

The Wildcat Roar

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Rocky Hill Spelling Bee Champ

By: Sakshi Narula
Staff Writer

Can you spell Pantheistic? Raffae can! On March 7, 2015 6th grader Raffae Chowdhury participated in the Montgomery County Regional Spelling Bee. Raffae had a big competition and out of many hard rounds, he took home the trophy. While on stage he mentioned how his English teacher, Mrs. Rye, would be proud of him and proud she was. It is challenging for people who participate in the spelling bee because they have to learn many hard words. When they get up to spell the word they can get nervous. Raffae worked hard to get to where he is now and he deserves the trophy. Spelling bees consist of many words that you have to study, and giving up hours of your challenging middle school day to practice them. Raffae studied very long and hard, and he is representing Rocky Hill very well.

Raffae's win can really help him a lot. This was an incredible opportunity for him and he seized it. He is now going to compete in the National Scripps Spelling Bee in May. The Spelling Bee is going to be held at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center. Raffae was awarded a 6 night stay at the Gaylord Resorts during the spelling bee week! He was also awarded an enormous Merriam-Webster dictionary, an online subscription to Encyclopedia Britannica for a year, and a set of coin proofs (which are special early samples of certain coins), from the US Mint! He is very fortunate to

come this far and if he makes it into the finals we might see him on ESPN.

Raffae wrote a short essay on how he first got interested in spelling bees and how he did so well. Raffae wrote...

"I first got interested in spelling in 2nd grade when our school announced that there was a spelling bee. I did the school spelling bee two years in a row. Despite staying in the competition up to seventh grade words, I never won. I never did it again until this year! With me being in middle school, with a couple years of advanced English classes, and lots of reading for pleasure under my belt, I decided to enter the spelling bee. Mrs. Rye told me I scored the highest among all her classes! I didn't think I would win the RHMS Spelling Bee, but I won as we all already know! Then it was a long

month of studying for the Regionals. I studied 1000+ words for the Regional.

And enter the final round! There were only two people left on the stage - me and my competitor. She spelled her word incorrectly and I spelled my word right. The word was Osmium. Then, I had to spell just one more word correctly to win the Spelling Bee. Otherwise, the two of us had to start another round of spelling. The pronouncer gave me a word to spell - Pantheistic. I was not familiar with the word, so I asked for language of origin and definition. I had the pronouncer repeat the word multiple times to make sure I was understanding, and saying the word correctly. I had probably asked every question when I realized, that the "theist" part was also in "atheist"



Raffae holding the winning trophy

because the definition told me "Pantheistic" had something to do with God. With that information in mind, I was sure I could spell it. So I spelled out the word and when the Judges said "That is correct", it took me couple of seconds to realize I just won the Regional Spelling Bee and will be representing Montgomery County at the Scripps National Spelling Bee!

Now, I am studying very hard with the help of my mom and I am very excited for the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Studying for Nationals is very different from School or Regional Spelling Bee. I am learning "Roots" from different languages and how they infiltrated English language over time. The Regional Spelling Bee will be held from May 24 - May 29 at the Gaylord Resort and Convention Center, and will be broadcasted on ESPN. I will be competing with 250+ other spellers from around the country. Wish me luck!"

We all wish Raffae the best. We are proud of what he accomplished. This is an amazing feat and Raffae certainly deserves it. Congratulations to Raffae and good luck at Nationals!



Raffae

The 14th Annual Willpower Game on "The Hill"



The 14th Willpower Game will take place on Friday, May 8, 2015. Be a part of this awesome program that has raised over \$100,000 for Susan G. Komen, PanCAN, and The Childhood Brain Tumor Foundation

There is something for everyone!

5pm-7pm: Dinner, Silent Auction, moon bounces, dunk tank, and more!
7PM: Parents vs. Staff basketball game and Principal's challenge!

Donations taken at the door

Tickets for sale that evening for the moon bounces, etc
Join us for an evening of fun for the whole family!

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Editorial Page

Drones: A Blessing or A Curse

By Ronak Tallur
Staff Writer

What do you think about drones? Are they safe or are they dangerous? There are many different point-of-views, but recently, many events have occurred to change how people think about drones.

At about 3 AM on January 26th, 2015, an inebriated, off-duty employee for a government intelligence agency decided to fly his friend's 2 foot by 2 foot drone "quadcopter." He lost control of the drone from his apartment, which is a few miles away from the White House. He texted his friends, worried it may have gone down on White House grounds. However, it wasn't until the next morning that he learned that it had in fact landed on White House grounds.

Immediately, he called the Secret Service, and began cooperating with an investigation into the incident. The drone was classified as not dangerous. At the time, President Obama and his family were in India. However, the situation has raised concerns not only for the safety of the Obama family, but for the safety of everyone, in general, because we never know when drones might show up and cause a major catastrophe.

Over the past few years, the Secret Service air branch has been hard at work, studying ways to stop small drones that could be used for terrorist attacks. A spokesman for a geospatial-intelligence agency named Don Kerr said that the employee who was flying the drone was using a "personal item." The employee was not named.

Although planes are not allowed in the airspace near the White House and it is illegal to operate a



drone in Washington, it is unclear whether the man will be charged with a crime. The drone is the latest safety concern at the White House. It occurred four months after a man climbed the White House fence with a knife, and made it deep inside the building before being tackled by guards. In 2011, a gunman fired at the White House, while one of the Obama daughters was inside the house. President Obama said, "The drone that flew onto the White House grounds was one that you could buy at RadioShack." Amazon was trying to use drones to deliver packages to customers. However, the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) made rules that makes sure users must stay within eyesight of their drone.

There is also concern with how high drones can fly. They can only fly up to 700 feet above ground. However, some drones fly higher than they are allowed to. These drones are bringing a lot of concern to the government, because if these drones are not restricted from how high they can fly, there is a chance that they collide with Commercial Jets, and cause full-scale catastrophes. The drones cannot fly within 5 miles of an airport. Another thing for drone users to think about is that, for example, we are starting to see more birds crashing into airplanes. Unfortunately, we cannot control birds. We certainly *can* control drones. Drone users need to start being more responsible with drones, so they do not cause disasters.



Pizza companies are trying to get use drones to deliver pizza, but the FAA is trying to shut down such theories. They are also trying to ban drones from flying over people. However, the FAA has authorized unmanned aircraft systems to fly in a wide area in North Dakota, so the industry can use these results for research.

This topic is an ongoing debate. Many people believe that the drone crashing into the White House should make the government put strict laws on flying drones. Others think that the drone crashing into the White House was just an accident, and that it won't happen again. But what's to say that a terrorist doesn't try to use a drone to pull off an attack? The government is putting laws into effect and evaluating other concerning topics on this heated drone debate. But all we know is that there are many possibilities for how the government can handle drones, and the decisions haven't yet been made.

"I think drones should be illegal," said our very own eighth grade World Studies teacher, Mr. Grimes.

It raises privacy and safety concerns, not to mention some of the illegal activities that people could perpetrate using drones. Just imagine taking a walk on a warm summer day, and all of a sudden, a drone flies over your head and takes a picture of you, and possibly misuses it (posting it on Instagram, Facebook, and other social media websites).

The other major problem is a question that many people are starting to ask. What if drones become a new fad? What if about five to ten years from now, everybody has their own personal drone? The new technology is becoming so vital to people that everybody seems to have their own piece of technology. What if people start misusing drones (like people misuse social media) and use it not only to spy on other people, but to try to hurt or bully other people? That could become a major problem that people desperately want to avoid.

To prevent things like this from happening, the FAA is passing major drone laws. According to an article in the Associated Press, drone industry officials have said that they are teaming up with the government and model aircraft hobbyists to launch a safety campaign. The campaign includes a website — www.knowbeforeyoufly.com — which advises both recreational and commercial drone operators of FAA regulations and how to fly their unmanned aircraft safely. "In just a few days, kids old and young will unwrap presents, and many of them — maybe tens of thousands — will have unmanned aircraft," Michael Toscano, president of the unmanned vehicle association, said in a conference call with reporters. "This technology is very accessible and in very high demand, but information on how to fly safely isn't readily available. That's why we've created this safety campaign."

Technology is changing the way we think. We're at a vital crossroads, and we have to decide whether we let technology rule us or us rule technology.

What Have we Learned?

Ms. Katie Odey
Supervising Editor

After the recent shooting of an unarmed man in South Carolina, most of us gasped with the expression, "not again." The thought of reading and listening to news about another shooting involving yet another police officer and another unarmed black man makes me wonder what lessons we have learned. If the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson taught us anything, it should be that police officers are not immune to bad judgment. The death of Eric Garner in New York also sparked protests around the country. Whether it was a terrible mistake or police brutality, these actions by the police have had deadly consequences, making it difficult to trust the people whose job it is to protect us.

The death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri sparked a nationwide debate over the issue of race and policing. It seemed to evoke Dr. Martin Luther King's reference to police brutality in his famous, *I Have a Dream* speech. I would sincerely hope that race had nothing to do with Officer Michael Slager's decision to shoot an unarmed black man, who was actually running away. If that is the case, then we still have a lot to

learn about racial tolerance and racial equality.

The shooting of 50 year-old Walter Scott in South Carolina is once again raising questions about policing and the decision to use deadly weapon. Speaking to reporters after the incident, North Charleston mayor, Keith Summey told reporters, "When you're wrong, you're wrong. And if you make a bad decision -- don't care if you're behind the shield or just a citizen on the street -- you have to live by that decision."

