

# The Wildcat Roar

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## The Power Lives On Through the Blood and Toy Drive

By Mae McDermott  
Chief Editor



Sam Moore

In the face of tragedy our connections grow strong—we are able to put aside our differences and harness the strength of our combined spirits to do incredible things.

Even though over a year has passed since former Rocky Hill student Sam Moore lost his battle with brain cancer in August of 2011, he still drives us to join together to celebrate and honor his life by fighting for a cure. The annual Blood and Toy Drive, organized by Ms. Tippet, is one example of many.

On December 14, members of the Rocky Hill community gave blood and donated toys, all of which were donated to the Children's Hospital in Sam's name. The total amount collected—27 pints of blood and over 300 toys—is a testament to the powers of determination and love, as well as Ms. Tippet's unwavering dedication.

Sam's nobility and strength was the genesis of this drive. "The blood and toy drive represent Sam's life as a loving, giving, caring young man," Ms. Tippet said. "It's the least we can do. It's an honor to be a part of it." Our very own Ms. Ault also grew very close to Sam and took part in the Blood Drive. "I feel honored to be a part of the Blood and Toy Drive in Sam's memory. I felt very helpless during his illness and this is a way to help other children fighting this horrible disease. Sam was always concerned about other patients in the hospital with him and I'm sure he would be very proud of our efforts."

Sam's parents, John and Carol Moore, were present on December 14 as well, and kindly agreed to speak with me about the Blood Drive. "The Blood/Toy drive represents Sam's continuing spirit that lives on in others . . . we call it 'The Power of Sam.' It is the spirit to help those in need and keep fighting in Sam's name. In many ways, the gifts of blood and toys to benefit Children's Hospital are like offering a smile in the face of adversity. We have deep appreciation to Susan Ault, Terri Tippet and Cheryl Kemp, all loyal friends of Sam's, for ensuring that the drive con-

tinues as an annual event in Sam's memory. We know he would be so proud of this event and have love in his heart for all those who participate."

Through our efforts to win this war, it seems as though cancer has connected us all . . . we share the experience, the fear, the heavy burden, and the hope for a future free of cancer as well as the darkness it encompasses.

"Cancer definitely takes a physical toll on society, but also an emotional, social, financial, and intellectual toll," Ms. Tippet explained. "It is so devastating to the whole community. Unfortunately, I have many personal stories when it comes to the effects of cancer personally. The biggest loss to me was when I lost my Dad to cancer on Christmas Eve last year. That hurt bad."

Mr. and Mrs. Moore have also developed a firsthand understanding of cancer's difficult trials. In their eyes, cancer is not just a disease, but "an injustice that must be fought."

"Childhood is a time that should be full of joy and wonder. Cancer takes that away and brings pain and suffering. As a society, each individual must decide how they want to make a stand against cancer as it touches all of our lives in one way or another. It could be as simple as supporting Rocky Hill's Willpower Game, or the Blood/Toy Drive. Each small contribution makes a big difference."

Standing together as one has allowed our community to do great things for society as well as individuals and families who have suffered or are suffering. "Rocky Hill Middle School wrapped its arms around our family during a difficult time," Mr. and Mrs. Moore said, "and now honors the memory of our son, Sam, through the annual Blood/Toy Drive as well as the annual Willpower Games. We are so grateful to be a part of this wonderful community."

Mr. and Mrs. Moore also gave insight as to how one should deal with cancer if it becomes a personal problem. "The most important thing to bear in mind when cancer is affecting your life or someone you are close to is to see the person, not the cancer. When cancer strikes, it likes to take over, don't let it define you or the person who is ill. Remember to smile, laugh, and love."

This battle has not yet been



The Moores and Ms. Tippet at the RHMS Blood and Toy Drive

won, and there is much more than can be done to propel us towards victory. The ever-tenacious Ms. Tippet has expressed the importance of making contributions to ensure the well-being of others. ". . . We can't stop thinking about, and working for, the common good of our community. At any given time, we don't know what people are dealing with. Participating in events like the Blood and Toy Drive, the coat drive, Pennies for Patients, and the Willpower Game helps everyone in our community."

Sam's Blood and Toy Drive is a mark of Sam's battle—his strength and bravery in the face of the unknown and his incredible ability to muster a smile even when the harshest winds seemed to be blowing against him. He continues to inspire us.

Scout leader Liz Haberman guided Sam's scout career in Troop 1397 and gave blood on December 14 as well. She told me, "When he passed, I made hundreds of ribbons with gray stripes (gray being the color for brain cancer). Everyone who attended the funeral wore these, and many still wear them on uniforms to remember him and what he meant to us." Ms. Haberman regarded Sam as one of the best cooks in their troop. "Sam was a role model for everyone in our troop of how to live life with courage and compassion. Even though he suffered, he never lost hope and was never bitter. He was optimistic; he enjoyed scouting and camping. He won awards from the troop in the camp cooking contest. We named our annual contest after him to remember him."

Sam also influenced Ms. Tippet greatly. "Sam lived life to the fullest. He never dwelled on the neg-

ative of his disease. He did not focus on or fear the outcome. He only focused on the here and now which allowed him to reach the end of his life on his terms."

Then there are, of course, the people who knew him best. The Moores recalled Sam's good spirit and heart. "Sam inspired us in his life with his smile in the face of adversity. He was also a fierce defender of the Underdog and wasn't afraid to speak up when there was an injustice. He was very loyal to his friends and family who were extremely important to him and he made sure they knew how he felt. When he knew he was losing his battle with cancer, Sam made the decision to donate his brain tissue to research so that other children might live. We will always be in awe of his amazing courage, and proud that through his gift he is still fighting for the Underdog, all those kids fighting cancer."

Thank you, Ms. Tippet, for organizing this wonderful event. Thank you, Ms. Ault, for your support of the annual drive. Mr. and Mrs. Moore can be sure that, for Sam and everyone else who has suffered from cancer, we will keep fighting this war until we have won.



As always, Mrs. Quinn is delighted to make a difference

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# Editorial Page

## I Can't Believe You Said That!

By Ms. Katie Odey  
Supervising Editor

Cursing and the use of profanity are rooted in just about every culture, and it makes you wonder why people use derogatory language in the first place.

Most people who use profanity and other forms of derogatory slangs do so for the sole purpose of hurting others. Some may argue that some words are not necessarily offensive, and some may use them casually without any harm intended. At what point is it really okay to curse or use derogatory language? We seem to have become so desensitized by some of these offensive words that we simply refer to them as the “f-word,” “b-word,” “n-word” and other euphemisms that make us feel better.

Various institutions, including our school, discourage the use of offensive language because of the damaging effect it has on a person's self-esteem. Our school administrators encourage us to be mindful of the words we use in school and outside of school. Dianna Baker, in her article, “Is Swearing Too Accepted,” wrote, “Over time, a nonchalant attitude towards profanity has developed into a cultural acceptability of the use of curse words.” It seems rather absurd that we have come to accept cursing as part of our culture in spite of its insidious effect on our values. John McWhorter, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute said, “Cursing in a casual setting is never alien to



Image from Google Images

American life.” When Middleborough, a town in Massachusetts, voted to 183-50 in favor of banning swearing and imposing a \$20 fine for swearing in public a few years ago, some people ridiculed the idea. Some argued that it was a hopeless move. What is troubling, and somewhat ambiguous, is that our acceptance of profanity does not conform to our ideals or how we want to be perceived. David Hudson, a scholar at the First Amendment Center expected the constitutionality of the ban in Middleborough to be challenged based on the idea of free speech. According to David Hudson, “Profanity is protected unless it is fighting words, true threats or incitement to eminent lawless action.” It begs the question, what kind of language do people use when they fight? I would imagine that friendly and encouraging words do not lead to any kind of conflict.

It is not uncommon to hear athletes use profanity to express their views. Similarly Sports TV announcers make disparaging remarks every now and then. Does it

make them more admirable? Although the media seems to glamorize the use of profanity, some celebrities have felt the negative effects of using offensive language. Recently a news anchor in Bismarck, North Dakota, got suspended after he uttered a curse word into his microphone during a live broadcast. Last year Paula Deen got chastised in the media for using a racial slur. The backlash from that controversy resulted in the loss of her TV show and lots of money in endorsements. Clearly words that were intentionally derogatory in the past could still hurt many years later.

We can all agree that offensive language has devastating effects. Cyber bullying starts with words intended to taunt and offend the recipient. We have heard and perhaps witnessed the consequences of cyber bullying. During the slavery era African Americans suffered terribly and endured the humiliation of being referred to as “...,” that n-word. It is understandable that most people of African descent would feel offended when people use that word to address

them. I would like to point out that it doesn't matter who uses the word. It is unacceptable because it is a relic from a painful era. An important lesson to learn is that words, even when they are not intended to hurt, could have serious consequences.

Parents and educators would agree that boosting children's self-esteem goes a long way to help them achieve their goals. In Carrie Craven's article, “Exploring the Power of the N-word,” submitted to Teaching Tolerance on May 26 2011, she emphasized the need for students to understand that the use of offensive language is simply not acceptable. According to Carrie, “What I want to teach my kids is that swearing and using offensive language makes you appear less intelligent, less empathetic and even cruel.” Eliminating curse words from our vocabulary would help us focus on using words constructively to express ideas and perhaps inspire others.

I would propose that we do everything in our power to discourage the use of offensive language. As Mother Teresa once said, Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.” Random acts of kindness could start with a smile and perhaps a few kind words spoken to lift one's spirit.

## It's a Wonder

By Mae McDermott  
Chief Editor

There is a certain unique beauty in life when we are children, a kind of magic surrounding everyday occurrences and items. This is the magic that made us stare in awe at houses painted in bright colors, gawk at tall trees and walk through toy aisles as if they were vast Wonderlands. Everything had a distinct appeal, and we saw the world through open eyes. Children can find beauty and goodness in most everything that they see, and their simple innocence and pure appreciation is truly beautiful.

