~~ or NOTs of December

25 Days of Christmas

Drew Leshman '17, Hot or Not Editor

Twenty-five Days of Christmas—four words that never seem to disappoint when it comes to the month of December. When getting into the routine of the holiday spirit, nothing is better than 25 days filled with classic Christmas movies. Since Dec. 1, holiday movies have been playing nearly non-stop every day on ABC Family. This extraordinary schedule of movies stretches all the way from *Elf*, to *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town*, to *Jack Frost*. These films get viewers into the holiday spirit, and prepare them for the big day on Dec. 25. Christmas involves a lot of preparation and watching these films is a great way to get ready for it. When setting up your lights around the house and singing cheerful Christmas songs, make sure to tune into ABC Family 25 Days of Christmas to catch a glimpse of what the month of December has to offer on the television side.

Being sick

Zoe Blake '17, Co-Assistant Photo Editor

Don't you hate that feeling when you wake up with a tickle in your throat? Isn't it the worst when you wake up with a roaring stomach ache? Either way, being sick is by far one of the worst things, we as mortal, helpless human beings must contend with. It is not only the pits because you don't feel well, but because of all the other things that go off balance: all the makeup work in school, all the screwed up sleeping schedules, and all of the annoying doctors poking and prodding.

And oh how the medication takes a toll, making you exhausted and unable to do anything but lie in bed weeping in pain.

Being sick can be nice to be waited on hand and foot by your parents, but in the end it just plain sucks.

Snow

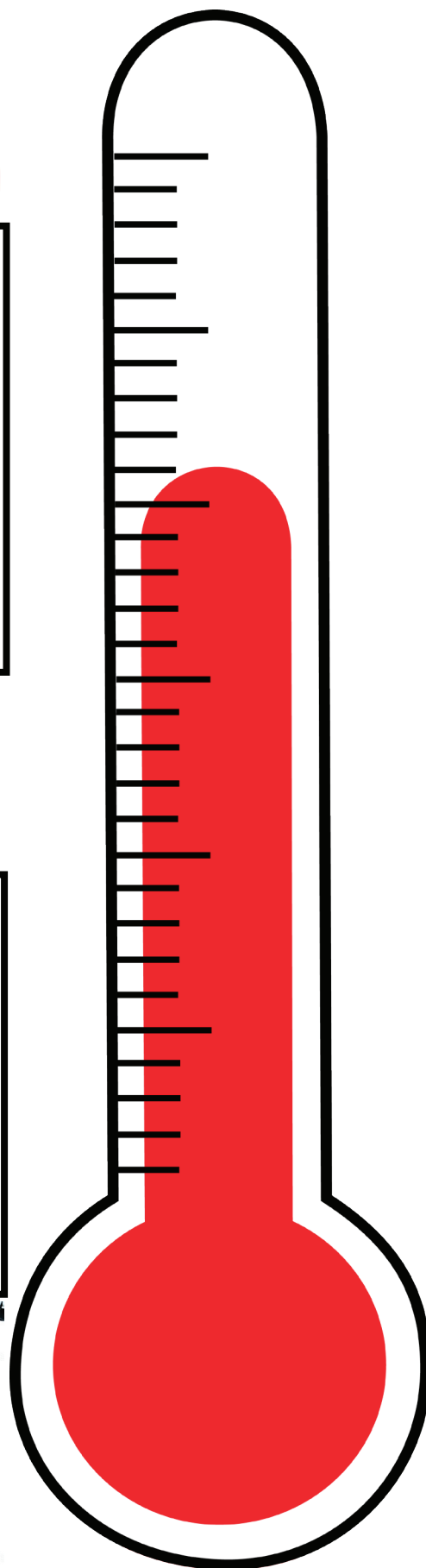
Corey Lipton '16, Managing Editor

As the song says, "Let it snow." Every year, winter brings us the beautiful phenomenon that is snow. Snow is wonderful; it allows for a ton of fun things to do. Probably the best part of snow is the skiing, which is one of the most fun activities on the planet. Without snow, we would never have an excuse to throw something as hard as we can at our friends. Snow also brings us the magical feeling of Christmas, and Christmas would not be the same without snow. Try imagining Christmas in Florida. Just like in the song, everyone in Florida is dreaming of a white Christmas full of snow. Along with snow comes snow days, snow men and snow angels, all of which we will be enjoying over this lovely winter. Christmas is universally known as the most wonderful time of the year, and snow is an important part of that declaration.