The bigger picture is the value of human life. According to the attorney for the Scott family, L. Chris Stewart, in CNN interview, "This is a bigger issue of human life and the value of it, and when people start respecting that more it won't matter what color you are." As a civilized society, we pride ourselves in human dignity in spite of our race, yet we engage in actions that do not represent who we are. When two police officers, Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos, were ambushed and shot to death in their parked patrol car in Brooklyn, New York, we had to face another painful episode of people losing their lives for no just cause. For one thing, we were reminded of the dangers that law enforcement officers face on daily basis.

The video showing the shooting of Walter Scott in South Carolina helps us to know what really happened, but you have to wonder what the case would be if someone had not caught the shooting on tape. As the facts emerge in this case, we have to remember that a life has been lost. There was the issue of the broken taillight and the suspect running away. Does his action warrant him being shot to death?

The recent riots in Baltimore following the death of Freddie Gray in police custody on April 19 has brought us back to the same issue of police actions towards black men. Once again, the authorities are conducting a "thorough" investigation. Sadly no amount of investigation will bring Freddie Gray back. At the end of the day, it boils down to citizens doing their jobs and obeying the law.

We teach our children to do the right thing. It is a matter of making a conscious decision to do what is right even if no one is watching or video taping. When we value the lives of others, we will learn to help and not destroy them. More importantly, we will learn to do the right thing.

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Rocky Hill Page

The Man With Many Faces

By: Aleysha Varghese
Staff Writer

Mr. Lucas, is a fun, exciting, exuberant, responsible teacher, who teaches 7th grade. Mr. Lucas is very exuberant and sings, dances, and lets students interact with the famous, Mr. Buck. The Wildcat ROAR was fortunate enough to get an interview with the great world studies teacher, Mr. Brian Lucas.

TWR: How long have you been teaching?

Mr. Lucas: I have been teaching for 24 years.

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

Mr. Lucas: I am honored to have been selected for teacher of the month. Thank you for thinking of me, for I am very lucky to work with such great students and staff members here at Rocky Hill Middle.

TWR: What makes you special?

Mr. Lucas: I feel special because of all the love that my mom and dad have given me throughout the years. I also feel special because of my wonderful family at home: Michelle, Kelsey and Braydon.

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

Mr. Lucas: I want my students to know that I care about them and that



Mr. Lucas

they can come talk to me about issues other than World Studies. I have a dog, two chickens and an old red pickup truck. I enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, gardening and doing yard work. I am currently the President of the Maryland Horseshoe Pitcher's Association, so if you are interested in pitching in tournaments go to horseshoepitching.com and find out some great information. I have pitched in two World Horseshoe tournaments and many State Championships. Finally, I am the biggest Pittsburgh Steelers Fan, this side of the Mississippi. (Pirates and Penguins too) If you see me in the halls around Rocky Hill, please say "Hi."

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

Mr. Lucas: I have learned many lessons throughout my 24 years of teaching 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades. However,

the one that sticks out in my mind the most is to always have a bright light on when getting dressed for school. I came into work one morning to discover that I had two different colored socks on and that my tie did not match my shirt. Another lesson that I learned early on in my career was NOT to bring wild ringed-necked pheasants into a classroom. Yeah...they like to fly. Just saying.

TWR: Why did you become a teacher?

Mr. Lucas: I became a teacher because I wanted to make a difference in people's lives. My dad, aunt and uncle were teachers and I had a lot of memorable teachers throughout my life that affected me as a person. I enjoy helping students realize their potential and guiding them in the right direction toward success.

TWR: What other schools or grades have you taught?

Mr. Lucas: I started my career in Frederick County teaching 3rd and 5th grades at Monocacy Elementary. I also taught the same grades at Cedar Grove Elementary for eleven years. From Cedar Grove, I moved to Fields Road Elementary School in Gaithersburg, MD. I've now graduated to middle school at Rocky Hill. I love my job very much and hope to be here for a long time.

When Spring Has Sprung

The way you know,
Spring has sprung,

Are by the bees,
Buzzing around.

The way you know,
Spring has sprung,

Is by the sun,
Shining hard and bright,

Upon our soon-to-be
tanned skin.

The way you know,
Spring has sprung,

Is when the crickets chirp,
Peacefully,

As you drift off to sleep,
Dreaming,

Of another day,
When spring has sprung.

By Anusha Chinthalapale

Sam Moore Blood & Toy Drive

"We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we can only fly by embracing one another" ~Luciano De Crescenzo



The Moore Family

By Shelby Wilson
Editor

According to the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation website (www.curethekids.org), "Everyday, 13 children in the United States are diagnosed with a brain tumor." In addition, the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation states that "This is one of the deadliest forms of childhood cancer." In order to save these innocent children impacted by brain tumors, research and funding are desperately needed. Organizations such as the *Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation* and *The Childhood Brain Tumor Foundation* located in Germantown, Maryland, work passionately to support and raise money for patients and families who are impacted by childhood brain tumors.

On August 2011, Sam Moore lost his hard-fought battle against brain cancer. In honor of Sam

Moore's remembrance and courage, Ms. Tippet organizes a blood and toy drive here at RHMS. This year on February 10th, 2015 the toys that were collected were given to children who are currently going through treatment for pediatric brain tumors.

This blood drive demonstrates commitment to saving children's lives and bringing them love while they are going through treatment. Together we can all be angels for one another by raising money and reaching out to kids like Sam Moore. As Mr. De Crescenzo said, "We are each of us angels with only one wing and we can only fly by embracing one another." Let us embrace one another to make a difference in the lives of children who are ill and need a lot of love and compassion.

Wildcat Counselors

"The Door is Always Open"

By Shelby Wilson
Editor

February 2nd to 6th is recognized as National Counselors Week. Our team consist of Mrs. Arce, 7th and 8th grade counselors, Mrs. Kiernan, counselor services secretary Mr. Maruskin, 7th grade counselor Mr. Marvel, 6th grade counselor Mrs. Reed, and Mrs. Yi the 8th grade counselor. One brief look at our Rocky Hill website and we can see that they care immensely about us as students. Their motto is, "Our door is always open."

I had the privilege of interviewing Mr. Maruskin, a 7th grade counselor, some questions about his job as a counselor.

The Wildcat Roar: "What is your favorite part about being a counselor?"

Mr. Maruskin: "My favorite part about being a counselor is helping and supporting people. Being there for students when they're not at their best."

The Wildcat Roar: "What do you enjoy most at Rocky Hill?"

Mr. Maruskin: "The students and the staff. The friendliness and kindness of the people create a wonderful atmosphere."

The Wildcat Roar: "What skills do you believe a middle school student needs to become the best person they can be?"

Mr. Maruskin: "Learning from mistakes and how the students are going to make things better from their mistakes. Also learning how to advocate for yourself and being kind."

The Wildcat Roar: "How would



you describe a normal day for a counselor?"

Mr. Maruskin: "There is no normal day for a counselor, everything changes hour by hour. There are different things that happen every day."

The counselors at Rocky Hill have many things to do. They make 6th grade orientation videos for the upcoming 6th graders as well as new student tip sheets so that our school year and the beginning of our middle school career is a success. They also allow you to ask for help with notes that you can write, and once the counselors receive them they will come and talk to you. Our counselors are great resources for students who need SSL guidance.

We don't need a special week to thank the counselors for the amazing work they do for us. We can say "Thank You" anytime for helping us find our way through school and life. Giving us guidance to choose right from wrong and helping us through situations that might make us feel uncomfortable are worth saying thank you all year long.

Thank you counselors for your care and concern. We appreciate it. We will take your care and support and use it for the future that lies ahead of us.

Writer's Corner

Deranged

By Lahari
Assistant Chief Editor

"Brooklyn! Get up, what happened? Are you okay?" I jolted awake and my hands flew to my head. There was a high-pitched hum resounding in my head and I waited until it stopped before looking up at my roommate, Eleanor. It was just a nightmare . . .

"Brooklyn, are you okay? Oh my god, you're burning up. Wait here, let me go get you some water." As soon as she finished her sentence, Eleanor ran out of the room. I looked over at my alarm clock that read '9:42 AM' and quickly realized that I would be late for my first class.

"Here, Brooklyn," Eleanor handed me a cold glass of water, "what happened?" She sat down beside me, and I pushed myself into a more comfortable sitting position. I racked my brain trying to find the reason for my incessant screaming, but all that I could recount was a fragile girl curled up on her bathroom floor.

"I-I don't remember much, but the image of a girl crying on a bathroom floor keeps popping into my head." I tightened my fingers around the glass before drinking the entire thing. I glanced over at the clock again, '9:57 AM' and groaned.

"Eleanor we're going to be so late for AP Sociology—did you drop Octavia at her bus stop?" My 13 year old sister lived with us because I didn't have the heart to leave her at home with my parents. Even though Octavia was a pain, she was still my baby sister.

"Yeah, obviously, I'm kind of glad that she wasn't here when you had your episode. She looks up to you so much and she'd have probably refused to go to school." I grimly smiled, Eleanor was like another sister to Octavia.

"Okay, okay, we gotta go." I said before shoving my duvet off of my legs. I quickly pushed myself out of my bed only to fall to the ground—my knees buckling underneath me.