Something has been bothering me and the question has been nagging at me, whispering in the back of my mind:

When do things *stop* being wonderful?

I am in no way saying that the world ever ceases to be wonderful—I am saying that things we find charming and fascinating often lose their appeal as we grow older. When do we stop catching butterflies and lightning bugs? When do we stop playing with and being enchanted by *toys*?

I know that not everyone feels the way I do about this matter, but I am writing from my own heart, thoughts and experiences. We all grow increasingly complex—is it possible for us to grow complex while maintaining a certain simplici-

ty? A child's way of thinking is healthy for the soul, enabling belief in the magic of life. Is it possible to hold on to that untainted virtue?

I believe that as we grow older, we get very distracted. Perhaps there comes a time when the world might begin to bother us rather than excite us, and the journey of self discovery, although necessary to the development of our personalities, becomes tiresome. Our challenges preoccupy us. Maybe it is in the midst of all the hardships we must face that this excitement for living might flutter away, because although our everyday worries can be petty, our feelings of anxiety are always valid, and they will always affect us.

Additionally, our age is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood—we are clinging desperately to childhood, going through the motions of life, or whole-heartedly embracing adulthood. Childhood and adulthood may be different stages of life, but they are inextricably linked . . . as confused children, we are told that we will gain clarity with our years. When we become adults, we are simply overgrown children. We bicker, we say and do stupid, thoughtless things, we refuse to accept what we dislike or do not understand, and we continue to long for clarity.

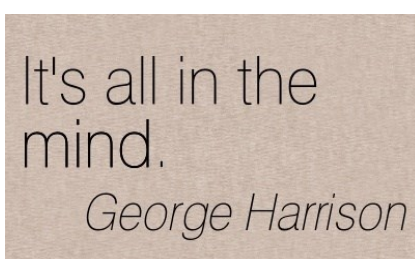
Yet many of us seem to smother our inner child, forcing

adulthood to come. Childhood does not have an expiration date, and growing up does not mean giving up who we are and what we love.

We are all fighting ourselves in some way or another, and this harrowing fight is exhausting and sometimes terrifying. In the heat of battle, maybe we lose that childlike glimmer.

There must be a way to maintain it, though. We cannot allow our lives to become labyrinths; we cannot allow pure instincts and simplicity to become lost in the mirth, because, in the end, only we have the power to curb the battle within ourselves. That child is inside, ready to come to our aid when we feel alone and lost, and the wonders of the world will be there to break our fall no matter what.

Because, you know, it's all in the mind . . .



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# Rocky Hill Page

## Home is Where Mr. Wells is

By Kai Hu  
Tech Editor



Mr. Wells  
Interim Assistant Principal

This year a very special and loving man came back to our wonderful school. That person would be Mr. Wells! He's been inspiring kids to care for their health since the late ninety's. So when he came back I had to get a chance for an interview for the newspaper. Then I got the great opportunity to interview this man and it turned out to be a wonderful lunch time interview. So throughout this

article I will be informing you with the conversations of each question and explaining talking about it. So first I asked him;

**TWR:** When did you first come to Rocky Hill Middle school?

**Mr. Wells:** I came to this school in September of 1996 right after the Atlanta Olympics.

Wow he's been in the old building and here for almost 16 years! But sadly he did retire in 2012 for my grade's 7th grade year. So a lot of you might have already known this but I asked him why he came back.

**TWR:** What or who persuaded you to come back to Rocky Hill?

**Mr. Wells:** I was asked to come back by the county. When Ms. Stewart had her baby she had to leave for a few months. And during her maternity leave, the county asked if I could come in and fill in for her. So I said yes. So now leads to me here.

As you may all know Ms. Stewart had a baby. Now she on maternity leave because of that baby. So the county tried to think of someone to fill in for her, and they thought who else would be better for the job. Of course Mr. Wells.

**TWR:** Who's your favorite teacher in Rocky Hill Middle School?

**Mr. Wells:** I don't have a favorite

teacher. There are so many wonderful and amazing teachers to pick from in this amazing school. This school has seen so many great teachers come and go there's really no way to choose just one. They're all great!

**TWR:** What inspired you to teach kids?

**Mr. Wells:** My kindergarten Physical education teacher. He inspired me to teach physical education to kids today!

**TWR:** What's your favorite thing you have ever done in your 16 years of teaching at Rocky Hill Middle School?

**Mr. Wells:** Well that's simple. My favorite thing in these 16 years is teaching physical education for 16 years.

**TWR:** If you were to have a birthday party, what theme would you choose for the party?

**Mr. Wells:** I would definitely have Caribbean as the theme for the party. I love Aruba. I own a summer condo there and I have a car bumper tag with Aruba on it too. That is my all-time favorite place to ever go Aruba it's wonderful!

**TWR:** How do you feel about the Rocky Hill Middle School Physical education department?

**Mr. Wells:** I think they are doing a

wonderful and outstanding job. They are teaching kids about fitness, and tactical sport thinking on a daily basis. It is just a perfect physical education program.

**TWR:** If there was anything if, any at all, you could change about the Rocky Hill physical education department would you?

**Mr. Wells:** Nothing, nothing at all. It's already wonderful as is right now. I think this program is heading in the right direction in a fast manor.

**TWR:** Besides physical education what was your absolute favorite class when you were in middle school?

**Mr. Wells:** I loved art. It's so creative and tingles your brain muscles just like gym. But instead physical education tingles your body muscles!!!

Mr. Wells is a fabulous teacher and a wonderful person. This 2013-2014 year, I believe, is going to be a good one with him around! One of his greatest passions is encouraging our male students to aspire to do well in school and in life. So when Mr. Wells came back it made us remember and realize that our school is more of a family and that we all love and support one another so much.

## The Benefits of Outdoor Education

By Shelby Rose  
Staff Writer  
With Contribution from Ms. Odey

I attended Outdoor Ed this year and I had the time of my life! I think this was a beneficial opportunity for all 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. During Outdoor Ed I learned how to be independent. I also learned about wildlife and how we affect the ecosystem. The most valuable lesson I learned was teamwork. As a teammate you need to learn how to cooperate, share everyone's ideas and work together. Outdoor Ed is a place where you get out of your normal territory and explore new horizons and face the challenges they give you.

Rumor has it, that Outdoor Ed may become a thing of the past. I personally think that's not an option. Without Outdoor Ed 6<sup>th</sup> graders would not have the chance to learn how to work together and become independent. As independent students we all have the opportunity to grow as leaders and demonstrate to others that we are ready to take on the challenges that the future may bring.

Three of my fellow 6<sup>th</sup> graders admitted that they had the time of their lives! They all think that Outdoor Ed is very beneficial. Most of the students interviewed this article like Outdoor Ed because it gave them great opportunities to learn and experience the outdoors. For most 6<sup>th</sup> graders, it provided a break from the classroom and being taught with books and worksheets. Christy Tan, another 6<sup>th</sup> grad-



er, said all her Outdoor Ed classes were fantastic. Jacob Kiviat loved everything, the cabins, the classes and all the people he met. Ethan Goldberg liked everything but his favorite activity was predator prey. One can tell from these experiences that Outdoor Ed is a beneficial experience.

Before Outdoor Ed is cancelled, I hope school leaders will think about teachers like Mrs. Quinn. Mrs. Quinn has been involved with Outdoor Ed for 33 years and has been a leader for over 20 years. She was also a student at Summit Lake and loved the experience from the beginning. Outdoor Ed is very important to her; she thinks this gives children the opportunity to learn in a different environment. She says it's so meaningful that students are learning by doing. Mrs. Quinn heard that the Montgomery Country Public School Council may eliminate Outdoor Ed because of budget problems, yet she thinks it is so unique that she still has faith that they will not cut it. If she could talk to them

personally, she would say, "Outdoor Ed is a valuable and unique opportunity. It introduces kids to new experiences. It helps you to make new friends and realizing that they can do anything." Most teachers and students at Rocky Hill would agree Outdoor Education is a unique opportunity for students to learn about the environment.

Some educators have conducted research and written numerous articles about the benefits of Outdoor Education. In her article, "The Edible Schoolyard Project," Alice Waters stated, "The kids have been captivated by this experience. You see them looking and smelling and tasting. They don't think that this is school. Yet we know what they're learning. And it's very important, fundamental information." Hands-on learning doesn't get any better than the exposure to nature that we get from Outdoor Ed. Predator/Prey helps students assimilate the food chain. In the article, "Outdoor Learn-

ing is in a Class of its Own," Kim Thomas writes, "Learning outside the classroom builds children's confidence and can transform their relationships with teachers." She went on to explain the benefits of outdoor education. "... children experience numerous benefits from learning outside the classroom, such as the opportunity to take risks, learn new physical skills, improve self-confidence and develop better relationships with teachers."

In her blog, Jo Ling posted her thoughts on Thursday, September 6, 2011. According to Ling, "Learning in this environment gives students an appreciation and love of the natural world. If delivered professionally and sympathetically, outdoor lessons enable children to make connections to and within the environment."

So I ask you, fellow students, to think about your Outdoor Ed experience and how meaningful it was to you. If MCPS cuts the Outdoor Ed program the upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders won't have this special opportunity. Please take the opportunity to let school leaders know how valuable Outdoor Ed education is. Your voice can make a difference.



# Writer's Corner

## Beloved Betsy

By Sophie Jorgensen  
Grade 7



"Bethany, your dog's waiting for you!" My mom yelled to me, as I rapidly darted down the carpeted stairs. My dog, Betsy, was my soul, my heart, and my best friend. Betsy was a petite collie that was always bouncing around, full of energy and enthusiasm. She was welcomed to my family when I was three years old, and I instantly fell in love with her cute puppy eyes and fuzzy fur that resembled a soft, comfy blanket. I always felt like an outcast in school; I was the odd, peculiar, girl lacking model hair and a beautiful body. Betsy comforted me in such times of discomfort and loneliness, always being supportive.

