

The Wildcat Roar

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The 2014 Willpower Game

By Ali Tyma
Staff Writer

What is the best cure for cancer? Laughter. And there was plenty of it at the thirteenth annual Willpower game on May 9, 2014. From dunking teachers in a dunk tank to the intense parent/teacher basketball game, smiles were everywhere.

The night started off with teachers and administrators in the dunk tank. It was fun to watch! Ms. Smith came prepared for the “dunk” in her snorkel, mask, and fins! People casually walked around the silent auction tables, where one could bid on items ranging from a music lesson with Mr. Heinemann to Redskins tickets. The night continued on to the charity basketball game where the parents once again dominated the teachers. After an emotional half-time in which Sammy Kessey won the Willpower Award, the intense basketball game ended with the teachers 87 and the parents 92. Regardless if you have always gone to the Willpower Game or if it was your first time, it was hard not to have fun. Alycia Shaffer, sixth grader, says, “It’s really fun and I’m really happy that they raise money for charity, it’s a good cause.” This good cause is also a very important one. We get to see the best of our Rocky Hill community working together for a common purpose. The match up game between teachers and parents is one of the main events. Parents won for the fourth time in a row. “I was rooting for the staff because I am a staff first, but the parents played a phenomenal game,” says Mrs. Gramatges, who is a parent as well. It was a great family night with lots of activities like moon bounce, face painting, and meeting people in our community.

Ms. Tippet has worked tirelessly to ensure the Willpower’s Game’s success. When asked why the Willpower Game is so important, she said, “Because we’ve lost so many people in our community. I’ve lost people in my life, who I admire and I loved, I cared for, to cancer. And it feels like the right thing to do, a way for me to fight, for them.” To honor the survivors, the fighting, and the ones we hold close to our hearts, each staff member participating in the flash mob held a sign to recognize those who have been affected by cancer. “My favorite part was the dance and the tribute signs, I can’t wait to come again next year,” said Mrs. Obenland.

To add to it all this year’s Willpower Award recipient, Sammy Kessy, joined in the flash-mob after



Mr. Vinar strives to score points for RHMS staff during the Willpower Game

completing his victory lap around the gym. The Willpower Award is a huge honor to receive. The award, created in honor of Captain Will Sang, a parent who suffered from pancreatic cancer, is given each year to a student who has persevered and shown integrity in the face of adversity. “You never saw “Captain Sang” down, never saw him worried, you never saw him sad, he was always up, always happy,” says Ms. Tippet. Sammy has faced “both academic and physical challenges,” said Ms. Milstein while presenting the award. “Despite those challenges, Sammy always has a smile on his face and seamlessly fits in with his peers, who accept him wholeheartedly.” Sammy’s positivity is truly inspiring and wonderful.



Farmer—err, Dr.—Eldridge, placing a chicken in its cage

But how did breast cancer research, pancreatic cancer research, and childhood brain tumor research become the school’s choices for the proceeds of the Willpower game? Ms. Tippet spoke candidly about the special people we have lost as a result of cancer. “We had a mom at the time, a parent of students who was fighting breast cancer. That was the one I kind of jumped on first, and being a woman and having a grandmother pass away from it, it was easy for me to attach to it and associate with it. And then a couple years later we had a dad here, who was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Pancreatic is very quick because when they discover it, it’s usually at stage four and at that time you have a year or less to live. They call it the silent killer, because there are no symptoms until that point. It evolves for years and you don’t know it. So we added that one because Captain Will Sang

was such a great man, that’s where the name “Will-power” came from. And they started the Willpower Foundation for Pan-Can. So we kind of took that with us and ran with it. We’ve had kids with brain tumors in the past, and we’ve done different things for them.” Tragedy and trials have sparked our passion for the Willpower Game. A few years ago we lost a very special teacher, Mrs. Holmberg. She had pancreatic cancer. Then, after a brave battle with brain cancer, we lost beloved student Sam Moore, and the Willpower Game took on an even broader purpose. Ms. Tippet explained the significance of adding childhood brain cancer research as one of our missions. “We’ve had kids that have had brain tumors and survived, and now we have Sam who passed away, so we needed to add that as well.” The fact that we as a community can turn tragic events into something positive is what make our school so special. Last week, a very excited Ms. Tippet announced that we raised thirteen thousand dollars at our last game. “We, as a school, have raised over one-