Eleanor grabbed my arm before my knees could slam onto the plush carpet. I felt a flash of recognition at the situation I was in.

Her breath came out in short puffs and breathing became harder as time passed. Her knees slammed down onto the cold bathroom tile and she curled up into a fetus position.

What was happening?

I pushed Eleanor's helping hand off of me and ran to the adjoining bathroom. Eleanor's surprised face was the last thing I saw before I slammed the bathroom door shut.

Eleanor knocked on the door, asking me what was wrong.

"N-nothing, don't worry about me." I stammered before sitting down on the closed toilet seat. I sighed and looked below me at the red and white bathroom tile.

The blood drop seemed to fall in slow motion. Multiple drops followed, all dropping on her pale skin.

I jolted with the sudden remembrance of my nightmare. I couldn't comprehend the events following my awakening. What happened to the girl and why was I having dreams about it?

I popped open the bottle of Advil and shook out three pills for my pounding headache. My thoughts were going haywire about the girl. Maybe if I knew what she looked like, my mind would be a little more at ease. A little more relieved that the girl wasn't me. It was stupid. The girl couldn't be me, I mean the nightmare wasn't a memory.

I massaged my temples; just *thinking* about the girl made my headache intensify. I swallowed the pills and leaned against the granite counter in our kitchen.

Eleanor entered the room warily with her messenger bag slung over her shoulder. She sent a small smile my way before grabbing a granola bar. I almost chuckled at the way she was acting around me.

"Hey, Eleanor. You headed out for class?" I watched her as she nodded and then slipped the granola bar into her bag before waving at me and leaving. I picked up my bag from the floor and left for a class that I was already late to.

"Hey! Brooklyn, wait up!" A familiar voice shouted from behind me. I abruptly turned around and the person and I collided, causing me to drop all of my papers. I grumbled to myself before squatting down to pick up my papers. Hands appeared from above and I looked up to see who it was.

I grinned, the troubles of my fluttering papers forgotten. "Ah, Michael Clifford, why is it that every time we meet, we drop something?"

Michael's eyes twinkled as he smiled, "It's probably because you're so *drop* dead gorgeous." I laughed at his futile attempts at flirting. I had met Michael through Octavia—Octavia's best friend Ember was Michael's younger sister. Michael and I—literally—bumped into each other the first day of Octavia's eighth grade school year and immediately became close.

"So listen, I wanted to know if it's alright if I come over to your flat so we can study for our AP Horticulture exam." I gathered my papers with Michael's help before replying.

"Yeah of course, come over around 5." Michael gave me a thumbs up before turning around and jogging over to his car. My day of classes was finally over. After attending two classes, both of which were two hours long, I was ready to fall asleep on my feet.

It was already 4:53 so I decided to finally get off of my laptop. I got up to stretch my sore muscles. Mid-stretch, the doorbell rang.

"I got it!" Octavia yelled. She'd been home for about two hours and she was submerged in her homework, too. Eleanor had texted me a few minutes ago telling me that she wouldn't be home until 10 or so.

I took my books with me to the living room and noticed a small blonde talking to Octavia. I wasn't surprised that Ember was here; Octavia and Ember were attached at the hip.

Michael noticed my silent presence in the corner and came over

to hug me. I chuckled into his shoulder when Ember squealed. I withdrew from Michael's hug only to be tackled into another one from Ember.

"Ember! You never talk to me anymore, am I too uncool for you?" I asked smiling at her.

She giggled, "No, of course not. In fact you're way cooler than Michael will ever be." I turned to Michael who feigned to be hurt by his sister's words.

"In fact, since you're so cool, I was hoping you'd let Octavia and I go to the Ark." I looked at her with a questioning look.

"What's the Ark?" I asked looking at Ember.

"It's this new café down the street, so can we go? Please?" Octavia interrupted with a hopeful look. I nodded making the two girls squeal and run out the door.

"Just be home before—and they left. Okay then..." I trailed off before looking over at a smiling Michael.

"Okay, weirdo, get yourself comfortable. I'm going to go use the restroom, I have a stomach ache *and* a headache." I patted the couch and left to go to the restroom. It seemed that Octavia had just taken a shower because the entire mirror was fogged up.

My stomach ache got worse and it was almost as though I could feel my inner demons clawing at my insides. I hunched over, feeling the devil twist around, torturing me. I lifted my heavy head to look at my distorted reflection in the foggy mirror. The room was freezing and to make matters worse, I was terrified. With trembling fingers, I reached up to clear the dew. My eyes were completely black—I couldn't even see a hint of the vibrant green eyes that were present just a few minutes ago. What was happening to me? What was wrong with me? I clenched my hand into a fist as I felt another beast struggle to be dominant within me. I could hear the whispers of my night-

mares surround me. My breath came out in short puffs and breathing became harder as time passed. My knees slammed down onto the cold bathroom tile and I curled up into a fetus position.

The voices were getting louder, but there was one that made me clutch my head. It was screaming, yelling, telling me to let go. Telling me to give up and break. I nodded and looked up at the ceiling and whimpered when I saw the blood on the ceiling. The blood drop seemed to fall in slow motion. Multiple drops followed, all landing on my pale skin. I cringed and squeezed my eyes shut only to be greeted with horrid images of myself. My eyes snapped open and I pushed the flimsy bathroom door open. My weak arms used the door to help pull myself up while the voices kept shrieking. I screamed and doubled over as another monster stirred inside me. I was crying hysterically and reached up to wipe away my tears. What I saw on my hands made me crumble to the floor again. My hands came away with crimson blood. *My eyes were bleeding.*

"Brooklyn! Calm down! What is going on?" Michael stumbled out of the living room and crouched down beside me. He shifted my head up to look him in the eyes.

"My eyes! Michael, my eyes! They're bleeding, a-and I don't know what to do..." I shouted before lowering my voice to a whisper, "help me, please."

"What? What blood? Brooklyn, you're eyes are not bleeding."

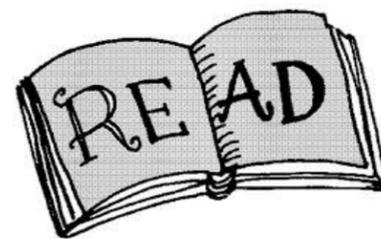
"Y-yes they are. Here look at my hands, there's blood all over them a-and there was blood on the ceiling. My eyes are black and," I showed him my hands, which were dripping blood. *So much blood.* I hear so many voices screaming at me to let go and stop fighting them. Michael, what is happening to me?" I cried out. Michael looked at me bewildered, even *he* couldn't help me.

Read!

Kayleigh Nelson
Staff Writer

Sometimes it's good not to look at the screen on your electronic device and look at the covers of a good book. Reading is proven to be good for your brain, and broadens your vocabulary. When choosing a book choose one that is not too easy or too hard for you to read, then skim through the pages to see if you like it. If you want to take it to the next level, then you can write your own story. It obviously does not have to be published, but you can share it with family and friends. Try writing a story on *Fanfiction* just for fun if you want. Curl up in a comfy and quiet place without your phone, and enjoy a good book.

Even if you like comic books or manga, that is still reading! Some



people may not like reading, but others love it! Reading has provided people with enjoyment for a long time. Just because technology is taking over does not mean you have to stop old habits. If your parents ask you what you are doing, it would sound better to say you are reading a book instead of playing *Clash of Clans*. Not every single book is a good one, but at least try some out. So next time you are about to pick up your phone, try picking up a good book.

Sports

A Comeback Year

By Ronak Tallur
Staff Writer

On September 29th, 2004, the MLB announced that the now defunct team, Montreal Expos, would relocate to Washington DC. The team was called the Washington Nationals. Coming into the 2012 season, the Nationals had never made it to the playoffs, and coming off an 80-81 season, there wasn't much promise for the team to succeed that year. However, after winning on Opening Day at Wrigley Field, the Nationals went on a roll, with a 14-8 record in April.

With rookie Bryce Harper hitting 22 homeruns, Adam Laroche hitting 33 homeruns, and Gio Gonzalez racking up an MLB leading 21 wins, the Nationals made it to the playoffs for the first time in franchise history. Unfortunately, they were eliminated in the first round by the St. Louis Cardinals.

Still, Nationals (nicknamed Nats) fans had reason to celebrate, since the team had performed so well in the 2012 season. There were high hopes coming into the 2013 season. However, the team struggled early in the season, and though they caught fire in September, with a record of 18-9, it wasn't enough, and the Nationals finished with an 86-76 record and did not qualify for the playoffs.

Coming into the 2014 season, the Nationals fans still had high hopes for the team. Their division was struggling, and experts believed that the Nationals could rally behind solid pitching. Under new manager, Matt Williams (replacing Davey Johnson, who retired following the 2013 season), the Nationals won on Opening Day at New York. Behind a strong pitching staff, one of the best bullpens



Image from Google Images

in the league, and solid hitters like Anthony Rendon, the team got off to a red hot start.

In May, the Nationals struggled heavily. Star players, such as Wilson Ramos, Ryan Zimmerman, Bryce Harper, Adam Laroche, Gio Gonzalez, and Doug Fister were out with their own injuries. Without these players, the Nats played poorly, with a record of 11-15 in May. However, the team made a comeback in the months of June and July, as they got their star players back. They also had relief pitcher Tyler Clippard represent the team at the 2014 All-Star game. Despite losing Ryan Zimmerman to injury in July, the team did something sensational in August.