"Did you feed her yet?" I asked my mom, assuming she hadn't based on the hungry flicker in Betsy's bold, green eyes.

"Nope," my mom replied, "that's *your* responsibility."

I pulled out Betsy's dog food, measly attempting to shield my nose from the reeking stench as I spooned an exact portion of kibble into her dog bowl. She wagged her tail excitedly and chowed down the food in what seemed to me like five seconds. I just stood there, giggling at her complete joy and elation. These were the days that made me love life: cool, crisp, autumn weather paired with an exuberant, cheerful dog that always made me smile. I couldn't imagine life without Betsy.

I came home from school to find my mother pacing back and forth, obviously distressed about something.

"Bethany," she murmured, "I need to talk to you."

"Okay," I replied, trying to hide my fear and act like it was no big deal. My mom only gets fidgety and nervous like this when something is seriously wrong, so I was starting to worry.

"I went to the veterinarian today with Betsy, and she said, erm." My mom mumbled nervously, "she said that Betsy has been diagnosed with cancer. I know this is hard for you to accept, but keep in mind that she's getting old, nearing thirteen, and dogs get sick at this point in their lives."

I stare at her, too stunned and shocked to say anything. I knew the news was going to be bad, but I didn't know it would be beyond horrible! Dogs die in a matter of days when they become ill! Betsy was my only friend that loved me despite my glaring flaws and imperfections. She couldn't have cancer; she couldn't die! I know that people love and adore their pets, but I connect to mine more than I connect to humans.

"The vets are going to do everything they can to restore her health, but the future doesn't look bright for her. I'd collect the memories while you still have her."

"Where is she?" I mumble, my voice quivering a bit at this devastating thought.

"In her usual spot," my mom mumbled back. I sprinted up the stairs, busted open the bathroom door, and violently yanked aside the chevron shower curtains to find my wonderful dog innocently staring at me. I don't

know how a sleek, hard bathtub would feel like a comfort zone to anyone, but I respected her abnormality as she respected mine.

"Betsy, Betsy," I sobbed, letting my emotions out. Waterfalls rolled down my cheeks as I clasped her between my arms and pulled her into a long, lingering hug.

"I can't live without you," I wailed, pleading and begging her to stay alive even though I knew she had no control over it. "Please, please don't die, I need you, Betsy. I need you." Eventually, I set her free from my tight grasp, plopping down right next to her. I tried to capture and savor the moment ("collect the memories", as my mother had said), but I couldn't even twist my lips into a smile; they stayed permanently in a melancholy frown. Reluctantly I stood up, and hopelessly tried to find an activity that would take my mind off this unbearable news.

On Saturday, my mom and I took Betsy to the vet. Betsy cringed at the medical atmosphere, as if she knew her life could end here. The veterinarian that guided Betsy to her office seemed kind, but I could only view her as an evil, devilish spirit that would hastily give us unfortunate news about Betsy's health.

"Betsy has a rare form of cancer, as you may have been told," the vet recited, "and we are unsure of how to cure it. We'll give it all our effort to keep her alive, but I'm not sure if that'll be enough." She handed me tiny, plastic bottles filled with little, orange pills, explaining that this medication was their best bet in restoring her health.

At home, I tried to get Betsy to take them, but she refused. It's almost as though she could smell that they were going to have a foul, medicinal taste. I snuck some into her dog food, hoping she wouldn't notice, and thankfully she didn't.

I fed Betsy the medication daily, as instructed, giving her a treat every time she took so she'd only taste the sweet dessert instead of the horrible chemicals. Though the vet said these pills would probably improve her health, they seemed to be hurting her health even more. She used to perk up when something exciting happened, racing to discover what it was, but now she solemnly limped around, showing no enthusiasm or curiosity. As my dog's health started fading, so did my heart, my grades, and my happiness.

As I emerged through my front door after a very unsuccessful day of school, I was surprised to find the house eerily quiet. No welcoming mother or adorable dog. I surmised my mother had taken Betsy to the vet to get some more medications or inquire the doctor on why the pills seemed to be weakening her. Before I could think of any other possible options, my mom returned, relieving me at the sight of Betsy trailing behind her.

"Bethany...I don't know how to tell you this," she drawled.

"Just say it mom!" I stated

forcefully, annoyed at her inconsistency.

"Well you see, Betsy's cancer can't be cured. There's no way to fix her, Beth. The veterinarians have to put her to sleep. She's in unimaginable pain right now, I hope you can understand. Her appointment's tomorrow, while you're at school. You wouldn't want to be there anyway, witnessing life ending. It's a tragicaly unbearable sight."

"No! She can't be put to sleep! I need her in my life! I need her! Why are you doing this to me? I love her so much!" I hollered, letting my passion for my dog shine.

"Honey, it's for the best, and I know you love her, but—" I interrupted my mom, jolting up the stairs to find Betsy. Once I found her, I spent the next few hours adoring her and replaying all our treasured memories together in my mind. My tears ran down my cheeks faster than an Olympic track runner; they become uncontrollable. At some point in the midst of sadness, you have to let your hidden emotions out. Everything I glanced at reminded me of Betsy- and how she'd be gone tomorrow. Of course I wanted her to be free from pain, but her death would just launch me into *eternal* pain. At 11:00, my mom finally pried me off my beautiful dog, tucking me into bed.

"You can say your final good-byes tomorrow," she told me, "just, try not to think about it too much, okay honey?"

"Okay," I mumbled, clearly lying. How could I not think about losing my best friend?

I could hear my mother faintly crying. I knew this would be hard for her too; she would be grieving over her and missing Betsy's bubblyness and liveliness just like I would be. As images of Betsy floated through my mind, I slowly drifted off to sleep.

*Beep, beep, beep, beep,* went my alarm clock. I jolted upright and quickly fell right back down when I realized what a devastating day it was going to be. Finally, I decided to pick myself up and enjoy Betsy while I could. I threw on some red jeans and my "Dogs are a Girl's Best Friend" t-shirt, and bolted down the stairs. Betsy dashed right to me, well, ran with the tiny bit of energy she could muster. She looked sickly pale, and I could see her bony ribcage through her aged fur. I got out my picture to take one final photo of her, but withdrew it, knowing she wouldn't want my last image of her to look old and horrible. I cried as I held her in my limp arms, appreciating all she has done for me. I began to yearn for her youth, even missing the putrid smell of wet dog. My mom forcibly separated me from my loyal companion, ushering me out the door while trying to hide her sorrow. I cried myself the whole way to school as I realized she was truly gone forever.

I dillydallied on the route home from school, taking the longest path. I didn't want to go home, where there was no adorable dog

eager to greet me. I didn't want to go home, where I'd be left depressed and lonely without my best friend. I didn't want to go home, where there was no Betsy.

As I arrived at my final destination, I was afraid of what would be inside. I knew nothing dangerous, unsafe, or traumatizing would be inside to scare me, it's what wasn't there that frightened me. I slowly stepped in through the front door of my house, as if I was in a haunted house, preparing to be alarmed. My mother nodded at me with tear-streaked eyes, and in that moment, I knew she was gone. I crawled up to my room, plopping down in the dark corner of my room. She was gone forever. Grief struck me like lightning. All the joyful memories of Betsy played through my head like a non-stop slideshow, making me miss her more. I mourned for her spirit, wishing it would return to Earth so I could happily be reunited with her. At that moment, I would've even gone to heaven myself just to be with her. Depression rushed through my veins, taunting me because I have no friends, support, or dog. It seemed as though powerful thunderstorms brewed above me, like life would just be one calamitous storm, never getting brighter. Even if we got another dog, no one would *ever* replace Betsy.

Over the next few days, I kept to myself at school, interacting and socializing with no one. The "I'm so sorry for your loss" comments really annoyed me; I knew it was fake sympathy, and Betsy deserved sincere, heartfelt messages. I don't even know how my peers were notified of my dog's tragic death.

All day's seemed to drag on forever, filled with emptiness, sorrow, and loneliness. My mother tried to cheer me up, but it never worked, as grief had overwhelmed her soul, too.

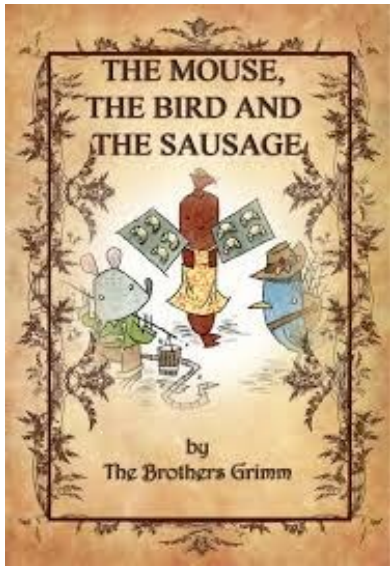
However, one day, about a week after Betsy's departure from the living, I had a slight epiphany. I began to look on the bright side of things: Betsy no longer had to suffer through extreme, daily pain and smell my worry, fear, and anxiety. She had a brilliant life, filled with fabulous, unforgettable memories, and I was going to have a brilliant life, too. Everyone has to die sometime, and I'm glad she had a calm, tranquil death instead of a painful, chaotic one. I should smile because it happened, not cry because it's over. Sure, she was my best friend, and I will always miss her, but there are so many great opportunities for me to make new friends; I just have to be willing to seek them. You should enjoy things in life while you have them, and find alternatives to love once the old things are gone. I'm overjoyed that I got the opportunity to love, care, and create everlasting memories with Betsy, but I'm ready to move on and find something else to love and enjoy, so my whole life isn't swallowed by my sorrow.

# Writer's Corner (Continued)

## The Brothers' Grimm: the Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage

By: Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm

Reviewed by Kaili Nakanishi



Now the Bird had to fetch the water, light the fire and set the table. The Mouse had to cook and the Sausage had to gather wood. But when the Sausage went to collect the wood, a dog came along and ate the Sausage. When the Mouse tried to mix the vegetables by rolling on the pan like the Sausage had, she was cooked. When the Bird came to check on the Mouse, he accidentally set fire to the kitchen. The Bird went to fetch water from the well to douse the fire, but the pail was too heavy and the Bird fell into the well and drowned.