Snow

Josh Radom '16, Managing Editor

Everyone get excited because it's that time of the year again. You guessed it. It is time for snow. It is the terrible time of slippery roads, wet shoes and pure sadness. "It is literally the worst thing that Mother Nature has put on this earth," junior Abbie Baker said. Snow makes everything more difficult. You have to drive slower, and even when you do drive slow, your car still slides like baby oil on a slip n' slide. It also adds to the frigid cold because everything you touch is covered in wet, freezing powder. Every covered spec is instantly transformed into a wet, heavy, annoying ball of snow that is so incredibly inconvenient that sometimes, it is better to just avoid altogether. Snow is truly the epitome of unhappiness and a perfect portrayal of the aggravation of winter.



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HUNGER GAMES: OUT OF THE ARENA

William Shulak '16, Assistant Student Life Editor

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1 caught fire, but then, sadly, quickly fizzled out. Directed by Francis Lawrence, the third installment of the *Hunger Games* series takes place shortly after the events of *Catching Fire*, with Katniss hiding out in the unknown District 13 after escaping the Quarter Quell arena in the previous film.

This installment, just like the third book in the series, differs from the first two movies by not having the actual games take place. Instead, the plot focuses on the rebels in District 13 building up strength to revolt against the capital and liberate the nation of Panem.

The movie itself is great. The performances from Academy Award winners Jennifer Lawrence and the late Philip Seymour Hoffman are powerful, and Julianne Moore, Woody Harrelson, Liam Hemsworth, Stanley Tucci, and Josh Hutcherson do strong supporting work as always. Bleak shots of war, torn landscapes and dismal battlefields are ominously beautiful, giving the film a distinct dark tone. The movie offers originality on its own when not being compared to the others in the series.

Junior Melia Bleuenstein has been a long-time fan of the *Hunger*

Games franchise having read all of the books and seen all the movies that have been released. “[*Mockingjay - Part 1*] fits in okay [with the rest of the book series]. I do not think they covered as much as they were supposed to in this movie if they were going to equally distribute all the action and plot stuff [between the two films making up the last book],” Bleuenstein said. “I do feel that they made a good decision splitting *Mockingjay* into two movies, since there is so much going on, but [the first movie] could have been done better.”

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1 is not unacceptable by any means, but it feels overall unnecessary. The ultimate problem with the movie is that there is there is no pay-off. In the end, from point “A” to point “B,” the film did not really change or undergo a major arc. Every little detail is stretched and over exaggerated until it is hardly unique as the original product. This just goes to show the problem of making a final installment of a book series into two movies.

Mockingjay - Part 1 is a fine movie that can easily be skipped and summarized before going to see *Mockingjay - Part 2* next November.



Photo courtesy of Martin Lamount

YEAR OF APPS IN REVIEW

Josh Radom '16, Managing Editor

As the years go by, trends and news worthy events come and go. This year has been full of disease outbreaks, horrible tragedies, and of course, addictive apps. These were the apps that haunted students night and day. Whether it was the need to get to the next level or the constant desire to compete against friends, here are the top four addictive apps of 2014.



Quiz Up
Popularity duration: 3 days

Quiz Up was probably the most brain stimulating of the four. The app entailed of one challenging a friend to a multiple choice quiz in which the results are compared in the end to declare a winner. Like most of the apps on this list, the obsession of Quiz Up lasted for only about three days, but what quiz filled few days those were. “It was so addicting. I played it like every hour in every class,” senior Maya Riddle said. At this point in time, there is basically no trace that Quiz Up was even a fad, but there is much appreciation for the good times and random facts that it gave us.



2048-
Popularity duration: 1 month

Ah yes, remember the days of 2048? For those who do not, the goal of 2048 was to successfully pair identical numbered tiles with each other to double the number value of the tile and eventually add up to 2048, hence the name of the game. This game was and still is a weakness for many. The smooth sliding of numbered tiles that range from two to whatever huge number one managed to work themselves up to, is what made this game addicting. “It’s a quality app. It did the job, I was always entertained by it,” junior Aaron Berlin said. Although 2048 has decreased in popularity throughout the year, it will always be remembered as one of the most addicting apps of 2014.