In August, the Nationals compiled the best record in the MLB, 19-8. During this red hot stretch, the Nationals won ten straight games, with six of those wins being walk-off victories. The Nationals surge continued in September, as they clinched the NL East with a 3-0 victory at Turner Field on September 16th. For the rest of the season, minor league players showed

their promise. Players like Michael A. Taylor and Steven Souza Jr. led the Nationals to an 18-9 record in September. On September 26th, they clinched the top spot in the NL. In the regular season finale, Jordan Zimmermann pitched the first no-hitter in Nationals history, and the Nationals won 1-0.

With a 96-66 record, the Nationals faced the San Francisco Giants in the first round of the playoffs. Though Bryce Harper and free agency acquisition, Asdrubal Cabrera, smashed homeruns, Jake Peavy and the Giants outdueled Stephen Strasburg and the Nats in game 1. In game 2, the Nationals lost an emotional game to the Giants. The game took 6 hours and 23 minutes to finish, and compiled a total of 18 innings. In the end, the Nationals lost 2-1.

The Nationals got on the board in Game 3, shutting out the Giants 4-0. Bryce Harper destroyed a homerun that nearly went into McCovey Cove. Unfortunately, in game 4, the Giants squeezed by the Nationals 3-2, eliminating the Nationals from the

playoffs. The Giants went on to win the World Series.

Though the Nationals came up short, fans still have high hopes for the Nationals to return to the playoffs in 2015. According to a recent poll, the Nationals have the highest odds in baseball at winning the 2015 season. The 2014 season had several HIGH notes, including Bryce Harper hitting 3 postseason homeruns. After the season, Anthony Rendon, who hit 21 homeruns and 83 RBIs, and Ian Desmond, who hit 24 homeruns and drove in 91 runs, won the Silver Slugger award for their respective positions. Anthony Rendon finished 5th in MVP voting. Manager Matt Williams won NL Manager of the Year, for turning the Nationals around after failing to qualify for the playoffs in 2013.

The offseason has been kind to the Nationals. Though they lost Tyler Clippard to the Oakland Athletics, they got a second baseman by the name Yunel Escobar. In free agency, they lost Adam Laroche, but got back 2013 AL Cy Young award winner, Max Scherzer, to a record setting contract.

The team has also decided to reward the team's major contributors in 2014. Stephen Strasburg, Jayson Werth, and Jordan Zimmermann will have their own bobbleheads made. Anthony Rendon will get a garden gnome. Nationals fans are getting excited, and getting geared up for the 2015 season.

Finally, the team has caught its stride. Finally, Nationals fans have a reason to be excited.

NFL Schedule

By Ronak Tallur
Staff Writers

The NFL schedule has just come out and I am going to analyze a few of the most key matchups. I am going to analyze the top 10 games of the 2015 season.

10: New York Giants @ New York Jets

In the battle of the New York teams, you will probably see a matchup with a lot of turnovers (fumbles, interceptions ESPECIALLY, etc.). We will also see some good receiver-corners matchups: Odell Beckham Jr. vs. Darelle Revis and Victor Cruz vs. Antonio Cromartie.

9: Patriots @ Colts

The rematch of the "Deflategate" game. It will also be a matchup involving two solid quarterbacks: Andrew Luck and Tom Brady. Luck has never beaten the Patriots in his career, and has thrown tons of interceptions. Brady is a 4-time Superbowl Champion. Still, this game involves two great teams and two great quarterbacks. I can't wait!

8: Bills @ Eagles

When the opponents were set for this season, this game wouldn't have come up on this list. But after the

Lesean McCoy-Kiko Alonso trade, this game became one that many people would want to watch. Will Lesean McCoy return to Philly with a bang, or will Kiko Alonso destroy the Bills offense? I can't want to find out!

7: Broncos @ Bears

Why was John Fox fired? It was quite the story of the offseason. This game might have been ranked higher on the list if it was in the Mile High City, but it is still going to get national attention. Peyton Manning and the Denver Broncos will face off against their old coach in the Windy City. Will the future Hall-of-Famer get the best of his old coach, or will John Fox's great coaching be too much for the Broncos?

6: Cardinals @ Steelers

Both these teams were one-and-done last playoffs. The Cardinals were the better team (until the injuries caught up with them), but the Steelers still had a brilliant season. Also, this game is the rematch of Superbowl 43. It will also be the battle of quarterbacks who were once in the same division: Carson Palmer and Ben Roethlisberger. Let's see how this matchup shapes out.

5: Cowboys @ Packers

These two teams faced off in last season's Divisional round of the playoffs. It was a cold day, Demarco Murray

had over 100 yards rushing, Aaron Rodgers dazzled though he was injured, and there was one controversial play at the end of the game. Did Dez Bryant make that catch on 4th down? The two teams will face again this regular season. Who will win?

4: Seahawks @ Packers

Last season, it was the rematch of that great big officiating controversy. This season, it's the rematch of last year's NFC Championship game. The Packers were up 19-7, but the Seahawks went on a tear to come back and win 28-22 in overtime. Russell Wilson threw four interceptions, but also threw the game winning touchdown pass. When these teams play, something big always seems to happen. What will happen this time?

3: Eagles @ Cowboys

Why put this game at #3? Because it will be Demarco Murray's return to Dallas, of course! The 27 year old running back had a brilliant season last year. He rushed for 1,845 yards and started off the season with 8 straight 100 yard rushing games. To add on to this game, Tony Romo and Dez Bryant will battling it out for the Cowboys. And for all we know, Tim Tebow could be playing at quarterback for the Eagles in that game.

2: Steelers @ Patriots

This is the much anticipated Kickoff

Game. Ben Roethlisberger, Antonio Brown, and the Steelers versus Brady and the Gronk. Not only will this be the return to football, but it will probably be a great football game. Both teams have a lot of skills (on both sides of the ball). The Patriots are also the defending Superbowl champs. This was one step short from being #1 on our list. Find out what *will* be #1... next.

1: Patriots @ Broncos

This comes #1 on my list, because it might be the last time Peyton Manning and Tom Brady play each other. Manning may not be back for the 2016 season, which will be the end not only of a great career, but a great rivalry. All time in the Manning-Brady rivalry, Brady leads 11-5. This is the seventeenth and perhaps final meeting of a rivalry between two future Hall-of-Fame quarterbacks, and perhaps the best quarterbacks of all time.

So here are the top 10 matchups we are looking forward to for the 2015 NFL season. All 10 matchups have extremely talented players, great histories, and many more great things involved. We know what teams are playing, we know *when* these teams are playing. All we don't know is what the outcome o

Sports (Continued)

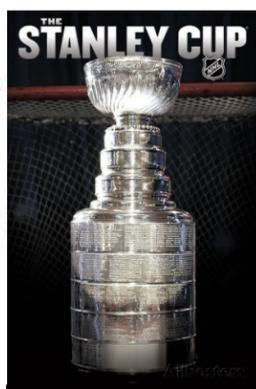
NHL Playoffs

By Ronak Tallur
Staff Writer

As the 2014 NHL regular season is drawing to a conclusion, many eyes are focused on the incoming NHL playoffs. Right now, the “beasts of the east (Eastern Conference)” are the New York Rangers. The best team in the Western Conference is the Anaheim Ducks. This has been a genuinely surprising season in the NHL, and if you think about it, it is only the beginning.

One of the biggest surprises this season is that the New York Islanders and the Nashville Predators, two teams who heavily struggled in the 2013 season, are at the top of the standings in their conferences. Nashville is two points behind the Anaheim Ducks for the Western Conference lead. The Islanders are currently five points behind the New York Rangers for the Eastern Conference lead. Islanders fans are very glad that they traded for goaltender Jaro Halak in the offseason. Halak set a franchise record when he won his 33rd game of the season against Calgary.

Other surprises include the fact that the Calgary Flames, who



were the third worst team in the Western Conference, have quietly snuck into the playoff picture. Another major surprise is that the defending Stanley Cup champions, Los Angeles Kings, are currently out of the playoffs looking in. There are many other teams who didn't qualify in 2013 who have a great chance of competing for the Stanley Cup this year. The Washington Capitals, led by star left winger, Alex Ovechkin, currently have a wildcard spot in the Eastern Conference, and are nine points behind the conference leading New York Rangers. The Capitals not only have Ovechkin, but Nicklas Backstrom, who leads the NHL in points and assists. They got to play in a Winter Classic game and in front of the nation, defeated the 2012 Stanley Cup champions,

Chicago Blackhawks, 3-2. The Vancouver Canucks, who were pathetic in 2013, are the sixth best team in the Western Conference this year. Canucks fans have a reason to believe their team will succeed in the playoffs this year, since they acquired star goaltender, Ryan Miller, in the offseason.

As we get closer to the playoffs, we also have to analyze the threats that will be in the playoffs. For starters, the Rangers have Rick Nash, who is second in the league in scoring. They also have a star goaltender, Henrik Lundqvist. The Ducks, on the other hand, have Corey Perry and Ryan Getzlaf, and there is no surprise that they are leading the Western Conference. The Boston

Bruins have a brilliant goaltender named Tuuka Rask. The Capitals have the league leading goal scorer, Alex Ovechkin.