hundred thousand dollars.” Ms. Tippet has earned admiration from parents, teachers, and everybody who has been involved with this program. “Ms. Tip is amazing. We are very lucky to have her at our school,” said Mrs. Wilkerson.

The success of the Willpower Game is a testament to the hard work and planning that went into it. Parents had to take time out of their routines to practice, and it paid off! “The Willpower Game was an awesome night,” said Mrs. Obenland. “To see all the staff and students come together for such great causes was very uplifting. The basketball game was incredible.” Each year there seems to be something new and different. One of the major attraction is witnessing the principal’s challenge. This year, our principal, Dr. Eldridge, had to battle with some chickens. She did a good job catching them and placing them in a cage. We can’t wait to see what is in store for next year!

After months and months of planning the day finally came. Teachers were dunked, parents won the game, and Rocky Hill Middle School, aside from any differences among students, staff, and parents, joins for one common goal—to raise money for an end to cancer. Even though it’s one night out of three-hundred-sixty-five days, it’s one day that can make a change forever.



Parents and teachers meeting and greeting before the game

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Editorial Page

Children of War

By Manav Mathur
Assistant Chief Editor



"Mom, it's too hot out here!"
There are times where we complain about the most basic and trivial things. More often than not, we fail to realize that, throughout the world, there are people our age living in positively deplorable conditions. Those people, whether they live in Siberia, India, or Ukraine, live through these brutal conditions, accepting their lives as they come—in many cases, the only lives they have ever known. Young boys and girls have to suffer through squalid and unsafe conditions, especially in regions of civil and political unrest. Here in the United States, many of us complain querulously if everything is not to our liking. How is it fair for us to act in this manner when such people are barely living through each day, forced to cope with the total destruction of war?

Children in Ukraine and other war-torn countries live with the burden of many plaguing thoughts: *What if I come home to find there is no home to return to? What if my family or friends are taken away or, even worse, killed? What if I don't live to see tomorrow? What if my only teenage sister was kidnapped at her school?* Children, especially young children and babies, can

"suffer psychological stress, developmental problems and cognitive damage when a parent goes to war," according to recent research by the Boston University School of Social Work. Children directly involved in civil unrest can be devastated by the destruction around them. Perhaps the same applies to children in Ukraine, as many of suffer from diseases and extreme poverty. Children will suffer from losing loved ones, carrying the stress that comes with their absence. Through all these conflicts, there are children caught in the middle. In societies like ours, sometimes we forget that.

The Syrian War, like the Ukraine crisis, has affected its young populace. According to a new UNICEF report released Tuesday, March 10, 5.5 million Syrian children now need assistance because of the war, a number that has more than doubled in the past year. Among the hardest hit are one million children living under siege and in hard to reach areas in Syria. Ad-

ditionally, as of January, violence has killed more than 10,000 children in Syria, who are often not *accidental* victims of war, but rather deliberately targeted. Witnesses say children and infants have been killed by snipers, or become victims of summary executions or torture. Schools have been bombed.

UNICEF highlighted what it called "deep developmental and emotional scars" left by the fighting. Even the 1.2 million refugee children living in camps and host communities in neighboring countries suffer from the war, with limited access to basic necessities.