Prior to the other bird telling the companions to switch jobs, the Mouse, the Bird and the Sausage were able to make things work, but they each could not handle each other's responsibilities when the circumstances changed.

In this story, one message rings true--some things may be right for one person, but that doesn't mean it would be the same for another. This tale involves a Mouse, a Bird, and a Sausage. These companions live in a house together and have individual responsibilities. The Bird has to gather wood. The Mouse has to fetch water, light the fire, and set the table, while the Sausage has to cook.

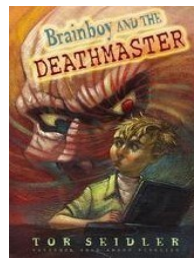
Another bird came to tell them that they should switch jobs.



## Brainboy and the Deathmaster

By Tor Seidler

Reviewed by Richard Mbanaso



In Tor Seidler's diverting book, 12 year-old orphan and video-game prodigy Darryl Kirby discovers a new online game at the shelter he must call home. In a matter of days, Keith Masterly, the game's inventor, takes notice of Darryl's deft playing. An eccentric billionaire who was once a boy genius himself, Masterly adopts Darryl and whisks him away to his high-tech laboratory.

There, Darryl and several other hand-picked young geniuses are put to work on Masterly's secret project: eternal life through DNA

manipulation. The children are each given a daily "vitamin thing" which stifles their memories of who they are and where they came from. Darryl skips the pills and discovers Masterly's plan, which ultimately involves disposing of the young researchers.

The book's set-up is excellent, but a few structural flaws mar the compelling story and the ending feels rushed. Darryl's discovery of the secret of immortality after just a few days in the lab seems unlikely given this fantasy's narrative logic, and readers receive no explanation for Masterly's shift from child genius to evil madman. Still, the language, invariably crisp and bright, makes for a quick read. As with Seidler's first book, The Dulcimer Boy, the core message reinforces the notion that children do stand a chance against the cruelties of the world.

## The Soul of Dancing

When you feel the beat of the drum, your heart starts to move.  
You feel free and no one can take that away.  
As your soul moves, you move as well.  
You may be a good dancer; you may be a bad dancer all are welcome.  
When you and your soul start to move – you are free at last.

By Shelby Wilson



## Moving Away

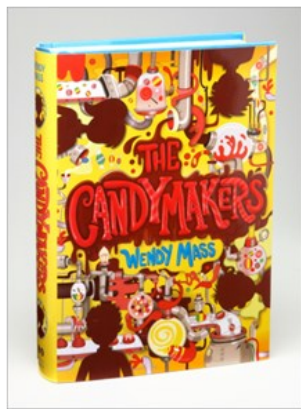
At times like this  
I remember the first time we met  
Little second graders  
Who had a problem getting along?  
I guess this is what dying feels like  
Remembering all the happy memories  
And being grateful  
That you had a chance to have them  
Am I supposed to forget?  
And move on with Life?  
Making new memories  
On top of these old ones?  
Or dwell on these memories  
And let everyone advance in life?  
Leaving me behind  
Because neither sound appealing to me  
I guess.....  
In life, nothing can stay unchanged  
I have to believe that  
If I want to get anywhere in life  
The memories that we made  
And the tears that we shed  
Nothing can undo that  
For I will love you guys  
To the moon and back again  
Thanks

By Mallika Lakshminarayan

## The Candymakers

By: Wendy Mass

Reviewed by Mahi Ganatra  
StaffWriter



Logan, Miles, Philip, and Daisy are the four winners of an essay contest. Their reward is sweet! They get to participate in a national candy making contest! Logan, being the head candy maker's son, already has loads of experience with the factory and with candy itself. Whoever invents the best, most innovative new candy gets a lifetime supply of candy for themselves. The contestants may use any of the staff's advice, but the candy has to be made by them. As you read, secrets unfold and the story has a bitter twist. Are the kids all really what they seem like, or will their history cause their fates to intertwine forever? You may think that this is a happy and simple

book with a predictable ending at first, but by the end, you'll know that it just may be the complete opposite. Just remember, everything is not what it seems

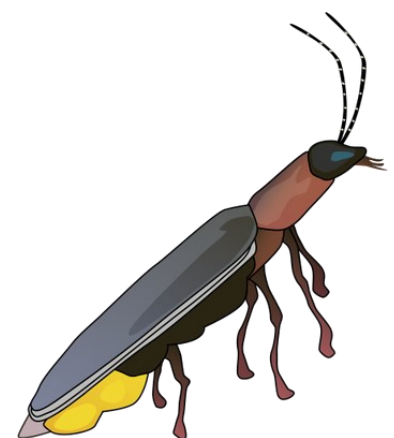
The Candy Makers is a book that will leave you mouth-watering. You will not put this book down from the start to the finish. And at the end, you won't be able to stop thinking about it. Boy, does it leave you in a shock! This book is split into five parts, four of them being in each of the contestants point of view, the last being a narrative. The way Wendy Mass embeds her details into a magnificent plot of a story is just unbelievable. When I was reading the book, the details created such a mouthwatering image in my mind, I told myself that I would need to keep a supply of candy handy! The Candy Makers is by far, my favorite book, and I recommend it for all people from ages 10 and up.

This book is an excellent treat for candy-fanatics, and anyone who loves a great story, I really, really enjoyed this book and I think you will too! Be sure to check it out at your school or local library.

## Fireflies

By Jeevita Cynthia Tharmarajah  
Grade 6

Fireflies fly in the dark Night  
Shedding light upon every  
blade of grass  
light brings  
A glimpse of hope for the  
little creatures within that  
hide  
From the dark in their  
Little homes  
Under the ground  
Fireflies Bring Light.



# Sports

## The NFL Playoffs

By Dylan Maeda  
Staff Writer

The NFL playoffs are rapidly approaching; the time has come to pick out teams with the greatest chance of winning the Superbowl. With many teams doing so well this season, the playoffs were a lot of fun to watch. I'll start with the NFC East which is one of the worst divisions, mainly because of the Redskins. What more is there to say about the Redskins? Most of us have given up on them, especially after that horrible loss against the Vikings and 49ers. They were at the bottom of their division for the whole season, leaving fans with very little hope of them making the playoffs. For the Dallas Cowboys their biggest concern is winning their division. Writer Mike Moraitis for Bleacher Report wrote, "As far as the wild card is concerned, Dallas needs to jump three squads in order to secure the final playoff position, and it's looking like winning the division is its best chance at being a postseason team in 2014." The Eagles were tied with the Cowboys at one point, and this made the matchup between the Cowboys and the Eagles a game to watch. The Cowboys played without their star quarterback, Tony Romo. With the NFC East division title on the line, the Cowboys brought in Kyle Orton



with the hopes of clenching the division title. Some pundits speculated that if the Cowboys won the division and make the playoffs, the Seahawks and 49ers would pose a major challenge. The Eagles ended up with a 24-22 win against the Cowboys.

Moving to the NFC West, there are two major teams in this conference, the 49ers and Seahawks. Right now the Seahawks lead the conference. The 49ers are behind them. After the impressive playoff run last year and the addition of Percy Harvin, the Seahawks have been a league-wide favorite to make a deep playoff run. The season has been great, and by blowing out the Saints in week 12 they became the first team to make the playoffs. The 49ers, which made it to the Superbowl last year, are behind the Sea-

hawks. This playoff run will be harder than the past few years. During the season they struggled against winning teams and Colin Kaepernick just hasn't had the same spark like he did last year, "But with Kap, they've seen what he can do, and they'll need him to be the catalyst that makes this an explosive, multi-dimensional offense," Dylan Desimone wrote in an article on Bleacher Report. The bottom line with the 49ers is that they need to be just as great or better than last year's playoffs to make it back to the Superbowl.

The NFC South is led by the Saints with the Panthers behind them fighting for control of the division. Whoever wins the division depends on the last few games. In regards of their playoff chances, the

Saints have experience in the playoffs unlike the Panthers. The teams with the best chances of going to the Superbowl are the Seahawks and the Broncos. The Broncos have had a great season, mostly due to the exceptional performance of the QB Peyton Manning. Along with setting the record for the most touchdowns in a year, he led his team to the top of the division. They have only been beaten by the Patriots who are right behind them in the conference standings; Manning's old team, the Colts also beat him, along with the Chargers who play in the same division. The second place team in the AFC is the Patriots; they have a bye week to start the playoffs. If the Bengals beat the Chargers in the Wildcard game, the Bengals will go on to face the Patriots. The winner of that game plays the Broncos. "The football world wants to see Peyton Manning and Tom Brady duel again, and this year it will happen," Eric Golub of the Washington Times wrote. The beginning of 2014 looks like it will bring good football. . . 12 teams will start but only one team will end up winning.

America's eyes will be glued to the television screen through January and especially that big Sunday in February. Who do you think will win?

## The Winter Olympics

By Dylan Maeda  
Staff Writer

February 7 marks the start of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. Athletes from all nations will compete in competitions such as ice hockey, figure skating, snowboarding, and many more. All countries will put their best athletes out there for us to enjoy. A scary bombing took place in Russia about a month before the games, but Russian President Vladimir Putin is sure that the games will be secure.

This year, a new competition will be played. . . . slopestyle snowboarding. Slopestyle snowboarding is a mix of snowboarding and skiing in which athletes need to perform several impressive tricks in the air. For team USA, Shaun White is heavily favored to win gold in the half pipe competition, just as he did in 2010. He will be competing in the slopestyle competition. No one is denying his chances of winning gold again this year.