According to Joe Beninati, “Alex Ovechkin is unstoppable right now. Nobody covers him and he just drives it past each and every goaltender he faces.”

The Montreal Canadiens and Chicago Blackhawks have playoff experience, the Islanders are on a hot streak right now, and the Nashville Predators have been unstoppable all year long. There are many dangerous NHL teams entering the playoffs, and there is no way we can tell right now who will end up hoisting the treasured Stanley Cup trophy.

Fans are getting restless. The NHL regular season is close to ending, and very soon, all the games will be a buildup to the Stanley Cup. There are going to be great teams competing for a chance to go down in history. Every team has one very strong aspect, one side to them that helps them persevere through hard times and get back to their winning ways. Soon, very soon, there is going to be one team, only one team that will hoist that valuable trophy, the treasured Stanley Cup.

RHMS Archers



Rocky Hill's Finest Archers led by Mr. Leck

By: Zoe Tishaev
Staff Writer

Believe it or not, Rocky Hill Middle School has its own archery team! Hand-picked by Mr. Leck, these skillful shooters fire tons of arrows after school, sometimes even staying until 5:30 for practice and giving up Friday afternoons. There are about 40 people on the archery team, and every year there is a state archery tournament. On March 8, the archery team drove to Hagerstown at 9:30 in the morning. They shot against 7 other schools to see who would reign victorious. The top female and male shooter with the best score won a brand-new, sparkling bow! For 3 years straight, Clearspring Middle School has triumphed over the other middle schools in archery. This year was no

exception.

Although the Wildcat Archers put up a good fight, the shooters at Clearspring managed to, yet again, beat them. The RHMS Archers placed second in the tournament as a school. We asked Mr. Leck about his thoughts on the subject. “Their archery coach is their P.E. teacher, so they probably practice more. They have a bit of an advantage over us.” Yet, we lost by a mere 13 points! “They all put in a lot of effort, and it really showed at the tournament.”

Keep in mind that Mr. Leck is not only our amazing archery coach, but also a hard-working 8th grade science teacher. He has to find time for the team to practice, so Clearspring does have a bit of an advantage.

The Future of the Redskins

By Vikram Josti
Staff Writer

The future for the Redskins is startling. With the edition of new General Manager Scott McCloughan, the changes will be astonishing. The Redskins are entering this offseason with lots of concern. Who will be starting for the quarterback position, what will the Redskins do with the cap space they have, and who will Scott McCloughan draft in this upcoming draft?

The Redskins defense was last in opponent completion percentage for quarterbacks. Jim Haslett was to blame and consequently fired from the Defensive Coordinator Spot. The team only put up 36 sacks, while Ryan Kerrigan had 13.5 sacks alone. Redskins signed LB coach Joe Barry from the Chargers. This wasn't McCloughan's choice, but they will see this season. Redskins cut Defensive Lineman, Stephen Bowen, and Barry Cofield. The Redskins signed Ricky Jean-Francois after these cuts. Jean-Francois was drafted by McCloughan in the seventh round by the forty-niners. The Redskins also signed Deangelo Hall to an extension. However, he may not be starting at cornerback position. The Redskins announced they will not resign Strong Safety Brandon Meriweather. He plays poorly, dangerously, and unfairly. Another Safety, Ryan Clark, announced he was retiring. With that, Redskins are in need of the safety position. The Redskins currently signed Safety Jeron Johnson, who was drafted by McCloughan. He spent a few years in Seattle as a backup for Kam Chancellor and Earl Thomas. The Redskins are possibly not signing Brian Orakpo to another

contract. Orakpo had only half a sack and was injured on and off the field. They don't want to sign another defensive man who is turning thirty. Trent Murphy took his spot and he has proven to start. Brian Orakpo went to the Titans. He said both he and the Redskins need a fresh start. Terrence Knighton signed a one year, \$4 million dollar contract. With more additions to the defensive line, DT Stephen Paea signed a contract. He had a career-high six sacks this season with the Bears. Redskins resigned Colt McCoy. McCoy still has a chance to prove himself as starting Quarterback. Niles Paul reached an agreement with the Redskins. He had his career-high season with many wonderful catches. Cornerback Chris Culliver signed with the Redskins after a tremendous season with the 49ers. McCloughan drafted him, and he came back from an ACL tear in the 2013 season. They have lost Roy Helu to Raiders, losing their 3rd down threat. WR Leonard Hankerson went to the Falcons, where he and Kyle Shanahan will reunite.

The Redskins offense needs some work. The offensive line let 58 sacks. Tyler Polunbus let out eight sacks at right tackle. Desean Jackson and Pierre Garcon take up a lot of the cap space. Redskins announce that if Marcus Mariota is available till the fifth pick, they would take him. There is a possibility McCloughan might trade Mariota to other teams that want him. Redskins have picks in every round.

Chances of the Redskins winning the NFC East are low. Even though the Cowboys lost Demarco Murray, they found Darren McFadden in replacement. It is unclear how successful they can be, but Redskins fans continue to have hope.

Special Features

Supernatural

By Lahori
Assistant Chief Editor

Sam and Dean Winchester are two of the CW's finest characters. These two—played by Jared Padalecki and Jensen Ackles—star in the CW TV show *Supernatural*. Maybe it's the suspense factor or the terrifying scenes, but this show appeals to all. When the show first started off, it aired on the WB, but was soon part of successor of the CW's lineup. The show aired its first episode on September 13, 2005 and received 5.69 million views. The pilot was shot in LA, but the episodes are now generally shot in Vancouver, British Columbia. Some episodes are shot in other locations to fit the plot. The pilot was about the Winchester boys and how they got to where they are today. Sam Winchester, the younger brother, quit the family business of hunting monsters to study at Stanford. Dean Winchester continues hunting monsters with his father, John Winchester.

The pilot begins with the death of Sam and Deans' mother from when they were younger. It then fast-forwards to present time and Sam's girlfriend, Jessica, dies in the exact same way as his mother, Mary Winchester. This causes Sam to get back on the road with his brother to continue on with the family business. There were many concepts on how to the start the show, but the one that prevailed was Jessica's death and the Winchester brothers being raised as hunters.



The series creator, Eric Kripke, worked on developing the show for *ten years* before it actually came to television in 2005. The show started off with a basic plot—weekly monsters and some drama off to the side, but soon became something totally different. The show began to focus more on the relationship between Sam and Dean rather than spotlight on the monster aspect. Kripke conveys that “it's always been a show about *family*.” The Winchester brothers road trip and hunt monsters, earning money off of credit card frauds, pool hustling, and poker winnings. The show's synopsis takes a turn after it zeroes in on angels and demons instead of just monsters.

Originally, Kripke had only planned out three seasons, but soon expanded the show to five. Actors

Jared Padalecki and Jensen Ackles then signed on for seasons six and seven as well. The show is currently on its tenth season and they've already renewed it for the eleventh season. Since the first season, there have been many other series regulars. Crowley—played by Mark Sheppard—and Castiel—played by Misha Collins—are also two characters who are crucial to the plot. Misha Collins and Mark Sheppard were cast into the show because the producers wanted to bring in a Christian aspect into the show—thus creating the roles of angels and demons. Misha Collins was made a series regular during the fifth season and Mark Sheppard was made a series regular during the tenth season.

Jensen Ackles was initially asked to audition for the role of Sam, but chose to go with Dean instead.

When asked about the reason for choosing to audition for Dean, Jensen Ackles answers, “When I read the script, Dean just jumped out at me. With that character there was always a bit more comedy, and a bit more recklessness, and it just appealed to me more . . . I found a character that I really enjoy playing.” Jared Padalecki chose to audition for the role of Sam Winchester because he liked the idea of being the ‘reluctant hero’. Padalecki had worked with two of the executive producers before, so they had urged him to audition.

Extras:

- The characters Sam and Dean Winchester were originally to be named Sal and Dean Harrison.
- The last name Winchester was chosen due to the Winchester mystery house.
- The Winchester brothers' birthplace was Lawrence, Kansas and when Kripke was asked why, he stated that it was due to Stull Cemetery located in Lawrence.
- Dean's car, a 1967 Chevrolet Impala, was included in *Supernatural* as his “trusty steed”. “We say it's a modern American Western — two gunslingers who ride into town, fight the bad guys, kiss the girl and ride out into the sunset again. And we were always talking from the very beginning that if you're going to have cowboys, they need a trusty horse.” relays Eric Kripke.

What Does it Mean To Be Nice?

By Mahi Ganatra
Editor

What does it mean to be nice? Pleasant, agreeable, satisfactory, as the dictionary might define it, yet each person has a different idea of nice in their mind. What's obvious though, is that being nice, or kind, is a positive trait. Now of course, in our society there are many clichés, one of the most famous being “nice guys finish last”. Sure enough, as our lives progress, as our generations develop, it seems that many people have taken to this cliché. But why is it that? I can tell you for sure that it doesn't have to be that way. You see, as much as you may have heard it, and as much as your mind pushes the idea away, kindness is contagious.

We're all instilled with the basic manner of being nice to each other, and you can observe that in most younger people that you may know. Now, it seems like being mean, or bullying, or anything of that sort is so common that people just don't seem to recognize it anymore. You, as an individual, are capable of many things. Kindness comes at no cost.. When you compliment a person, it has a greater effect than you think. Most people



don't realize that they might have made someone's day and that's because it took no effort to do it, just a few words. Even we are bombarded by random acts of violence in our airways, there are people who perform random acts of kindness. Being kind to another person can be rewarding if you consider how good it feels to make someone's day. You could make a huge difference.