What happens when a child, who support and care to grow and develop, is trapped in a world where all odds seems to be against them? In Crimea, this is the world children must face. Russia prevented the adoption of children by Americans from the Ukraine, opening up only more discord among relief efforts for the area. Writer Katie Jay states that, "Crimea has reportedly been ab-

sorbed by Russia, and is therefore no longer accepting the authority of Ukraine. All in-progress adoptions are being rejected. My heart breaks for the American families there being told to return home, without their children while they still can, as well as all the orphans Russia is depriving of a future." The cruelty is stifling—there is truly no future in sight for these children. Russian authorities have even made it known that they have "special plans" for these children, visions of who they want them to be and how they will be raised. We mustn't forget that not every child has the freedom to choose, as we do. Their lives, it seems, have been planned for them.

Malala Yousafzai became a victim of violence in Pakistan On October 9, 2012, when a gunman shot her on her way from school. Her story made news headlines around the world because of her courage and determination to speak for the education of girls.

War. Its effects can be thought of as a wave, affecting all parts of society. The most impacted may live in places that seem far away and foreign to us, but they are our comrades, our peers, children our age who are deprived. We need to do everything in our power to help these children—children of war.

How Do You Say Goodbye?

By Mae McDermott
Chief Editor

"Goodbye" is such a vast word. It is a word that requires time, wisdom, and experience. It is a word that is often difficult to form, especially when the loss is great.

Earlier this year we lost my grandfather. He was my mentor, my best editor, my role model, and, most importantly, my friend. His heart was huge and inside of him he carried love that could reach the span of the universe and beyond—love for the memories and life that he lived, and love for his family. How do I say goodbye to him?

This time of year many of us must wrestle with Goodbye, especially 8th graders. We must leave the environment we've grown so accustomed to and re-establish ourselves.

"Goodbye" carries so much weight. Within us all it is changing and growing as the end of the school year approaches at shocking speed. The end always seems so far off until suddenly it looms in the distance, like an oncoming storm. Beyond those dark clouds are places shrouded in mystery. Perhaps that is why Goodbye can be so daunting; it means letting go of things that you know, and it feels like you are losing that which keeps you safe and secure. And in that way it is terrifying—like the ground beneath has suddenly given way.

I do not want to let go of things here at Rocky Hill that have

sustained me and people that I have come to love. I am afraid of *how* I will face the future without the strength I derive from these familiar surroundings. Like any fear, the fears of change and of future are just as debilitating as they are difficult to cope with. You cannot push it deep down inside because fear surfaces no matter how you try to stifle it. It comes in sudden silences and unexpected waves, or in bouts of inexplicable apathy. Change is inevitable, so the time or pace at which you face the fear is not your choice. You are at the mercy of the universe. Sometimes I can't help but feel that. Sometimes I feel like the universe is testing me.

But then I must remind myself that life is a gift, not a test. Every life is full of trials, but these trials are part of the glorious journey we are lucky enough to take. Our days at RHMS are part of our journeys—all the memories, the lessons learned, and the conflicts, resolved or not, are worth appreciating.

There are so many memories to bask in. I will always appreciate (and question) Mr. Molley's fascination with burning and exploding objects. I saw his broadest smile when he freaked a couple girls out with a particularly loud explosion. I will always smile when I think of Mr. Grimes' brutal honesty and ability to offer the perfect rebuttal. I won't forget Ms. Armaiz's English class, her humor, and the time we surfed YouTube, from Martin Luther King to ABBA. I so appreciate Mr.

Leck's very genuine cordiality, and his joking (yet serious) responses to my (unreasonable) questions that force me to admit that I probably worry a little too much. Ms. Belman and Ms. Maxey made me love Spanish. I am grateful to Mr. Vinar and Ms. Gonzales, who deal with so many students like me who hate math. Every song sung with my chorus has touched my heart and left its mark; every piece of wisdom and consolation from Mr. Heinemann has shaped my character and means more to me than I can possibly express. I will always cherish this paper, Ms. Odey's guidance, the opportunity to grow as a writer and a team member, and the remarkable things that can happen through the written word. I am so lucky to have experienced all these wonderful things and crossed paths with so many wonderful people.