Flappy Bird
Popularity duration: 2 weeks

This is the only app on this list that is no longer available in the App Store for download. Flappy Bird was an app that everyone loved to hate. It was that one app that had no real goal except tapping the screen to move a “flapping” bird up and down between pipes. “I was so good at it. The simplicity is what made it great and addicting,” senior Noah Kretchmer said. Flappy Bird was taken off of the App Store by its creator because he believed that people were becoming too addicted to it and that it was unhealthy. Well, for as long as it was available, BHS was hooked, in an unhealthy way.



aa
Popularity duration: TBD

Finally, and most current, aa. No one really knows what it stands for, but everyone is addicted. This is the most recent obsession among BHS students, and it has succeeded in drawing the majority of the population in to the fad. The synopsis of aa entails a spinning wheel with various pegs attached. The goal of the game is for the player to shoot more spikes into the circle without touching the already existing spikes or any new ones. “There is literally nothing I like about it, but I keep playing to beat the next level,” junior Ryan DiCarlo said. Only time will tell how long the aa obsession will last, but with the track record of past apps, its chances are not looking great.

Photos courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Chilling drama captivates Berkley

Jessie Cohen '17, Co-Circulation Manager

The BHS Drama department's fall play, *Big Boys Don't Cry*, written by Vern Harden and directed, in this production, by John Hopkins, left audiences speechless. The play was performed on Nov. 20 through Nov. 22, and the opening night show could not have been more impressive.

In the play, Lenny Barnes lives with his mother, Ethel, stepfather, Guy, and little sister, Verlene. The family does not get along, and many of the characters struggle with issues such as alcoholism and anger management. Lenny's stepfather abuses both Lenny and his mother. Lenny has been admitted to the hospital on multiple occasions from wounds that Guy has inflicted upon him. However, Lenny is not a completely helpless victim. He fights back against Guy and even seriously injures him once. The play follows the court case in which both parents are being accused of child abuse.

The actors were brilliant. They really got into their characters and made every movement, expression and statement believable. The main characters, along with the rest of the cast, had unforgettable performances. Lenny Barnes was played by senior Zachary Guerra, Guy Barnes was depicted by senior Andrew McIntire, Ethel Barnes was played by junior Alison Koch and the attorneys were portrayed by senior Hailee Halprin and junior Ryan Hurley.

"This is not a high school play," director John Hopkins said. Adding onto this idea, Hurley said, "I thought that the play actually went really well. We weren't sure how people would react, if it would move them or make them

upset, and I think we got the reaction we wanted."

A large part of the production's success is thanks to the crew members. The stage crew moved the sets and props in and out smoothly and efficiently, making the entire performance run flawlessly. In addition, the sets were incredible. The feeling of the play was embodied by the actors and was defined further through the sets. Lighting was also a major part of the production. Thanks to senior lighting designer Bailey McMillian, and assistants senior Joe Dzedziula and sophomore AJ McBee, the lighting added extra drama and excitement to the play.

The play tackled an extremely heavy issue and did not try to avoid its harsh subject matter. It brings much needed attention to how serious the issues of domestic violence and abuse are and how terrible the consequences can be. "This play was important because the topic could involve people who are around us every day, and it brought forth the idea that anyone around us be affected by this," Hurley said. The viewer cannot help but become emotionally involved in all the characters' lives.

Every person who experienced the play left heartbroken and in disbelief. It is hard to believe that something as terrible as child abuse could happen in some children's daily lives and this story brought the issue front and center in the audience's mind, and many realized it is not something that should be taken lightly. The proceeds from ticket sales to the play benefitted the Judson Center foster care program.



Photos by William Shulak

Albums heading your way this December

Cameron Cece '16, Entertainment Editor

As 2014 comes to an end, many artists and consumers of music feel as though this could possibly be one the most disappointing years in music. The year was filled with over played songs like "Shake It Off" by Taylor Swift, "Hot Boy" by Bobby Schmurda and "Happy" by Pharrell. Luckily, December looks to be one of the more promising months for music this year filled with a variety of different music and albums that are more memorable.

J Cole
2014 Forrest Hill Drive

In 2013, Cole dropped one of the top five albums of the year. The album was based off of his newfound fame and concepts like getting his first chain, facing untrustworthy friends, and coping with personal struggle. No one could predict what the young star would do with his new project. "I'm not dropping any singles. I want you to hear the album straight through, front to back," Cole said on his official web site. Afterwards, Cole stated that he named the new album after his first home. Recently, he expressed to his fans that it was a dream of his to buy back the house he was raised in and devoted a whole album to his accomplishment. The release date was Dec. 9.