I challenge you. Compliment someone everyday, starting today. It doesn't have to be obvious, just throw it into a conversation. It doesn't have to be a stranger either, compliment your best friend! And if these compliments really improve a person's day, that person will be inclined to compliment other people themselves.

The Learning Impact

By: Anusha Chinthalapale
Editor

Schools start early, and homework is a must, so students must be able to adapt flexibly around education. Students come home from school and they want to chill out for a little bit. They go onto their phones and switch on the TV for about ninety minutes. Then, comes the homework. Depending on the amount of homework a student has, they could be up for an hour to over four! The following things are a must for students to do, if they want to have a relaxing afternoon.

Create A Time Management Schedule! Becoming a master of time management is the first step for reaching relaxation. Create a timetable of when you will relax and when you will do homework. This is the start of nabbing those extra hours of sleep.

Drop The Phone! It's almost an impulse to reach for your phone right after you're in bed. Charge your phone away from you; you can always look at it on your ride to school. After you get into bed, your body starts to release toxins. When you pick up your phone, it gives off radiation, sending those toxins right back into your body.



Take A Nap! If you have had a stressful night before, consider taking a nap after school. It's almost like recharging your brain. When you sleep, your brain gets back energy that it used during the day. The earlier you sleep, the earlier you'll have more energy.

Eat Breakfast! Breakfast is an overstatement. You hear people say, “It's the most important meal of the day!” Those people would be correct. School starts early and students sleep late. But grabbing a granola bar before you sprint out of the door, is not exactly breakfast. Sleep earlier or wake up earlier. Eat some French toast, or an omelet., After all, it *is* the most important meal of the day.

By following these simple tips, you're on the road to successfully having a great afternoon. So sit back and relax, literally, because what have you got to lose?

Special Features Cont.

Why We Yawn

By: Sophia Opreciano
Staff Writer

Pinpointing exactly why we yawn is a pretty tough task. I've always wondered why we yawn -- and no, I'm pretty sure "because we are tired" is not a good enough (or scientific enough) of an answer -- and how is it even remotely contagious? After doing some research, I've concluded some facts and statements from psychologists who have been studying this topic.

Why Do We Yawn?

No matter how hard we try not to yawn, we still do. Nevertheless every time we do so, we end up hearing a couple other yawns following after ours. In some degree, it is kind of creepy yet it still amazes some of us humans. An often used explanation goes somewhat like this: When we are on the verge of collapsing face flat on our desks, we yawn, causing our mouths to open wide. When we do so, we suck in oxygen-rich air. The oxygen enters our bloodstream and wakes us up. It sounds pretty convincing at first, because it's better than "because we are tired" excuse, but shockingly this explanation is just one huge fat myth! The real mystery behind this case lies in the human body's most complex system: our

brain.

"The human brain takes up 40 percent of the body's metabolic energy, which means it tends to heat up more than other organ systems. When we yawn, that big gulp of air travels through to our upper nasal and oral cavities. The mucus membranes there are covered with tons of blood vessels that project almost directly up to the forebrain. When we stretch our jaws, we increase the rate of blood flow to the skull. And as we inhale at the same time, the air changes the temperature of that blood flow, bringing cooler blood to the brains," Andrew Gallup says, a psychology professor working at SUNY College at Oneonta. --

In other words, when we are stressed, yawning helps cool down our brain. It's like when we are play-

ing sports, when we are exhausted we take mini breaks and drink water to relieve ourselves. But there's another baffling question not being answered here; why do we yawn in the mornings?

Yawning is a thermoregulatory system -- thermoregulatory meaning the ability of an organism to keep its body temperature within certain boundaries, even when the surrounding temperature is very different. -- could explain as to why we usually yawn during nighttime or when we wake up. Before we fall asleep, our brain and body's temperature rises to its highest. And when we fall asleep, it steadily declines. When we wake, our temperature rapidly rises, causing us to yawn. Scientists have yet to pinpoint as to why we feel refreshed after a big hearty yawn, but some say



Image from
Google Images

it's because we feel more efficient and observant.

Yawning is Contagious!

Humans in a way have a great bond. Even if we aren't related we still feel that connection, that emotion. It's what connects us humans. When we see someone get hurt, no matter what, humans will feel *empathy*. It's what makes us cry when something bad happens. When we see someone smile or laugh, we have the urge to laugh as well. Partially because what we just happened to see amused us, but mainly because humans have the ability to understand and feel another individual's emotions. The same thing goes for yawning. Smiles, laughs, cries, and yawns are all contagious -- in a good way that is.

Along with being contagious, yawning is easily complied. Sometimes, even reading the word "yawn" can activate our brains and automatically you will find yourself yawning.

So the next time you find yourself in a yawn-some situation, think about what is happening around you. Maybe your classmates will end up yawning too, who knows? Well, then, everyone will start yawning, and next thing you know the room is going to be echo-filled with yawns and laughter!

The Past

By: Kayleigh Nelson
Staff Writer

Back in the day in the United States they did not have television, phones, computers, video games etc. Also families had to work hard to survive, and support their families. Families had many children, meaning they had to work extra hard. Only the middle-class or wealthy went to school. Others had to help their families or were limited in their educational opportunities. In the rare occasion they did go to school, it was in poor condition and had hand me downs from white schools. In order to create change, The NAACP was formed in the early 1900's.

Although African Americans were not slaves anymore, they still suffered from the adverse effects of racism. Since electronics were out of the question during these days, children would play the piano, go outside, play games or talk with family and friends. Since there were less distractions, children excelled more in school and families spent more time together.

Want to send an e-mail or text to someone? Handmade letters were the way to send a message to someone in those times. People were involved in their religious activities with others in their community. Children might also read books in their free time. Girls were expected to become proper young ladies, and men were expected to be gentlemen. However, it was hard to be a woman, and still can be today. Women did not get their voting rights until 1920, and



their job was to run the household and care for the family. African American women got even less rights as citizens.

It is important to reflect on the past. Although it was a very different time, we should still hold on to traditions that emphasize family and friends as well as active roles in the community. Even though we are heading to the future, that doesn't mean we should forget the past.

Music Box

When I open the box
A ballerina twirls
And I hear a heavenly melody
I slowly fall asleep
Dreaming of great things
Picturing myself in a fantasy
Whatever emotions I feel
This melody is always there for me

By: Kayleigh Nelson

Empowered Girls Making a Difference in Our Community

By: Katelyn Folmer
Staff Writer

Boys are stronger, faster, and more athletic in sports. Is this true, or just another stereotype? Many of us know that this stereotype is false, that girls are just as fast, as strong, and as powerful in sports or other athletic activities as boys. Unfortunately, some people still refuse to think of girls as powerful. Girls and women were once thought of as weak, but we've come a long way from that. Just think of Mo'ne Davis, who was the first girl to win and pitch a shut-out.

Girls Fit for Life is a club that Rocky Hill provides to empower girls and make them stronger and healthier. We had the opportunity to sit down with a member from the club and hear her input about it. Our source would like to stay anonymous.

TWR: Do you like being in the girls fit for life?
Student: Yes, I do because it pushes me and enables me to try different tasks that I didn't know I was capable of.

TWR: Why did you join the club?
Student: I joined Girls Fit for Life club because I enjoy running, but wasn't very fast. I have improved a lot since joining.
TWR: What is your favorite thing to do in the club?
Student: My favorite part of our exercise are all of the warm-ups that we do because I get the chance to stretch, but also have a little bit of fun in the

process.

TWR: What do you usually do in the club?

Student: When I go to Girls Fit for Life club, we usually do three main tasks. Those tasks are warm-ups, running, and stretches/core strength afterwards.

TWR: How many girls participate in the club?

Student: Normally, about 12 girls participate from all three grades.

TWR: How has the club affected you?

Student: The club has affected me in many ways since I started participating. I have been able to learn more things to improve my core strength, run at a steady pace, and feel better about myself. Also, I am more confident and not afraid to try my best because of surrounding peers.

TWR: Who started the group?

Source: Ms. Tippet started the club.

TWR: Does Ms. Tippet give you feedback on how to run better or anything like that?

Student: Ms. Tippet gives us a lot of tips on how to improve on stuff such as push-ups, lunges, or even running position.

We thank our source for her information. She is only one of the 12 empowered girls who are participating in the club. Girls who participate in this club are going to become role models for younger girls who are looking forward to participate in the club. Keep representing girls!

Current Issues

2016 Elections

By Arpan Barua
Chief Editor

Yes, it is only 2015, but it's never too late to start talking about this upcoming election. With this term being Obama's last term, we get to see both parties battling it out for their party nods. But this year some questions arise.