People say that everything comes to an end. I guess this is a way of accepting losses and moving on. But it just *isn't true*. Nothing ever *really* dies. Life and all the things within it never end.

And so I don't ever *really* say goodbye, because these memories are a part of me and my foundation, placed so deep in my soul that they will never leave me. I know I will always have them there to guide me and lift my spirits, like a good friend.

Thank you, Rocky Hill, and thank you for reading. Until next time. . . .

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Rocky Hill Page

Images of 2013-2014 School Year on The Hill



Top Female Archer

By Anunima Arun
Staff Writer



Samaneh Ali
Grade 7

Samaneh Ali, a seventh grader at Rocky Hill, has been recognized as the top female archer in the state of Maryland. Rocky Hill placed second in the competition, with a total of

2866 points followed by Smithsburg MS with 2726 points. Samaneh scored 274 points and took a lead of all the female archers.

TWR: Why did you choose to play archery?

Samaneh: I chose to play archery because I'm not really good at any other physical sport, so I thought I would give it a try, since it looked really cool and interesting.

TWR: Is there anyone that inspired you?

Samaneh: Well, when I first went to archery I saw many people who were really good shooters. Especially my coach, Mr. Leck inspired me, so that inspired me to do better and try my hardest.

TWR: What techniques did you choose to stay persistent?

Samaneh: In order to not give up, I had to keep reminding myself that practice makes perfect, since I wasn't good at archery right from the start. Also I knew that if I wanted to get better, I couldn't give up even if I got frustrated.

Ah-Mazing Teacher

By Aakriti Mahajan
Staff Writer



Mrs. Maxey
Spanish Teacher

Mrs. Maxey is a Spanish teacher. She was nominated because she enjoys sharing her love of Spanish with other students.

TWR: How long have you been teaching?

Mrs. Maxey: This is my eighth year teaching.

TWR: How do you feel about being nominated?

Mrs. Maxey: I am so happy. It re-

ally means a lot to me to know that my students are enjoying my class.

TWR: What do you think makes you special?

Mrs. Maxey: I really care about my students' learning. I want them to be successful and I try to find ways to motivate them in class.

TWR: How would you describe your interaction with your students?

Mrs. Maxey: I think I have a good relationship with my students. We have a lot of fun in class but we also get our work done.

TWR: How much do you like teaching and what would you like your students to know about you?

Ms. Maxey: I love sharing my love for Spanish with my students. I want my students to know that this is my first year at Rocky Hill and I love working here since the students are so wonderful.

Writer's Corner

Letters from Rapunzel Book Review

By Mahi Ganatra
Staff Writer

Cadence Brogan thinks of herself as Rapunzel. Yeah, that's right. The fairy tale princess with a name that means: a green, leafy, vegetable. Only this Rapunzel isn't stuck in a tower. Instead, she is stuck at her school's dreary homework club with a mean teacher with very strict rules whom she refers to as The Witch. But that's not all there is to her life. Rapunzel and her dad were very close until he got clinical depression, or as the creative-minded Rapunzel likes to call it: The Evil Spell. And to make things worse, her IQ proves that she's a genius and her teachers think that she should go to the gifted and talented program which she does not care about whatsoever especially if it means being in the same class as the nerd/bully, Andrew. She would rather stay at the homework club with The Witch. Speaking of the homework club, what does Rapunzel really do there? Well, after her dad was diagnosed with C.D., she found a letter from him labeled to Box #5667. The letter explained how the mailbox helps him so much. This letter begins Rapunzel's quest.

This story is written in the form of Rapunzel's letters to Box #5667 with attachments of her crea-

tive responses to homework assignments. Desperate to save her dad, she pours all her emotions and attention to detail into the letters. With the intricacy and spotlessness of the letters, she is confident that her dad will be saved in no time, but then she realizes that she isn't receiving responses, thus upsetting her further.