In February 2013, Lindsey Vonn, who many see as the best skier in the US, tore two ligaments in her right knee. After the injury, she was quick to say that she would compete in the Games, which at that time were 12 months away. After a few months of surgery and recovery she resumed practice, but reinjured the same knee. She told the Today Show, "If things go well, I'll be racing next week. If they don't, then I'm going to have to



reassess and see where I stand and if I can make a comeback for this season." Only time will tell if she will compete or not. Mikaela Shiffrin is the second best to Vonn and has a good possibility to win a medal as well. Other big things are happening in skiing; history will be made as Jessica Jerome becomes the first woman to compete on the United States' female ski jumping team. This is the first time women will have a ski jumping team. A new face has emerged in men's skiing as well; Nick Goepper will be competing for the first time in the Olympics after doing great in the selection events.

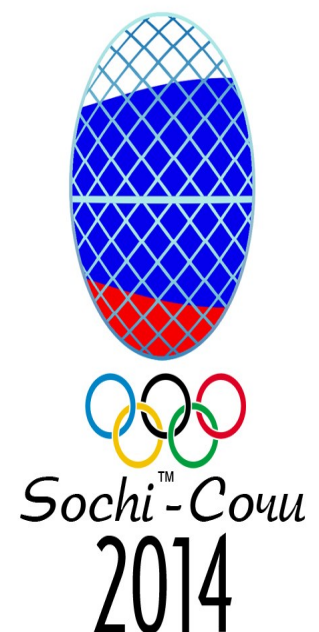
One of the most famous competitions in the winter games is hockey. Last year, Canada beat the

US team for the gold medal. This year, selecting the team has been hard for the coaches with so many great players wanting a spot on the team. Some say this is the best team we have had, especially with key players like Ryan Miller, who was the MVP of the Vancouver Games in 2010. Seth Jones is another player coming in with a lot of hype; he had a great rookie season playing for the Nashville Predators.

Another country with a great shot at getting the gold medal for hockey is Russia, led by their star forward Alex Ovechkin, but their defense isn't as good as their offense. "Team Switzerland will play a strong enough defensive game to squeak into the medal

round," wrote MS Kasprzak, senior writer for bleacherreport.com. Their goalie, Jonas Hiller, is one of the top 20 goalies in the world. They also have former NHL backstop Martin Gerber. Clearly, there will be lots of competition for this year's medals. Team USA will need to play even better than they did last year to win gold.

The Olympics should be fun to watch. With several interesting stories and athletes, it will be hard to wait for the games to come.



# Sports Page Co nt.

## The Miami Heat: What a Season!

By Vikram Jasti  
Staff Writer  
Contributions from Ms. Odey

Thy Miami Heat won two championships in a row. Will they win another championship this year? According to their players' stats they have a good chance. This offseason they waived small forward Mike Miller to the Memphis Grizzlies. They acquired small forward, Michael Beasley, the second pick for the Miami Heat in the 2008 draft. Greg Oden, the first overall pick by the Portland Trail Blazers in 2007, joined the Miami Heat after many injuries with the Trail Blazers. The Miami Heat also acquired shooting guard Roger Mason Jr. With Miami 14-4, they are the second in the Eastern Conference.

The Miami Heat are the sixth in points per game, thirtieth in rebounding, third in assists per game sixth for points allowed. On December 16, 2013, LeBron James sprained his ankle in the third quarter of the game against the Utah Jazz. In spite of his injury, he returned in the fourth quarter, finishing the game with a team-high 30 points in the 117-92 win against the Jazz. When Heat faced the Indiana Pacers, they thought they were going to stop Paul George. It was true for the first half, but Paul George and the Pacers and played a tough game. At the end, the Heat crushed the Pacers with 97-94 win. "It shows we're a team that's been there before," Wade said. "No matter what the score is we always feel we have an opportunity to win the game."

There have been rumors about LeBron James going back to the Cleveland Cavaliers since he is set to be a free agent this summer. He was the first rounds pick in 2003 from the Cavaliers LeBron James, Dyane Wade and Chris Bosh, the



famous "Big Three, have played exciting games for the Miami Heat. Why would LeBron James want to leave the Miami Heat for his old team? The team continues to raise expectations and the trio lead the team to more victories. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, the Heat became the first team in NBA history to win a championship after trailing in as many as three playoff series.

The Nets game was a very interesting game. During that game, LeBron James got upset because Nets forward, Mirza Teletovic had wrapped his arms when he going to the rim. This resulted in a scuffle that



The Miami Heat at the White House with President Obama

was quickly resolved. It was a particularly good game for Michael Beasley, who played very hard to help the Heat. The Net ended up beating the Miami Heat.

After that the Heat took a trip to the White House, celebrating their second consecutive NBA title with the First Basketball Fan. According to Cindy Boren in The Washington Post, Obama welcomed them by joking that "nothing brings people together like the Miami Heat." President Obama was quick to point out that the Heat stellar 66-victory regular season still fell short of his beloved Chicago Bulls' record-setting run of 72.

The Heat faced the New York Knick at Madison Square Garden. In spite of LeBron James' 32 points, the Heat lost to the Knicks. This game came shortly after the Heats' big win against the Pelicans. Even though the Pelican were known for scoring more than a hundred points per game, the Heat stopped them at eighty-eight points. The next game against the Warriors was a memorable game. The return of Chris

Anderson, The Bird man, added some excitement to the game. Dwayne Wade helped to lead his team to victory against the Golden State Warriors.

Most people would agree that LeBron James is very athletic and strong; therefore it was not surprising that he won the Athlete Trophy. According to Tim Reynolds in the Associated Press, LeBron said, "I am chasing something, and it's bigger than me as a basketball player... I believe my calling is much higher than being a basketball player. I can inspire young people." James went on to say, "If I can get kids to look at me as a role model, as a leader, a superhero... those things mean so much, and that is what I think I was built for."

The Miami Heat has continued to dominate the games this season in spite of some painful losses. The Heat guaranteed the contract of Roger Mason. As Greg Stoda, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer shared the fact that Mason and Beasley shared a congratulatory handshake in the locker room Erick Spoelstra is very proud of these players. "We're happy with those guys," He went on to say "I don't know if they were sweating it or not, but those were fairly easy decisions for us." The Heat still believe in Oden even though he got injured. LeBron James and Bosh agreed that he would be vital to the team when he returns. With this lineup, the Heat is set, but it begs the question, will they be able to pull off another championship?



## Beagles: The Cutest Dogs

By Anusha Chinthalapale  
Rocky Hill Page Editor

Getting a dog is a big responsibility, especially when one in the household is terrified by them. This is a report on why you should get a dog; the beagle.

Description, Height, Weight, Origin and Age Span

Beagles are small to medium sized dogs. They grow up to only 13-15 inches at their growth peak. The males are slightly bigger than females. They are a family friendly type of dogs and they are very friendly (and cute). Beagles originate from dachshunds. They are both straight-legged and have curled tails. Beagles weigh from 18 to 35 pounds; that's about half of a preschooler's weight! Beagles are small dogs that have a strong body build. They are good cuddlers and a great family dog. They live up to 12-15 years, which is a big span for dogs this small. The beagle



From Google Images

does not shed as much as the other dogs. The beagle is from Greece. William the Conqueror brought back a beagle from his famous Grecian expedition. From then on, beagles have become one of America's most loved dogs. By 1990 and 1991, beagles became the dog to win the most 'Best Dog' in dog shows.

Responsibilities

You have to be ready for all responsibilities dogs will bring. "I've

had a dog for about three years now and it is a huge responsibility. I would suggest making a schedule," says Mandy Peterson, 9<sup>th</sup> grader at Northwest High School. "You must walk it twice a day and feed thrice: Once in the morning, once as soon as you get home from school," says Tania Johnson, 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Roberto Clemente. It is scientifically proven that people who are afraid of dogs get over their fears after getting a

small puppy. Since this dog stays small, it's even better. You'll get a chance to pet and cuddle the dog after a long day at work. "My dad and I have decided to split up the walking schedule. He will walk it in the morning and I will walk it in the evenings. We will bathe her once a week," says Emma Chan, 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Kingsview Middle School.

The best pet to start with is a beagle. It is small, family-friendly and perfect for every household.



# Life on The Hill

## Teens Rise, But Don't Shine

By Ali Tyma  
Staff Writer

It's six o'clock in the morning. You sigh. Yes it's time to wake up and shower. As you stumble towards the bathroom, still drowsy from lack of sleep, you wish that school would start later. Well that wish may become a reality. Dr. Joshua Starr has recently proposed to alter the current school start times, a change that hasn't been suggested for a little over ten years. "Why?" some will ask. Because studies have shown that there is a clear link between student health and well-being and sleep. Getting enough sleep is something commonly overlooked by most students.

The average teen is expected to get between 8.5 and 9.5 hours of sleep. In recent surveys conducted by the work group showed MCPS high school students sleep for about seven hours or less. During the adolescent teens bodies change in such a way that they cannot fall asleep as early as they did when they were younger, but they continue to need more sleep than an adult. Inadequate sleep impacts the brain negatively. Important brain functions that are part of the



Image from Google Images

learning process, including the ability to concentrate and produce information rely on proper sleep.

Improper sleep in teens is associated with higher rates of obesity and depression, lower levels of motivation and attentiveness, and increased rates of traffic accidents. Research shows that the students of schools that altered the start times are involved in fewer car crashes. In the 2013 MCPS survey 70 percent of parents of high school students agreed that high school started "too early." 69 percent of high school students preferred high school start later. While changes (if the school board decides to alter bell times) won't be made until the 2015-2016 school year at the earliest Dr. Starr

has certainly made some very strong and valid arguments. And besides, who doesn't want more sleep time?

Some students at Rocky Hill shared their perspectives on school start times. "I get to school at 7:40 AM, and I'm always tired. I believe we should start school at 9:00 so everyone gets a good night's rest and be focused and prepared," says Allen Munive, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader. Based on the recommendation of School Superintendent, Joshua Starr, MCPS needs to consider pushing back high school start times by 50 minutes and extending elementary school day by 30 minutes. According to the MCPS Press Release, "The recommendation is based on the report of the 2013 Bell

Times Work Group, which studied the issue around school starting and ending times for more than 9 months. The next step in the process is an extensive communication and outreach plan to gather input from a broad array of stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and community members." There is no doubt that most high school student would welcome the idea. "I am making this recommendation because I believe it is in the best interests of our students. There is extensive research that demonstrates that adolescents are simply not getting enough sleep. This is a public health and safety issue," says Dr. Starr.