There are some very compelling stories for the election, especially on the Democratic side. As Hillary Clinton has announced her candidacy for the presidency, many believe that she is eventually going to obliterate all of the other candidates in the Democratic Party because of how much power is in her hands. I feel like she scares people off so much that nobody wants to run for president. On the Democratic side, there has been no one who has decided to run for President because of Hillary's intimidating presence. But you might be wondering, why are you so confident in Hillary getting the Democratic nomination? It's mainly because of how much power she has. As a former Senator, First Lady, and Secretary of State, she has one of the most extensive backgrounds in politics

today. Also, a lot of people are truly hoping for a first woman President just after we got the first African-American President. It could be nice to have the first woman President to break another barrier, but only voting for someone that is a woman could be a little arrogant. For those who do want Hillary to win, yes that's absolutely fine, but before you go campaigning for the next woman President, listen to what she has done. I honestly feel presidents shouldn't be in power with so many scandals and investigations. She has allegedly funneled money from the

Clinton foundation into her own funds, hid emails from security, lied about the Iraq War in front of Congress, and apparently has her own internet server in New York. If all of these rumors are true, then it is important that we weigh in this information fairly. A person truly shouldn't be running for the most powerful position in the free world with so many scandals and controversies. But what is going to happen is those people who truly don't follow politics will still vote for her because she is a woman. We shouldn't vote for people just be-

cause of gender. This can prove to be ignorance. We need to look at her objectively as a candidate, rather than someone who represents breaking the barrier.

On the Republican side, the field will soon be packed. Senator Ted Cruz is the first person to decide to run for President, and a flood of more will soon be coming. Many Republicans feel with Obama now gone, they all have a shot. With Senator Cruz's incredibly eccentric right wing thoughts and ideas, many love or hate him. But, Cruz might still have a chance because of his extremely right wing style. Even though Democrats might not agree with him, a confident set of ideals will help this country make firm decisions, something that hasn't happened quite often in the past several years.

With the 2016 election coming up so soon, it will be exciting to see news coverage of all the candidates and their platforms. Make sure to keep up with the news!



Propaganda Takes a Toll

By Anusha Chinthalapale
Editor

Propaganda has the ability to convince the simple mind of an average world citizen. Think 1940 for example, we are in the midst of World War II. In the US, the propaganda posters are fairly effective. Here comes the famous Uncle Sam, as he requests men to volunteer into the US army. Unfortunately, most men want to stay closer to home to protect their families, and of course, the great depression is sweeping through the nations. The most convincing poster of this time is most likely the one with the woman with the maxim, "We can do it!" This poster, surprisingly, recruits many women to act as nurses for the army.

The reason for this is because women were looked upon as inferior to men; if they received the opportunity to be of help, to be a hero, they were going to take it. Regrettably, propaganda has taken a turn for the worse in Germany. Still 1940, but instead of boosting their citizens up, they make a mockery of them (Jewish) or turn them against others. One of the most interesting posters found, is a picture of a type of 'killing machine'. It advertises jobs for low paid employees to work in a camp, gassing, killing and torturing Jewish people.

Propaganda is still very much alive today. It can be found at almost any and every street corner, here, in the US. Shampoo commercials, for instance, use the girls with the thickest, darkest hair and shows



the girls using their brand of shampoo. Covergirl, is probably the brand with the most propaganda to unveil. Every month, they get celebrities, that are naturally gorgeous, using their brand of makeup.

Our society, almost filled with gullible girls, will buy this product, expecting unrealistic transformations to occur. American citizens need to start using their heads before buying products. They're just throwing away their hard-earned money, on a ripoff t-shirt that will tear within the week of purchase. Next time, before you buy, think. Is this really necessary? Am I going to need this, or am I just jumping onto the bandwagon?



A Little Inspiration

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." ~Lao Tzu

By Anusha Chinthalapale
Editor

Whenever I think of this quote, I think of failures leading up to the final product. Thomas Edison didn't invent the light bulb on his first try. It has been said that it took him 1,000 tries to make it correctly! That means he failed a whopping 999 times before finally getting it right. The scientists have successfully created a cloning device, but they failed 227 times before cloning Dolly the Sheep.

Similarly, I have to set smaller goals before getting what I want. I have to fail, so many times before getting it right. I have to go after what I want, when I want it, before it can slip away. I have to try something 1,000 times before giving it all up. And my goal is to be the best



I can be at anything. Don't get me wrong, I'm an overachiever but I'm not so hardcore with it.

I believe that this quote can inspire people to go after what they want, even if it seems impossible. They may try a thousand times, and still not achieve what they want. But it's that thousand and first try that finally works. Yes, a journey of a thousand miles, does indeed begin with one step

DONT BE A FOLLOWER BE A LEADER. DO WHAT YOU THINK IS RIGHT NOT WHAT OTHERS THINK.

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Today's Technology

Google's Self-Driving Car

By Aakriti Mahajan and Anunima Anun Tech Editors

In a couple of years, we will most likely have to learn how to drive. Well, it's possible now with Google's self-driving car. All you have to do is sit back, relax and let the car do the work. Google released its first model of the self-driving car in May of 2014. The most unique feature about this vehicle is that it does not need a steering wheel or a brake pedal. Google's software is so advanced that the car does not need these features for functionality. Many of us are probably debating whether a self-driving car is safe, considering the scenarios where something could go wrong. However, it may be a relief to hear that most of the technology behind the car is based upon older software that has been tested multiple times.

The heart of the technology in this vehicle is its main software known as LIDAR. It has multiple responsibilities in providing the driver convenience. With a laser and around sixty sensors, the software is used to project a 3-D map that detects road hazards within two hundred miles. There is also a windshield camera which helps a driver see what is right in front of them along with multiple radars that sense nearby vehicles. If that is not enough to make you interested, there is even a GPS system that uses Google's maps to search for a route, analyze driving speed and give accurate locations. In December of 2014, another model was released of the car with a few

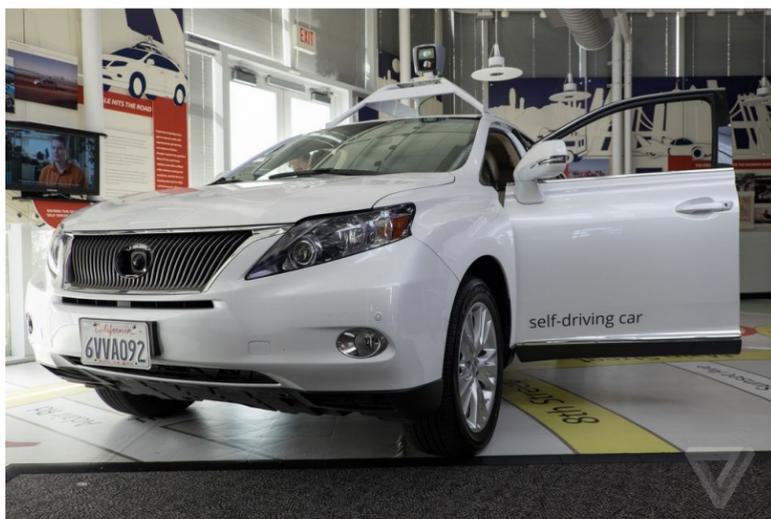


Image from Google Images

differences from the older model. According to *WIRED*, "The obvious differences are the addition of real headlights and the design of the LIDAR vision system, which now sits flush on the roof, instead of on roof-mounted supports." The car definitely has some interesting features, but one must remember that the car's main purpose is for functionality. This is one of the reasons why the vehicle's maximum speed is only twenty five miles per hour. Also designers are continuing to work out minor issues relating to the vehicle's safety and design, such as passenger safety on the road during unsafe weather conditions.

Google's self-driving car can benefit people's lives in various ways. Think of disabled Americans that may also have the desire to drive a car on their own. Also, if you aren't as skilled with driving, you can let the car do all the work. Plus, you wouldn't have to pass your driv-

er's test. Another reason to switch to a Google car is that you won't have to worry about being ticketed by a traffic police, which saves money and time! How about the struggle of perfect parking? You wouldn't have to worry about it with Google's car because the computer is set up to drop you off at your location and park at the nearest available space.

However, there are a few cons to this amazing self-driving car. You may be surprised with the car's extreme cost. The equipment of the vehicle is priced around \$150,000 with a LIDAR system costing around \$70,000. The total cost is estimated to reach around \$220,000, almost an unreasonable amount of money for any American to invest on a car. Many people argue that self-driving cars may cause accidents. According to disabled-world.com, "Google claims these cars will be even safer than human-driven vehicles, simply due to the

lack of human error. Computers will not get tired or distracted and the company claims to have already tested them out on over 300,000 miles of road, without one single incident." How about drunk drivers? "A Google Car could also cut deeply into the number of drunken driving deaths by about 10,000 related deaths a year..." says Ron Medford. Anyway, human error results in more accidents than accidents that occur because of machine caused errors. Why not spare one life caused by a machine instead of ten caused by human error?

A few other sources agree that driverless cars can glitch and cause serious damage. Google's self-driving car doesn't run on gasoline, because it's electric. This would hurt the gasoline industry, but would also be a step towards a better environment. Google's self-driving car offers various convenient options for the passenger and has many safety aspects such as multiple sensors, radars, software and cameras that detect road hazards. We can expect almost everyone to take advantage of these self-driving cars in the next couple of years.

Google driving to be driverless

Google's modified Toyota Prius uses an array of sensors to navigate public roads without a human driver. Other components, not shown, include a GPS receiver and an inertial motion sensor.

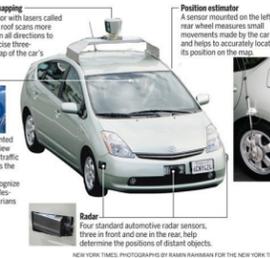
Laser-guided mapping — A rotating sensor with lasers called a LIDAR on the roof scans more than 300 feet in all directions to generate a precise three-dimensional map of the car's surroundings.