Having put her emotions so thoroughly into the letters, Rapunzel provides the story with no backdrop necessary. This is also because Rapunzel has to explain everything to Box #5667 because she has just discovered it as the story starts.

As Rapunzel's story is told through the continuous letters, the plot starts to reveal startling points which adds to the building suspense.

Sara Lewis Holmes, the author, has put great thought and emotion into this promising novel. This story won the Ursula Nordstrom First Fiction Contest. Holmes has done an amazing job approaching large problems in a light manner to provoke emotion, smiles, and laughs. With a shocking twist revealed at the end, you will be on the edge of your seat, not wanting the book to end, as young Rapunzel struggles to answer the big question: How do you break an Evil Spell?

Orphan Train

By Christina Baker Kline

By Ali Tyma
Staff Writer

In this historical fiction book, Molly Ayer has been in and out of foster care homes. The only thing keeping her from trouble with the law is community service. Molly is assigned to help an old lady, Vivian, clean out her home. As Molly helps Vivian shift through her belongings and memories, Molly finds that they aren't as different as she once thought. Vivian was an orphaned, Irish immigrant, placed on a train set to go to

different places. Each and every one of the kids placed on that train had no clue where they would end up or what would become of them. Vivian has many unsolved mysteries; Molly has the missing puzzle pieces. What Molly doesn't know is that the answers ultimately set her free, and opens a door to an unlikely friendship. Molly learns that the secrets she carried with her all those years, was the very thing that kept her from true freedom.

It's Summer!



The temperature is finally rising.

No more snow – just fun in the sun.

Ice cream melting down your chin and hanging out with your friends.

Hanging out at the pool and relaxing at the beach.

It's about time we had a brake – summer within your reach.

By Shelby Wilson

The Road Not Taken by Lahari Tammera

"Please rise for the class of 2014! We thank you for sitting through this very long ceremony." Smiling, our Dean Jack Gilinsky, stepped down from the podium. He was the youngest principal or dean that I have ever had. Today was our graduation day for college. For some strange reason our ceremony was based on our high school graduation. I had already had enough of that at the end of high school. I was very lucky to get into Oxford University; almost everyone here is creative and full of life.

"Leigh! Get over here, we need to take pictures!" My best friend Ashton yelled from in front of the food table, I swear that boy is an eating machine. After taking a couple of pictures with him, I sat down under one of the gazebos. Now that college was completed and I had gotten my degree, what was I going to do? I got a paying internship at Syco Records. Basically, I would be writing reviews about different bands and singers who are signed with Syco. I am an English major so it made sense that I would do something related to writing.

As soon as the ceremony was over, I was to go to Syco to get a tour/ orientation. Apparently, not many internships were available at Syco Records. Ashton was coming with me because my nerves were going haywire. When we got there, the lady at the front desk lead us to my work space. It was a small cubicle that smelled faintly of roses. The lady's name was Sky and she was around my age maybe a bit older.

"...and this is our second to last stop for the Syco Records Tour," she paused letting Ashton and I marvel

at the beauty of the large recording room. "This is where many of our extremely talented stars record their very beautiful music." I had been listening to their songs a few days ago. You know the feeling when you are underwater and at the pool and your hair becomes weightless, but gravity slowly brings your feet to the bottom of the pool?

That sense of security when your toes touch the bottom of the pool, knowing that you cannot drown as this pool is too shallow for you to sink. That is how I feel when I listen to Alex and Sierra or just beautiful music in general. I jolted when Ashton tapped me on the arm; I always spaced out when I was thinking about something or really passionate about it.

"Would you like to check out the recording room?" Sky asked.

"Of course!" I said with glee. Ashton and I walked inside while Ashton shut the door behind him. Sky told us how to work everything in the room. Ashton went to sit at the drums; he was actually really good because he had been learning since the age of seven. I stood at the mike ready to sing the song Ashton and I wrote together about a year or two ago. One of the reasons I applied to Syco was because I loved to sing. It was my 'hidden talent' that only Ashton knew about.