Based on this recommendation, middle school would start ten minutes earlier at 7:45 AM. Students like Aaliya Cordero, Grade 7, would like to keep the start time as it is. "Waking up in the morning is a pain, but I'm ok with the school hours." Ashley Kerivan echoed the same idea. "I like the current hours since we get out early." When it comes to school start time, it is important to take the health and well-being of students into consideration. Students need to have enough sleep in order to function properly.

## A-Mazing Teachers

### Mrs. Kay Boughan

By Katelyn Folmer  
Staff Writer



Mrs. Boughan

This quarter we selected some teachers that we think stand out in what they do. This quarter we selected; Mrs. Boughan. She has stood out because she loves her students, is very dedicated to them and helps them when they need it. We sat down with Mrs. Boughan and asked her a few questions:

**TWR:** How long have you been teaching?

**Mrs. Boughan:** 12 years of volunteering in the schools during the day, because my kids were in school. And I've been in the school system for 20 years.

**TWR:** Over the years, what are some things that your students taught you?

**Mrs. Boughan:** I was in Ms. Odey's silent reading class and I was saying to the students "If you want to get better at reading, you have to practice." And now I realize that or

how it applies to me, if I want to get better at something, I have to practice. Also, I've experienced so much kindness from kids.

**TWR:** Why did you start teaching?  
**Mrs. Boughan:** I loved it. When my children were in school, I started volunteering during the school day, and I loved it.

**TWR:** How do you feel about being nominated as the teacher of the month?

**Mrs. Boughan:** Very honored and humble because there are so many great staff members here.

**TWR:** What are some things you love about your job?

**Mrs. Boughan:** I've always loved working with children and staff. I love learning new things with the kids.

**TWR:** What would you like your students to know about you?

**Mrs. Boughan:** That I have 4 children and a lovely husband who I enjoy/enjoyed and in June we are expecting our 6<sup>th</sup> grandchild.

**TWR:** What is one lesson that you have learned throughout your career?

**Mrs. Boughan:** How wonderful and valuable each student and staff member is to me.

**TWR:** What other schools or grades have you taught?

**Mrs. Boughan:** These are all the places and statuses I have taught: Damascus elementary school before Rocky Hill Montgomery county public schools community co coordinator organizing community and educational programs.

### Mrs. Marion Heidary

By Aleysha Varghese  
Staff Writer



Mrs. Heidary  
Media Assistant

Mrs. Heidary works as a media assistant at our school. She welcomes students with a warm smile when they walk into the media center. She wears headbands that match different occasions and reveal jovial personality.

**TWR:** How long have you been working in RHMS?

**Mrs. Heidary:** This is my 4<sup>th</sup> year

**TWR:** How long have you been a media assistant?

**Mrs. Heidary:** I have been a media assistant for 11 years in total

**TWR:** How do you feel being nominated?

**Mrs. Heidary:** I'm very happy, proud, excited, and a little bit scared!!

**TWR:** What do you think makes you special?

**Mrs. Heidary:** My sense of humor

and my enjoyment of the students at RHMS

**TWR:** How would you describe your interactions with your students?

**Mrs. Heidary:** My interactions ALWAYS start with a smile because of my crazy headgear

**TWR:** When you come to school what do you look forward to the most?

**Mrs. Heidary:** A reluctant reader who finds a book they love

**TWR:** Were you always a media assistant?

**Mrs. Heidary:** No, I was a parent educator for 13 years

**TWR:** You help students find books, but what kind of books do you like?

**Mrs. Heidary:** I like historical fiction novels and legal thrillers.

One thing most students would say about Mrs. Heidary is her concern for students and her willingness to help. She is not only welcoming when you visit the media center; she takes time to inform students about the various fun programs she and Ms. Gramatges have created.





# Special Features

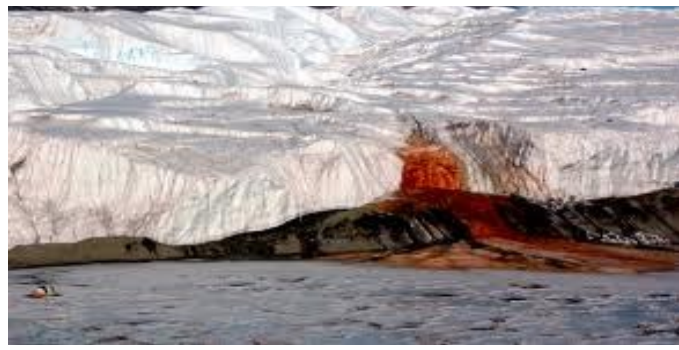
## Life Under Ice?

By Linette Kingston  
Staff Writer

Frozen beneath a glacier, a colony of bacteria thrives despite the harsh conditions—and without any oxygen.

*How this can be?* This is a question many are asking, but before we answer it, let's travel to the Taylor Glacier in Antarctica. There, a distinct land feature stands out from the surrounding ice. "Blood Falls," or so it is called, is a mysterious red-colored waterfall whose pigmentation is caused by iron and sulfur compounds in the water, not red algae as it was originally thought to be. Underneath, a lake that doesn't freeze—since it's about four times saltier than the ocean—became trapped about 1.5 million years ago under the glacier as it gradually advanced. Its water comes from the lake, which then seeps through a fissure in the glacier.

The lake is so far under the ice (about 400 meters below) that re-



searchers were unable to drill deep down to it. However, they were still able to collect some of the waterfall's effusion for further testing. "When I started running the chemical analysis on it, there was no oxygen," remarked Jill Mikucki, a leading researcher at Harvard University. "That was when this got really interesting, it was a real 'eureka' moment."

Now onto the bacteria themselves. Nearly all of the microbes are descendants of marine microorganisms, and dwell without any oxygen, heat, and light. They feed off of the iron and sulfur compounds in

the water. Scientists believe that the ancestors of the bacteria most likely lived in the ocean millions of years ago, yet when the glacier advanced, a pool of seawater was ultimately trapped by the glacier.

"How does an ecosystem function below glaciers? How are they able to persist below hundreds of meters of ice and live in permanently cold and dark conditions for extended periods of time, in the case of Blood Falls, over millions of years?" questioned Mikucki. While we may not know the answer to that question for now, additional explorations and tests will probably pro-

vide us with an explanation.

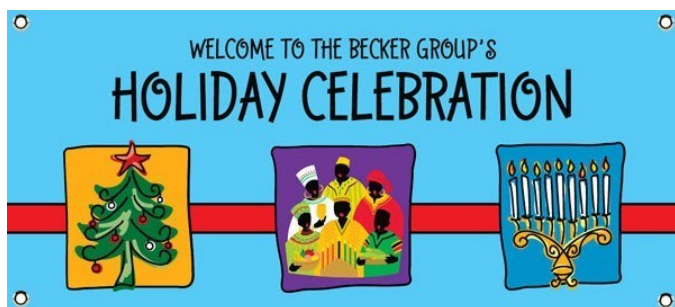
"John Prisco, of Montana State University, said that because the ecosystem has been isolated for so long in extreme conditions, it could help explain how life might exist on other planets, and serve as a model for how life can exist under ice," writes Randolph E. Schmid, AP Science Writer. Think about that. Eerie bacteria could be living under layers of ice on Mars—an interesting theory! Ohhhh!

Anyway, do not be frightened! The bacteria are harmless . . . right?



Information taken from <http://www.usnews.com/science/articles/2009/04/16/bacteria-found-thriving-beneath-antarctic-glacier>

## Traditions and Holidays in the Winter



By Shelby Wilson  
Staff Writer

When we think of winter traditions and holidays we think of Christmas. However, there are other winter holidays like, Chanukah, and many traditions that include Kwanza and Shab-e Yalda which is the eve of the winter solstice.

The history behind these holidays and traditions are very interesting and wonderful. One of the most well known winter holidays is Christmas. Many people think of Christmas as just Santa Clause, but it's actually a Christian holiday that celebrates Jesus Christ birth. Before they celebrate Christmas many Christians begin the Christmas season by celebrating a tradition called Advent. Many families start Advent this tradition by lighting the first of the four candles on their Advent wreath. These 4 candles represent the 4 weeks before Christmas. Another Christmas tradition is going to Christmas mass at their church to celebrate the birth of Christ the King.

Chanukah, also known as the festival of lights, is an 8 day Jewish holiday. During Chanukah a menorah is used to light eight candles. Traditionally many Jewish families sing special songs and recite special prayers. They also eat foods fried in oil called latkes and dairy foods. A lot of Jewish families playing a tradi-

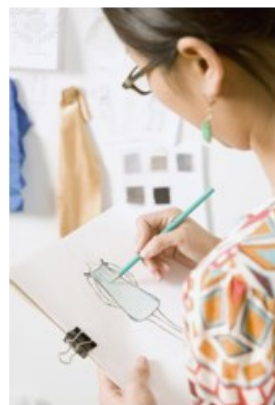
tional game called dreidel.

Kwanza was a weeklong holiday to give African-Americans a holiday. They use Kinas to light 7 candles. A Kinara is like a menorah but it has 7 candles instead of 8 candles. Traditionally Africans Americans decorate their houses with colorful African pictures to show their appreciation for the seven principles that make up Kwanza. These principles are unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

According to Mrs. Sobhani of Clarksburg, MD, Shab-e Yalda, is the longest night of the year and falls on December 21st this year. This Persian celebration, like many other celebrations it centers on food and friends. This wonderful celebration starts with a scrumptious dinner and "most importantly ends with fruits like watermelon and pomegranate, along with nuts and dried fruit. Activities common to the celebration of Yalda include staying up past midnight, conversation, eating, reading poems out loud, telling stories and jokes, and for some dancing. Decorating and lighting the house and yard with candles can also be part of the tradition.