The Smashing Pumpkins
Monuments to an Elegy

The Smashing Pumpkins promised their fans a new album in December called *Monuments to an Elegy* which follows their 2012 album *Oceania*. *Monuments to an Elegy* will be an interesting project due to the features on the album such as Mötley Crüe's drummer, Tommy Lee, and it was produced by Howard Willing who is responsible for creating the classic album with the Pumpkins titled *Adore*. "Being Beige" is the most recognizable song on the album. It has a simple title, but the features hard drums, a smooth acoustic guitar and a memorable chorus. This will be the bands eighth studio album. The release date was Dec. 9.

Lil Wayne
Tha Carter V- Part I

Lil Wayne is another hip-hop trailblazer, but in recent years many have witnessed the idol fall from being a clever and witty lyricist to an overplayed single-making machine. Wayne recently stepped his game up when featured on the "About the Money" remix and "Believe Me" by Drake. Hopefully, his new project will be successful, especially if it is part one of the album that will be carrying Wayne into retirement. Due to recent complications with Wayne and Cash Money Records, the release date has been pushed back. A recent petition by fans has been created to get the album released before Dec. 25, so be on the lookout for an unofficial release date from Wayne.

Photos courtesy of wikimedia, Jay Balfour and Billy Corgan

Detroit Lions surprise NFL with new disciplined approach

Bennett Hart '16, News Editor

The Detroit Lions have an incredibly deep history, of losing that is. Since 1958, the Lions have won only three division titles and 10 playoff berths. But this year, the Lions have a prime opportunity to break their 56 year title drought.

Starting with a convincing victory on Monday Night Football against the New York Giants, the Lions have simply shut down many of their opponents with NFL's best defense. With victories against potential playoff teams like Green Bay, New Orleans, Atlanta and Miami, the Lions have shown that they are a serious NFC contender. Additionally, the Lions were robbed of a victory against the Bills due to missing three field goals (kicker Alex Henery was cut the next day), and in Arizona when three questionable calls in the second half were the only things that stood between them and a win over the NFL's top team.

In week 12, the tides turned. The Lions came out flat in a big game in Foxborough against the Patriots and did not turn it around. After two consecutive losses the team had a 7-4 record and was part of a very shaky playoff picture. For the first time all season, the Lions did not occupy a playoff spot.

Luckily, the Lions made a quick turnaround playing just four days later in their 75th consecutive Thanksgiving Day game. In their return home, the Lions were victorious, 34-17, in a heated division game versus the Chicago Bears. The following week, the Lions won again by the same score against Tampa Bay. Calvin Johnson was a big part of the offense in both wins; he combined for 304 yards, which helped the offense pick up its game. They have only scored roughly 19 points per game this year, but Johnson was out for many of those games.

Over the course of the season it has been clear that the major improvement the Lions have made is in their leadership. The new coaching staff has brought more of a low key demeanor to the squad which has made the team more consistent. So far this year only one of the Lions' losses was a game they had a chance to win, and that was due to the fact that they missing three field goals. The Lions have also overcome significant discipline issues on and off the field which has been a huge problem for them in the past. Solving all of these issues has helped the Lions to a 9-4 record.

On the field the team is finally living up to their potential. Sophomore Sam Tomlinson said, "The Lions have been much better in the fourth quarter, the coaching change has worked well." Sophomore Josh Warner had a similar view, and he explained, "[The Lions] are beating the teams they should beat."

The Lions are currently ranked second in their division, trailing only the Green Bay Packers, but at 9-4, the Lions playoff chances are looking great. As long as the Lions can beat the Vikings at home and the Bears on the road (they have already beaten both teams this season) then they will have at least a wild card spot in the playoffs for the first time since 2011. If they lose one of those two games, the Lions will have a game at the Lambeau Field against the Packers to end the season, which could potentially earn them a playoff spot as well.



Head coach Jim Caldwell brings a new disciplined approach to the team.



Wide receiver Calvin Johnson makes a huge impact with his recent return.

Photos courtesy of Dave Hogg and Leon Halip

A girl's take on fantasy sports: a true waste of time

Jessie Cohen '17, Co-Circulation Manager and Katie Wolberg '18, Co-Business and Ad Manager

Fantasy sports: a strange addiction that has become a large part of American life. Well, at least in the lives of our male counterparts. We, Katie Wolberg and Jessie Cohen, cannot wrap our heads around the male fixation on the worlds of fantasy football, baseball, hockey and basketball.

In our minds, fantasy sports are a waste of time. We just don't understand why men and some women enjoy them so much. It is not that the female gender cannot play fantasy sports, or that women are incapable of understanding sports, it is that we have absolutely no interest and do not understand why online sports teams even exist.