Video camera — A camera mounted near the rear-view mirror detects traffic lights and helps the car's onboard computer recognize moving obstacles such as pedestrians and bicyclists.

Position estimator — A sensor mounted on the left rear wheel measures small movements made by the car and helps to accurately locate its position on the road.

Radar — Four standard automotive radar sensors, three in front and one in the rear, help determine the positions of distant objects.

Source: Google



Google Docs

By Aakriti Mahajan and Anunima Anun Tech Editors

Have you been using any sort of Google account lately? Well, Google Docs may be one of them. Google Docs is a convenient way to work on your files while keeping them organized at the same time. MCPS teachers are promoting the use of this fabulous application due to its easy accessibility from school and/or home.

A major reason Google Docs is starting to become very popular in MCPS is because of its simple way of sharing documents with others. Most students prefer to have a teacher, parent, or friend edit their writing pieces. Instead of having to email someone to edit documents, one can easily use the share settings in their Google account to invite others to comment or edit any document. Google Docs also provides students a better use for their educational email addresses, which will help keep them organized with school work and due dates of assignments. Remember those times when you were working on an assignment on Word, but forgot to save your hard work? With Google Docs, a draft automatically saves every three to four minutes so you will never have to worry about completely

What are Google Docs?



Documents



Drawings



Presentations



Forms



Spreadsheets

DitchThatTextbook.com/GoogleDocs



starting over on an assignment.

There are also a few interesting features on Google Docs that you may not have known about. When you are working on any document on Google Docs, a toolbar is displayed above. If you click tools, you are given various options such as 'spelling, research, define, translate document, etc.' A lot of these options are presented to a user in word, but Google Docs takes it to another level. The "define" option is more upgraded than the thesaurus on Word. Users are given multiple definitions of words, along with synonyms. The research option is definitely one of the most unique features. One can simply click on "research" and do a Google search on the side of the document, along with searching for im-

ages, and searching for synonyms and definitions of words through an online dictionary.

When talking about accessing Google Docs from home, we must keep in mind that there are MCPS students that do not have internet access at home. Think of being that student, while everyone is ahead on the assignment, you are the only one behind. A student from Glasgow Middle School struggled when her teacher told her class to work on a homework assignment online, "I see my friends do their work, and I struggle to get the access I need. It makes me sad," says the student. Isn't this unfair to her? According to a survey, "more than 90 percent of Fairfax households with children have home computers". But what about those 10

percent of students who can't work on online assignments at home? This is clearly not fair to them and the problem must be addressed.

Students who don't have access to a computer find various ways to get hold of one. Some go to their local library after school and use the computers available there. Others give up their lunch time to use computers at school. Ying Wu, a student from Stuart High School, grew up without having access to a computer. "There's a kind of a wall, a barrier to the world", she states. Although she lacked a computer, she earned a 4.2 GPA from her school's International Baccalaureate Program. What an accomplishment!

Google Docs is a convenient way to type and edit documents. Its unique and upgraded options make it a useful application for students. However we must take into account that there are students who do not have access to a computer or electronic device. MCPS needs to advocate for a solution that can solve this problem, so these students do not constantly have to worry about searching for computer access. Hopefully everyone will have the opportunity to take advantage of Google Docs in school and at home.

Entertainment

The Power of Chocolate

By Sophia Oprecio
Staff Writer

Chocolate, smooth, sweet, decadent, rich, flavorful and full of love. Chocolate is powerful because of all these things and so much more. When we eat chocolate our taste buds become a river of deliciousness and our hearts beat with joy. For many, unraveling chocolate is like unraveling a present on Christmas morning!

If you're a chocoholic you should check out the website www.thechocolatesstore.com. On this site you'll find the most scrumptious facts about chocolate. Believe it or not "Cocoa powder was created in 1828. In addition according to the Chocolate Store.com, mass production of chocolate and the availability of it came about during the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century." For those of you who like an extra kick of caffeine, according to the website, "a one-ounce piece of milk chocolate contains about the same amount of caffeine as a cup of decaffeinated coffee." Amazingly the candy factory website points out "Americans consume 2.8 billion pounds of chocolate each year, or over 11 pounds per person." Now that's a lot of chocolate!



Chocolate and love go together like a hand in a glove, especially on Valentine's Day. Chocolate, soft like a cloud, velvety like a new exquisite piece of silk what more could you ask for – especially on a day like Valentine's Day! Go to any grocery store and immediately you are overwhelmed by all the delectable chocolate. Once you eat chocolate on Valentine's Day your imagination goes wild and you feel like you're traveling on a chocolate cloud to a land where everything is made out of chocolate. If you listen closely, you can also hear the soothing sounds of playing harps from angels and a choir singing HALLELUJAH!

When you think about chocolate, all you can think of is how good and delicious it is! It's extremely hard to resist one of the most precious things created on this earth. Chocolate is so powerful it helps us feel better!

When it's eaten it puts a smile on your face and after you've had a bad day and it's always there for you. So maybe it's not the best source of our important nu-

trients for our body but it sure does taste good! Never the less, it gives you nutrients for something that is so much more important; it heals, cleanses and nourishes the soul. So when you eat that silky chocolate get ready for the playing of the harps and choirs of angels singing HALLELUJAH that will ultimately lead to a whirl wind of the most gigantic chocolate tornado you've ever tasted!

A Delicious Recipe for all the Chocoholics:

My Mom's Easy Chocoholics Dream Cake!

Prepare one box of dark chocolate cake mix according to box. In addition to the ingredients listed add 1 teaspoon of vanilla, 2 tablespoons of milk and one box of chocolate pudding mix & 1 tablespoon of chocolate fudge.

Bake cake according to the directions on the box.

Allow cake to cool and ice the cake with your favorite chocolate icing.

Cover cake with chocolate shavings if you dare!



The Fantabulous Cross Country Adventure of Mrs. Rye

By Mrs. Rye
(One and Only)

Driving across the country to see my oldest son, Tyler, was certainly an adventure! Tyler recently moved to Denver, Colorado, and when asked by my son to deliver his fourteen year old Jeep to him, my husband and I first exclaimed, "Yikes!" After thinking about it and getting the Jeep a bit of a makeover at the car shop, we let Tyler know that we were up for the challenge and set off on our 27 hour, 1,700 mile, four day drive from Maryland to Colorado.

Along the way we stopped in St. Louis, Missouri, and saw the Gateway Arch. We also experienced the Great Plains of Kansas and all of its vast, never ending farms. Wheat fields that went on for miles and miles, thousands of cows, windmill fields (air power), and even a few buffalo were seen along the way. After visiting Dodge City, Kansas, we were able to say that we "got out of Dodge" and when we entered into Colorado, I said to my husband, "Kent, I don't



Tyler, Kate, Mrs. Rye and Mr. Ryle at Red Rocks Park

think we are in Kansas anymore!" When we FINALLY arrived in Denver, we were very happy to get out of the car and explore the city. Denver is a great city, but the surrounding areas are what really interested us.

After helping our son fix up his new apartment a bit, we hiked at Red Rocks Park and saw extremely picturesque scenes! There is also a really fascinating amphitheater built directly into the rock formations! Overall, my Spring Break trip was a success, but the next time I see my son in Denver, I definitely plan to fly!



The Gateway Arch



1,700 Miles from Damascus MD to Denver, Colorado

Mrs. Quinn's Australian Adventure

By Mrs. Quinn
(The Queen of All Outdoors)

Mrs. Quinn and her husband traveled to Australia for 3 weeks over spring break, to visit their daughter who is a goalkeeper, playing professional soccer in Melbourne. The plane ride was VERY loooooong. It is 5 hours to Los Angeles and then another 15 hours to Melbourne!!! They based themselves in Melbourne, since that is where their daughter lives, but traveled to Port Douglas and Sydney. Port Douglas is tropical resort area. While in Port Douglas they snorkeled the Great Barrier Reef and explored the Daintree Rainforest.

One of the best parts was when they were able to snuggle with the koalas at a wildlife preserve!!! In Sydney, they climbed the Sydney Harbor Bridge - all 1,390 stairs and climbed up 450 feet above the water. They visited the iconic Sydney Opera House. Just outside Sydney, they hiked the Blue Mountains. While in the Blue Mountains, they rode the world's steepest railcar back up to the top of the mountain. It went up the mountains at a 52 degree angle, backwards, and there were no



seatbelts!! In Melbourne they traveled the Great Ocean Road and saw spectacular coastlines and beaches. One of most impressive places they stopped at was the 12 Apostles.

These are extremely old and very large rock formations right along the beach. They also saw lots of wild koalas and kangaroos! Of course they watched their daughter play 2 soccer games (1 win and 1 loss). The Aussies also use some different words than we do in the United States. For example – we say ketchup; they say tomato sauce, a parking lot is a car park, a friend is a bloke or mate, and they always say no worries for don't worry about it. Besides all the gorgeous places they visited, the one thing that stands out the most, is how kind the Australian people were to them; very friendly, generous and accommodating. Although they had a trip of a lifetime, they were glad to be back in the USA!!



Kelsey, Mrs. Quinn, and Mr. Quinn