## Fashion and Interior Design at RHMS

By Anita Thamarajah  
Editor



Images from Google

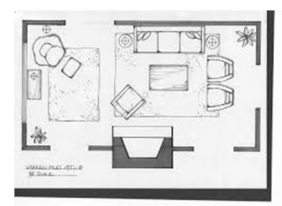
This year, a fun new class was introduced to Rocky Hill. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are allowed take a class specializing in fashion and interior design. The class is a semester course and the curriculum includes many fun activities that allow students to master designing rooms and clothing. The class is taught by Ms. Caviness in the FACS room. So far, there is only one of these classes per semester. "The class and the projects are fun and here are some really exciting people in the class." says Came.

The first unit is interior design. The students learn about different aspects of designing rooms such as flooring, window treatments, and accessories etc. They will also learn about drawing floor plans and the symbols that represent different kinds of furniture. The final project is designing your dream room in a box with homemade furniture. The second unit is fashion design. Students learn how to design clothing for different occasions and how to write descriptions of clothing worn by celebrities to widely known events.

The students sew clothes for themselves and for small little mannequins. Students also learn about fashion throughout the ages and keep up to date with the latest trends.

Mrs. Caviness started this class here, because she heard of a similar class that had been going on for years at Pyle Middle School in Bethesda. "I thought our students at RHMS would enjoy it also," Says Mrs. Caviness. "I used to make all my own clothes in middle school high school and college. I have always loved interior design, from the time I was a little girl."

The class is fun and entertaining. "My favorite part is making different designs of dresses in the sketchbooks." says Paola. There isn't a lot of hard work if you stay on task. If fashion or interior design is something you are really interested in, this would be a very informative class that may set a path for a career in design. "The best part is making the dream rooms" says Courtney. Mrs. Caviness adds "Everyone at some point will live in a house and have to decorate or furnish their house at some point in time. As for the fashion part of the class, when interviewing for a job the employer will often size up the candidate just by the way they are dressed and if their clothes are neat and clean and not torn and have missing buttons. People often forget that the skills in FACS courses are skills that everyone will use their entire life."



# Current Issues

## Charitable Donations: Society's Friend

Manav Mathur  
Assistant Chief Editor

Remember around Christmas time, when you pull up to your local grocery store and you see those people collecting money in the big red 'kettles'? Well, the Salvation Army, as the organization calls itself, is actually doing society a big favor by having these fundraisers.

The Salvation Army began in 1865, under the discretion of William Booth and his wife, Catherine. The organization back then was a little more religiously oriented, with Army "soldiers" stated that they were doing God's work. The Booths preached to the public, noting that anyone who was a member of society was welcome to the order. The Salvation Army was known for its efforts during the Galveston Hurricane of 1900 and the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. It operates in over 130 countries and provides their

services in over 175 languages. "The Salvation Army uses those nickels, dimes and quarters to provide after school programs, summer camps and toys for children during the holidays, and all in the community where they were donated," singer Selena Gomez states at a Dallas Cowboys game on November 28, 2013. The Salvation Army has become a real benefactor for those who cannot afford basic necessities and people who are struggling in today's times.

Whatever the case, there are many other organizations that are out there, working to give support to our struggling society. But what about the



Image from Google Images

money? That's right, you are donating to these organizations, but is the money worth donating? According to an article by Ken Berger, President and CEO of Charity Navigator, yes and no. "In rating thousands of charities since 2001, we've come to learn that while there are quite a few charity fraudsters, there are also many wonderful charities out there that are doing an amazing job of helping millions of people every day. Their stories and accomplishments can often get drowned out as public trust is damaged in all charities by the chicanery of the John Cody's of the world." Fraud

through the guise of charity is a rising trend in today's times, and sometimes causes your hard-earned money to be wasted. John Donald Cody, mentioned above, was convicted last month for a \$100 million US Navy Veterans' Association scam. He took on the identity of Bobby Thompson and scammed people by asking for donations over \$100,000. Such people can really tarnish the image of charities that are attempting to make a difference in this world.

As we start off 2014, we should remember that charities are one of the positive forces in society and we can help to make a difference by donating to these charities. However, we should also remember that there people who take advantage of charitable donations and squander all the hard-earned money of the public. So, next time when you think of donating to a charity, think of all the possible lives that could be changed forever with that \$1.

## New Year's Music

By Sooah Sohn  
Special Features Editor



Ah, New Year's! We reminisce about the countless memories we had with our friends and family as we listen to music that propels us into a future of hope. We recall hit songs that had been overplayed to the point of dizzying all who heard it, but now seem reminiscent of a year that will never come back. Overall, we feel... old. Old and sentimental.

What causes this sentiment? Perhaps it is the music that chivalrously bows to the occasions.

There are countless genres of music, with the fans of each one supporting it to the end of its days. From all over the world, talented (and not-so-talented) artists are begging for attention. Throughout history, music has been one of the prime subjects of attention. People use their voices, instruments and compositions to attempt to capture their audience's attention. Because of the innumerable tastes that differ from person to person, there are many genres and cultures that are missed in the field of music, with various fans supporting their preferences. All kinds of traditional and classical music are enjoyed by people all over the world, for hardly anyone is oblivious to names like Mozart and Beethoven.

But there are certain times during the year when the overall flow of music seems to be going the same way: holidays, especially in the Christmas time. Even if one doesn't know the lyrics to "Rudolph the Red

Nose Reindeer" by heart, their ears are certain to recognize the tune from passing people humming it during the holiday season. Somehow, the Holidays and New Year's seem to urge a kind of sentiment from somewhere deep inside us.

Singers release songs of longing and cheer, determination and despair- which they always do, but there's something different about the ones that appear during specific seasons. Some winter songs are awkward to sing or dance to during the summer time, when sleigh bells and snowflakes are not prominent. Music videos feature soft lighting, snow, and either an extremely happy or severely depressed background music. Of course, this is not to say this is for all songs, but the general flow of music seems to shape itself to the spirit of the people.

This is probably due to the uprising sense of duty to the events and traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation. A father strums a guitar in front of a fireplace and Christmas tree. In Korea, children and adults alike dress in traditional silk clothes as they sing and dance. And of course, there are the streets blaring music that sing of stories passed down from generation to generation wherever you go.

Music is something that comes from peoples' hearts, and goes out to touch someone else directly. This is what makes it beautiful and alluring, enveloping people in its comforting caress. Music feels good from both ends; both the artist and listener can enjoy it time and time again. This year, where will music take us? What new level of timelessness will we be able to look back on year after year? I look forward to the world's musical adventures; don't you?

## Remembering A Legend

Ms. Katie Odey  
Supervising Editor



Nelson Mandela  
1918-2013

Is it really possible for one man to impact a generation with an unwavering courage and dignity? Nelson Mandela's life is a testament to the power of one. His courage and humanity inspired millions around the world. On December 5, 2013 the world bade goodbye to an icon, who has been compared to legends like George Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. The fact that one man dared to challenge the evil of racial prejudice and endured hardship in small jail cell for twenty-seven years, is definitely noteworthy.

As a young teenager, I became aware of racial prejudice in South Africa through the novels and poetry written about South Africa. Mine Boy by Peter Abrahams explored the deplorable conditions of Black South Africans during the Apartheid regime. Cry My Beloved Country by Alan Paton explored racial segregation in that region. I remember dozens of "Free Mandela" campaigns, especially during my college years. People around the world organized campaigns urging the Apartheid regime in South Africa to free Mandela. Who was Nelson Mandela?

He was born in Mvezo on July 18, 1918. As a young boy, Mandela learned about the valor of his ancestors and dreamed of making contribution to his country. He stud-

ied and obtained a law degree at the University of Witwatersrand. During his tenure as the leader of the African National Congress, ANC, he encouraged his supporters to emulate the non-violent approach of Gandhi. In spite of his non-violent approach, in 1962, Mandela was accused of plotting to overthrow the government by violence.

On June 12, 1964, Mandela and seven others were sentenced to life imprisonment. After his sentencing, Mandela made his famous Speech from the Dock on April 20 1964. Mandela said, "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the idea of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if need be, it is an idea for which I am prepared to die."

Mandela spent part of his 27-year prison term in Robben Island, off the coast of Cape Town. His years of confinement were marked with campaigns all over the world demanding his freedom. After pressure from the international community, Mandela was released on February 11, 1990. He continued to campaign for justice and equality for all South Africans, and in 1993 he won a Nobel Peace Prize. One year later he was elected president and became the first black president of South Africa.

After leaving office, Mandela continued to campaign for justice for his country and around the world. He established organizations aimed at addressing global issues. When Nelson Mandela died in December, over 90,000 people and about 100 world leaders, including President Obama, attended his memorial service. For most people, Mandela was not just a national hero; he was a global icon for peace and reconciliation.

# Today's Technology

By Kai Hu  
Tech Editor

The PS4, released on November 15, 2013, arrived just in time for the holiday season! According to VG Charts, the last PlayStation platform, the PS3, had an astounding 82.41 million total units of sale worldwide. Compared to that, the PS4 has a sale of 4.38 million units (and counting). This may seem like a large gap (and it is), but remember that the PS4 is a recent release whereas the PS3 came out precisely 7 years and 4 days before the PS4.

So what's so great about the PS4 anyway? Well, according to [www.IBtimes.com](http://www.IBtimes.com), the PS4 system revolves around a powerful custom chip that contains eight x86-64 cores and a state of the art 1.84 TFLOPS graphics processor with 8 GB of mega-fast GDDR5 unified system memory, easing game creation and increasing the richness of content available on the platform.

Also, if you are going to buy the PS4 then you will probably want PlayStation Plus. Even though the PlayStation network for the PS3 was free for users, Sony decided to take a cue from Microsoft (NASDAQ:MSFT) and charge subscribers \$50 per year. PlayStation Plus allows players to interact online and play games with their friends. You will also need PlayStation Plus to gain PS4's feature that automatically downloads game updates when the system is suspended. However, you will not need the added service to use video services like Amazon Prime, Netflix and Hulu on your

## PS4



new PS4.