Much of the male population has an undeniable emotional and physical attachment to their ESPN online accounts. Numerous times, girls have seen guys get angry, upset and even tearful over their fantasy team's defeat, for reasons unknown to us. "I do not really understand [fantasy sports]," sophomore Hannah Zonder said. She

continued, "They are not real. I just do not think there is a point [to playing fantasy sports]. Why do you need to put your favorite players on a theoretical team when you can just root for them and their real team in their real games?"



Zonder makes an excellent point, because similarly, we do not understand what motivates men to participate in fantasy sports. In no way are we saying there is anything wrong with fantasy sports, nor are we saying women are useless when it comes to anything sports

related, however, we, as women, have no interest in these types of hypothetical "sports".

To get the low-down on the male view of fantasy sports, we asked an average high school boy for his opinion. Freshman Max Kwartowitz said, "I like fantasy sports because I feel like I get closer to my friends. Making my own team really gets me involved in the games." Kwartowitz continued, "It also focuses my attention on sports while at the same time letting me keep up with [my] school work." Playing fantasy sports could seem like a somewhat logical pastime. However, it still seems like it consumes an inordinate amount of time and effort. We can most definitely appreciate this view, but it does not mean that we have to accept it.

If woman were so inclined, we could be just as good as guys at fantasy sports and some women are. However, we just do not want to play. To our male colleagues, we urge you to log out of the ESPN fantasy world and realize there is life beyond fake sports leagues.

Photo courtesy of apps101

Detroit sports culture rapidly changing

Josh Segall '17, Sports Editor

When people think of Detroit sports, The Bad Boys Pistons' teams of the late 1980s, the 2004 Pistons' championship team, and the historically consistent Red Wings come to mind. These teams all left a memorable mark on their respective leagues through the ways they played their games and the level of overall success they experienced. But as of late, the struggling Pistons and the slowly deteriorating Red Wings are no longer the talk of the town; it is the Lions and Tigers who are now on everyone's radar.

With stars like Isiah Thomas, Joe Dumars, Dennis Rodman and Bill Laimbeer, the Pistons of the late 80s and early 90s have set the tone for basketball standards today. Their brutally physical style has become a staple of Detroit sports culture. After winning back-to-back NBA championships in the 1988-1989 and 1989-1990 seasons, it was challenging for Detroiters not to admire their hometown Pistons.

All of the success took a turn for the worse when in 2008, Dumars, general manager at the time, traded star point guard Chauncey Billups for the aging, future Hall-of-Famer Allen Iverson. Since that infamous trade, the Pistons have not had a winning season. Now, the Pistons are off to another slow start in the 2014-15 season, and things do not seem to be improving.

Detroit is Hockeytown though, right? Starting from the 1997 season, the Red Wings have won four Stanley Cups, which is more than any other team, with the most recent coming in 2008 over the Pittsburgh Penguins. The Red Wings are off to a good start this year, but the long term future is in jeopardy as stars like Pavel Datsyuk and Henrik Zetterberg continue to age. Aside from the lockout year, the Red Wings' record has been declining for the last three years.

What is left for Detroiters to turn to then? It is hard to imagine now, but the answer is the Tigers and Lions. Just several years ago, both the Tigers and the Lions were among the worst teams in their respective leagues. But, things have changed in Detroit, and these two teams are now the focal point of Detroit sports.

From 1994-2005, the Tigers never had a winning season. This streak has recently come to an end when they won the American League in 2006. Since then, the Tigers have only had one losing season and have made two trips



Photo courtesy of The Sideline Sports

Cabrera is currently the proven leader of the Detroit Tigers.

to the World Series. Stars have emerged in this time frame with pitchers Justin Verlander and Max Scherzer, who are now both Cy Young winners. Last year before the trade deadline, the Tigers acquired another former Cy Young winner from the Tampa Bay Rays with starting pitcher David Price. Led by the designated hitter Victor Martinez and third baseman Miguel Cabrera, who is considered to be one of the best hitters of all time, the Tigers should be very successful during the years to come.

Football, the most popular sport in the United States, is

a game that the city of Detroit had never made a significant contribution towards. The Lions have been the laughing stock of the NFL for a very long time. Before the 2011 season, the Lions had not made the playoffs since 1999. This streak of dreadfulness was encapsulated when the Lions became the only team to finish 0-16 in NFL history in 2008.

Now, in 2014, the Lions are off to a promising start and are seemingly on their way to the playoffs. Leaders of the modern era Lions include quarterback Matthew Stafford and wide receiver Calvin Johnson. Playing just five seasons in the NFL, Stafford is already the leading passer in Lions history. Calvin Johnson, also known as Megatron, is widely considered to be the best wide receiver in the NFL and is mentioned with Jerry Rice as one of the best of all time.

Several great players to the team have been added over the last few years through the draft, especially on the defensive side of the ball. Defensive tackles Ndamukong Suh and Nick Fairley are two high draft picks that have made tremendous contributions to the team. Defensive end Ziggy Ansah is steadily developing his skills, and second round pick cornerback Darius Slay is improving rapidly and is already among the best cornerbacks for the Lions. Detroit's defense is the best it has been in many years.

While the culture of Detroit sports shifts to the gridiron and the diamond, the memories made by the Pistons and Red Wings will not be forgotten. Star players from all the Detroit teams continue to emerge, as some beloved legends begin to fade away. Hopefully in the future, all four teams can pull it together at the same time and make Detroit one of the best sports cities in the country.

Derrick Rose latest injury: it is not the shoes

Cameron Cece '16, Entertainment Editor

On Nov. 14 ESPN's hour-long debate show, *His & Hers*, aired and analyst Sarah Spain voiced her opinion regarding Chicago Bulls' point guard Derrick Rose's new injury and what she thought about his shoe provider, Adidas. Rose was enduring a pulled hamstring that kept him out of the lineup for four games; Spain raised the idea that Rose's injuries could possibly be the result of his shoes. "My conspiracy theory, which I've been fighting off because I've got no issues with Adidas, and I don't know how they're made, but those shoes advertise as the lightest shoes on the market. And ever since he signed that big Adidas deal and changing shoes all the time, things started happening," Spain said. She went on to support her claim by stating that Rose's shoe looked loose when he planted his foot.

Many fans of Rose have blamed Adidas for all of his injuries, but others believe that, at this point in his career, the young star might just be prone to injury and the shoes are not to blame. In 2013, Rose suffered a season ending injury while sponsoring his shoes as the lightest shoe on the market. Performance reviews were posted on YouTube that year by a user that goes by Kick Genius. The review

stated that the shoes are at best "meh". He added that the shoes struggled to gain traction when cutting and the ankle portion of the shoe felt very weak when worn in a game. This year Adidas unveiled their new sneaker for Rose called the Adidas D Rose Five Boost which is an upgrade from Rose's 2013 shoe. Since then, Adidas and Rose have moved from the lightest shoe on the market to one of the heaviest. Ultimately, they are starting to fit what Rose needs and fix their shoes' reputation. This year Kick Genius had a much better review of the D Rose Five Boost and stated, "It is a much more stable shoe and more comfortable to play in."

Also, Rose has been looked at as one of the most protected players in the Nation Basketball Association (NBA). Every game Rose walks onto the court with compression shorts, ankles taped and extra padding within his shoes for more support. Spain's argument about the Adidas shoes being unstable holds up temporarily until he or she looks at his injuries this year, proving that at this point Rose is simply prone to being injured.

Websites SneakerWatch and Nicekicks raised the point that Spain and fans of Rose need to stop the "finger

pointing" and look at Rose instead of Adidas due to the fact that he has been enduring injuries since being an AAU star in Chicago. And many fans feel the same way. "I'm a huge fan of Rose, but I am sick of seeing him injured every couple of games and then analysts or fans blaming the shoe company for all of his past injuries," junior Silair Sileewa said. Sileewa then went on and said, "Nike's Kevin Durant missed the first six games of the season due to a foot injury, but no one blames Nike because they know that Durant will be back, unlike Rose. With him there is a certain level of uncertainty due to his health." Derrick Rose might be put in the same category as Tracy McGrady, Penny Hardaway and Grant Hill. These are all great players whose careers ended early due to various unexpected injuries.

Adidas is not some run of the mill shoe company with zero experience dealing with professional athletes, but instead a world manufacturer of sportswear and shoes. Players get hurt in sports, obviously some more than others. Rose unfortunately just happens to be one of those players, so blaming a company with about 65 years of shoe expertise seems like a far cry from reasonable.

The 'United' States

Malindi Lubinecky '15, Editor-in-Chief

America: The land of the free and the home of the brave. It is a country that is supposed to stand together, however, this is anything but the truth. Matters from the civil rights movement to more recent ones like the Ferguson controversy puts into question, how united are we really?