For all of you that love indie games, more indie games will be available for the PS4. Sony has publicly been working closely with indie game developers for the past few years to build games for its next-gen PS4. At E3 in June, the company announced that more than a dozen indie titles would be coming to PS4 after its November release date. Some of the titles include Compulsion Games' "Contrast," Human Nature Studios' "Doki-Doki Universe" and Helldivers' from developer Arrowhead Game Studios!

When you first buy your PS4, you will get the necessities plus a headset. Much like the PS3, the PlayStation 4 comes with the system itself, a power cable, an HDMI cable, a Dual Shock 4 controller and a USB cable; but unlike the PS3, the PS4 will be released with a mono headset

for players to talk to one another. Unfortunately, the HDMI is the only connection that works with the console. So, if you are still playing your PS3 on an old 13-inch Panasonic television set, the time to hit Best Buy (or at least your parents' living room) has come. The Dual Shock 4 controller also comes with a charging cable, but other PS4 controllers purchased elsewhere will not include this cable.

You can purchase the PS4 right now for \$399. Simple, right? The PS4 is currently available in 32 countries, including Canada, the United States, Latin America, Australia, and Europe, and will be released in Japan on February 22. The PlayStation 4 is \$100 cheaper than the Xbox One, coming in at \$399. Despite the \$50 that gamers must pay for premium subscription service PlayStation Plus, the smaller price

tag may make the PS4 more appealing for buyers who do not want to spend a ton of money.

Like any of its competitors, the console is not without its glitches. This is to be expected, and Sony will probably remedy these bugs soon enough through a software update. Some users claimed to have had problems logging into the PlayStation network due to the high number of new users. Others reported that the console will freeze during gameplay and downloads. You should always be patient with your new console and network, since some kinks come unexpectedly, when many gamers are playing simultaneously.

Do you have a PlayStation 4? If so, what do you think about Sony's latest system? Are you planning to purchase a PS4 now that its release date has arrived? If you have any comments you can publish them on the Wildcat Roar blog or tell one of the staff writers!



## Kindle Fire HDX 7

By Manav Mathur  
Assistant Chief Editor

The Kindle family by Amazon has just expanded: the new Kindle Fire HDX 7 is the newest addition to the gang, boasting new features, a lighter, sleeker frame, a powerful interior, and tons of content to browse for on the Amazon market, with over 200 apps to choose from.

Firstly, the Kindle Fire HDX 7 brags a matte-black soft-touch plastic finish on the back that makes it strong as well as provides a firm grip. And even though the overall design might seem different to you, the tablet feels extremely comfortable in the hands. The exterior may be great, but the interior is one of the most powerful on the shelves.

The Qualcomm Snapdragon 800 chipset may be one of the most powerful chipsets on the market. Combine that with the 2.2GHz quad-core processor, and you've got a blazing fast and super-functional core. It runs on an Android 4.2 Jelly Bean operating system and a lithium-ion battery that lasts up to 11 hours between charges. The user interface is clean and not difficult to use. The tablet also features a power button and volume control on the back of the tablet. Kindle Fire HDX 7 also features LTE connectivity, but with a substantially higher price. Amazon



gave the tablet its name after its HDX display, which features a 1920x1200 pixel display with a pixel density of 323ppi.

The Kindle Fire HDX has 100% RGB color accuracy, an impressive feat, and you'll notice the difference straight away. Movies look fantastic while images are rich and vibrant. The easiest way of describing it is by taking an image, pressing the 'enhance' button and then viewing everything through that filter. However, users have noticed a small, faint blue tinge around the edges of the screen due to the use of blue LED's as a means of getting that kind of color accuracy.

While Amazon's own services; Silk, Lovefilm, Kindle, etc. are incredibly well thought out and polished, the rest of Amazon's App Store is strictly controlled which

means the chaos of choice found on Google Play is nowhere to be seen here. What this essentially means is you won't find YouTube, Google Drive, Google Maps or even Google Music. Instead, Amazon is hoping you'll commit to their own content providers. Thankfully, this isn't such a compromise as Amazon has some of the best content available thanks to Lovefilm, Amazon CloudPlayer and of course the diverse Kindle store. If you happen to have a Prime membership, the offerings get even better with access to over 350,000 titles which you can borrow at your heart's content for no extra charge.

The Kindle Fire HDX 7 may not seem as different from its precedents, but it does have a service that will outshine its progenitors: Mayday. The main 'help desk' of the new Kindle, it allows you to com-

Images from Google

municate with a customer representative from Amazon face-to-face. If you plan to gift this tablet to your friend or family member who isn't on the technology side, Mayday is going to be a life saver for them! Once you activate Mayday, you can talk to the representative directly, and you will get the solution to your problems without leaving your home! The representative will be able to draw on your screen remotely to help you, and can also take control of your device and fix the issue right in front of you. The service is free of cost and is available 24/7.

So for the new tablet season of 2014, put the Kindle Fire HDX 7 on your wish list. A stripped-down version (no LTE, ad removal, etc.) costs around \$209, while a fully equipped version costs around \$409. This tablet is certainly one of the best tablets that has shined their ever-shrinking screen towards the public eye.



# Entertainment

## #Throwback To 2013

By Navyada Koshatwar  
Staff Writer

This past year has certainly had its ups and downs, with tons of dumb trends, ridiculous fashions, and innovative inventions. Right when we thought Gangnam Style was “it,” the Harlem Shake immediately arose to take its place. The Android vs. Apple battle raged on. Viral video “The Fox” made fans question what foxes say for months. Pope Francis was elected in November and was later elected Person of the Year 2013. The eventful year flashed by faster than you can say “selfie,” which, by the way, was named Word of the Year.

Technology made significant advancements during the year. We no longer have to pull out a phone or computer. Now with the Google Glass and Pebble Smartwatch, we have access to hundreds of apps without even lifting a finger. “Gamers” everywhere raced to get the Xbox one, and Grand Theft Auto V. Motorola released the popular Moto X. Apple came out with the iPhone 5, iPhone 5S/5C and iPad mini. You can now get a custom made case for your iPhone by having it made with 3D printers which are now being used to make more complex objects like working cars and medicines. You can even send in your own design and have it 3D printed for you on special websites. Then you can have it shipped to you through Amazon’s proposed Prime Air, which involves drones flying through the sky to deliver packages.

Every year, newer and stranger trends sprout up on the In-



ternet. The year kicked off with millions of Harlem Shake videos on YouTube and people screaming “Ain’t nobody got time for that!” everywhere they went. The battle between Vine and Instagram began. We soon saw the rise of the Advice Mallard, a random duck who gives off good pieces of advice. And soon after the Harlem Shake buzz died down, Ylvis came out with the music video for “The Fox,” which now has over 330 million views, despite the rather daft lyrics. A picture of a Shiba Inus dog named Doge who makes grammatically incorrect comments made his way across the web.

As one celebrity falls, another

takes the throne. Named by People Magazine, Kate Middleton and Prince Williams were the most “buzzed” stars in the last year. With the birth of baby George Alexander Louis, it’s no wonder that they gained popularity so quickly! They were closely followed by Kim Kardashian, an actress on the reality series *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*. Finally in fourth place came the ever-so-famous Miley Cyrus. Her new songs as well as her new look and attitude helped with her publicity. Pope Francis took the prestigious title of TIME Magazine’s Person of the Year. His fair, open-minded, and generally sweet personality is hard to

come by when a single person is given so much power; so naturally, he gained popularity from Catholics and non-Catholics everywhere *in mere days*.

As with every year, the AFI released their list of the best and worst movies and TV shows of the year. “The Americans,” starring Keri Russell, topped the list for best TV show with only two seasons so far. “Breaking Bad,” starring Bryan Cranston, followed closely with a staggering 9.6/10 rating on IMDb. The movie of the year was “12 Years A Slave.” The movie won a Golden Globe Award and 97% of the users on Rotten Tomatoes thought it was “fresh.” The song of the year was, not surprisingly, “Blurred Lines” by Robin Thicke ft. Pharrell and T.I. The second most popular was—also quite predictably—“Thrift Shop” by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis.

The most searched term on Google in the entire year was, sadly, the “Boston Marathon.” Then came the government shutdown which was one of the more unusual occurrences of 2013. Malala Yousafzai showed us what it meant to fight for our rights. Cristiano Ronaldo was named best soccer player in the world. We will forever miss Paul Walker, Cory Monteith, Nelson Mandela, Talia Joy, and many more as we move into 2014. Overall, smiles were cracked, tragedies struck, and the world changed over the last year. That is what brought us together. So together, we move on to celebrate another year on the beautiful and weird planet we call Earth.

## DIY Marble Run!

(Idea and pictures from <http://www.momtastic.com>)

By Mahi Gnatra  
Staff Writer

### Supplies:

Straws  
Cardboard box, any size  
Scissors  
Tape  
Glue  
Marbles

Tightly tape the sides of the box. Cut off the top part of the box with scissors.



Add more tape around the sides and inside to secure any loose pieces.



Cut a piece of straw an inch shorter than the length of your box and glue it down.

You might want to think for a minute what you want the design to look like and then cut and glue accordingly. Make sure the spaces are large enough for the marbles you’ll be using.



When you’re done, cut a small hole large enough for the marble at the start and finish of the maze.



Insert the marble through the hole and tilt the box very gently so the marble will go through the maze correctly.



## Have Fun Playing Sudoku

5	4		2	9			1
			5				4
		7				9	
8			3			6	7
			6	5			
9	3			1			2
		1				6	
2					6		
3			1	7			4 9

6		5	7	2			3 9
4					5	1	
		2		1			4
		9			3		7 6
1			8		9		5
2		4		5			8
8					3		2
			2	9			
3	5			6	7	4	
							1
							8

Created by Anusha Chinthalapate