My mother is originally from Germany and spent most of her childhood in South Africa, and when she moved to the United States with my father in the late 80s, she was faced with the unexpected prominence of racism and its role in the American society. While driving from the airport, she witnessed the geographical divisions in an area near Detroit, so one of her friends commented that, "Eight mile is the imaginary line between white people and black people." My mother was confused, and she had no idea what her friend was implying. That was, until she got first-hand experience and witnessed the impact that race, ethnicity and even religion have on these invisible boundaries in a country that was supposed to end segregation and maintain civil equality. These boundaries, that are often heavily influenced by race, cause tension, conflicts and create divides between what many think is the home of unity. The irony of our nation is within the name: The United States. Are we really united? Geographically, yes. But, when it comes to social classes, race and morals, we could not be further apart.

People usually base their perception of others off of preconceived notions rather than off of their own opinions gained through tolerant and accepting interactions. We tend to make this mistake again and again, causing disruption and dispute within a system that is supposed to offer equality and freedom. In a room of 10 people with different genders, ethnicities, races and religions, how many can honestly say they do not feel judged in any way? Not most. That is the problem with our system: it is like high school—there are cliques, controversy and confrontations, and that never solves any problems; it creates a bigger disaster than there was originally. Similar to high school, these issues are often blown out of proportion and people spark rumors that spread like wildfire, so no one really knows the truth other than those involved. Due to racial/religious/gender-based stereotypes, people are unable to express their thoughts, beliefs and/or opinions on an equal platform to the more favored or powerful party. This creates gossip, circulates lies, and builds emotional barriers between social classes that cause many problems to become uncontrollable.

Although the government settles many of these social disputes, they are also a leading cause behind them. In simpler terms, they are triggering explosive outbursts to occur in many controversial issues like equal rights. For centuries, we have been defined as a nation that offers equality to all men, but when did that exclude men of different races? Or men of different sexual orientation? Women, even? The United States is admired because of its range for vast opportunities and the ability to create a life for oneself, but these privileges come with a price—the price of our freedoms, rights and liberties are exchanged for a country that does not implement equality, and that is not a fair trade. The only thing this is doing is wedging a divide between us as a nation; it is causing the United States to separate right before our eyes. We have come this far: gay rights are becoming a reality, race no longer divides a classroom and gender does not affect one's ability to vote. The progression of these equalities is promising, but the capacity to continue evolving these rights is hindered by the blindness of judgment in society.

So, how united is the United States, really? Topics ranging from morals to the government, suggest that Americans are not. People often blame the government for our issues and while that may be true in most cases, other aspects like prejudice and racism have a lot more to do with these problems than those in charge. Another factor that causes the lack of unity in our society is that many debate over an issue that they know absolutely nothing about and have no evidence to support their argument, which causes many disagreements to spiral out of control. A united nation is more than possessing written laws explaining our rights; it is about enforcing them without the fear that there will be backlash of racial tension or unjust rulings. Until then, the question of whether or not the United States is truly united will remain unanswered.

We are still not equal

Emma Weisberger '16, Assistant Editor-in-Chief

On Dec. 5, 1895, the 13th Amendment was added to the constitution to abolish slavery throughout the country. African Americans were then considered citizens, but they were definitely not equal. On May 18, 1896 in the Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, it was decided that African American and white people could be divided in "separate but equal" facilities. Of course, to be separate is to be unequal, and this ruling further strengthened the divide between races. On May 17, 1954, nearly 70 years later, in the case *Brown v. Board of Education*, America finally admitted to the separation being, by its very definition, discriminatory and unequal. On July 2, 1964, after strong leaders like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X fought hard and fearlessly, the Civil Rights Act was enacted. It further helped to close the gap between African American and white citizens. Proving that these huge leaps towards equality were not the end of racism, on March 3, 1991 four police officers were acquitted after they were caught on tape brutally beating a man named Rodney King, causing massive rioting in Los Angeles. There is no doubt that America has made great strides towards the equality of all who live here. That being said, recent events have called into question just how far we have come, if we are actively trying to promote justice and fairness for all races, or if we even acknowledge the existence of unfair treatment based on race.

For those that are unaware, the two events that have rocked the nation in the past few weeks took place in Ferguson, Missouri and Staten Island, New York. In Ferguson, a man by the name of Michael Brown was shot 12 times and killed by a cop named Darren Wilson. There was evidence to support the argument that the shooting was racial, but unreliable witnesses and conflicting testimony ultimately led to Wilson not being indicted. The second Staten Island case is, I believe, the more disturbing of the two. A man, Eric Garner, was caught on video arguing with the police. He was not acting violent or threatening in any way. More police showed up and eventually one officer put Eric Garner in a choke hold, pulled him to the ground while other cops handcuffed him. The disturbing part of the video is the fact that Garner says repeatedly, even when he is already handcuffed, that he cannot breathe. Garner eventually died because he was choked to death. What is even more shocking is the fact that the officer responsible for his death was not indicted either.

After hearing about these cases, I, like many others across the nation, was in awe of how in 2014 decisions as unjust as these could happen. These events were horrible tragedies, but if there is one positive thing they have caused is that they have pulled the discussion of racism back into the spotlight. People have been forced to reflect on the role racism played in these cases, and more than that, the role it plays in American society as a whole.

Whether or not people believe that the race of these two men had anything to do with their murder, the thing that really concerned me about the progress (or lack there of) was the fact that people are denying racism affects our society at all. America is way beyond the years of slavery and government implemented segregation, but we are not past racism. Those who believe that we have even begun to rid racial discrimination from our people and our governmental systems and institutions are part of the reason that it still exists. Many say that it does not matter if one is black or white, but that if they work hard they can achieve everything that they want to in life. The sad truth is that when it comes to American jobs, education, and judicial treatment, the color of one's skin matters. One can deny that it played a role in these cases, or many before them, but the ignorance of those thoughts are what allows racism to continue and for it to continue to work its way, systematically, through our institutions.

I have learned that to cure any addictions or diseases, one must first admit that they have a problem at all. The same goes for our nation. We are definitely not living in a post-racialized society, and we need to address that head on by not making this issue seem so delicate and therefore unable to be discussed. Making excuses for what were most likely race driven police incidents is telling the public that these things are acceptable. And even

if one does not believe that Ferguson or Staten Island was race driven, believe it or not, these are not the first and sadly not the last tragedies of their kind.

There have been countless cases in the news and most likely many that never even gain the same public attention that involve situations similar to Ferguson and Staten Island. Some create reason for controversy and leave the part the race played the situation slightly ambiguous, while others contain pretty solid points for blaming race as the main contributing factor.

Systematic racial profiling by our justice system can actually be proven. In a study it showed repeatedly, throughout numerous states, that African Americans were always one to two percent more likely to be pulled over than whites. Another study found that African Americans are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of whites. Another study found that African American and Hispanics comprise 58 percent of all prisoners in 2008, even though African Americans and Hispanics make up approximately one quarter of the U.S. population. To call these statistics a coincidence is above anything else, ignorance. What these numbers prove is that we still have a long road to equality ahead of us.

When it comes to the punishment of citizens in our society, the white privilege becomes glaringly evident. In 2010, The U.S. Sentencing Commission found that an African American person is 10 percent more likely to receive a longer sentence than a white person for the exact same offense. It was also found that 3/4 of those that received life sentences were non-whites. There is a 32 percent chance that an African American male will go to jail in his lifetime while it is only six percent for white males. From the moment a person is born, before they have even made a conscious decision in their life, if his or her skin color is anything but white, the odds are already against that person.

The fact that some people are not even concerned about the fact that we are systematically discriminating against our American citizens is frightening. Racism is secondary issue in the minds of most people, and it really does not get brought up again until something newsworthy happens, causing everyone to voice their opinions. The thought that the color of my skin, would, without a doubt, make me more likely to be picked out by the cops is so unbelievably sad to me. No, we are not separated by 'colored' and white drinking fountains anymore, but we are separated. People do not like to see the negative and say the things that need to be said, but racism is something that needs to be dealt with clearly and forcefully.

When I was younger and learned about the civil rights movement in the 1960s, I remember thinking how glad I was that our people had moved past that dark time in our history. I knew that racism was a battle we are still fighting, but I never realized how far will we still have to go. After hearing all of the recent events and learning those facts about the race divide that still exists, I realize that all of this "progress" is not as significant as I had thought.

The key to making progress in the future is informing the public about what racism is and how we can work to end it. There are those that are actually racist, but then there are those that do not know that what they are doing is even racist to begin with. Talking about these things without any sugar-coating will make great strides for this country.

Racism is not going to go away overnight, it is not going to go away for many years, and it probably will never go away completely, but thinking that everyone in our society is equal is just wrong. The color of one's skin does matter, and there is white privilege that exists very prominently in our governmental systems that are meant to represent fairness and justice. The truth is, we are not all equal in the eyes of our society and instead of having this romantic idea of the color of one's skin not mattering, we should address that it does and that we need to change that. People experience horrific racism every day without receiving the same media attention of Ferguson and Staten Island. Does it really take a person's death for us to even talk about these problems?