Sky gave us the signal to start. Ashton started off with a light beat that started to get more into it after a few seconds. That was my queue to start singing. As I sang, I felt that underwater feeling again and I felt as if I were in a trance. My eyes closed as my foot started to tap along with the beat. I felt as if my heart fell into rhythm with the beat of the drums. As the song came to

an end, someone clapping penetrated my daze.

My eyes fluttered open to see Simon Cowell standing there in front of the recording room glass. Simon was the founder of Syco Records and I was told he was currently in Australia. It was obvious that I was either lied to, or he came back early for some reason. Imagine the surprised look on my face when it finally registered in my mind that one of England's most respected man just heard *me* sing.

"Beautiful! Who are you two and where are you from?" I was in shock, Simon Cowell just claimed that my singing was beautiful and that Ashton's perfect drumming was even more perfect than we could have ever imagined. Simon Cowell usually never accepted someone that easily.

"Why, sir? With all due respect, I would rather not give you that information when we have just met." Ashton said as he got up off of the stool behind the drums. I turned to look at him with raised eyebrows. First of all, who doesn't know who Simon Cowell is? Second, Ashton was polite to his elders, but not *this* polite. Turning back around to Sky and Simon I saw Sky making hand signals to me from behind Simon. I think she was trying to show that this is her first time ever seeing Simon Cowell in person, which was funny because she told us that she had been working here for over two years.

"Well, I am asking because I love her voice and your drumming. Also, I created Syco Records, I'm surprised you don't know me." Ashton's eyes might fall out of his head... Quickly composing himself, he apologized.

"Our names are Ashton Irwin

and Leigh Rivera. We're both originally from Wolverhampton, but moved to Oxford for college." Ashton seemed really comfortable with talking to Simon, but I did not even say a word to Simon yet.

"Awesome, so you know what comes next, right?" What comes next? I don't know what he's even talking about.

"What?" I asked.

"So you do talk... well I am offering you both a record deal, how do you feel about that?"

Immediately, Ashton yelled yes, and everyone turned to look at me as if to ask what my decision would be. I wanted to scream yes as loud as possible, but the one thing that would determine my decision was my little brother, Brent. Our parents were not alive and he was my only family left. If I was to make any decision about becoming famous I want to bring him along with me on the journey.

"Is it possible that I could bring my younger brother along for any tour or trip that we have to take for this signing?" Simon looked surprised for some reason. It seemed he thought I could not speak more than a few words at a time.

"If it means you will agree to the deal then yes, you can bring him everywhere and anywhere you want." I grinned I was most definitely saying yes, I mean who could not say yes to a great offer like this?

"Yes. I agree to the record deal. I will take the road not taken by most and sing my heart out on stage."

Writers Corner, Continued

The Jabberwock Slayer

By Sophie Jorgensen
Grade 7

"Father, oh father, what do they want with you?" Charles, my one and only son, questioned anxiously, tugging on my plain brown shirt. It certainly wasn't every day that an overlooked fellow like me got called to the royal castle by none other than the king himself. Even so, I surely wasn't jumping out of my seat with pure exuberance and exhilaration at this official request. These things just didn't happen to people who slumped around in the fields all day, hopelessly plucking tomatoes from their stems and plowing rich soil only for the satisfaction of the royals; it was obviously a scheme of some sort. Since I was known as the strongest, mightiest man in town (a title I didn't deserve but had inherited from my father), I knew the king just wanted me to complete a dangerous task. Apparently, Charles thought so, too, as his fair face was plastered with the unmistakable look of anxiety. I shoved my belongings into a worn satchel and headed toward the small door leading out of our tiny house.

"Well, are you coming?" I yelled to my son, not expecting an answer in return. He stumbled through the door and sprinted up the hill, not caring at all about how he was dirtying his clothes. On the farm, he turned tireless days of labor into endless days of imaginative fun. Luckily, I was here to protect him from danger he could, and would, stumble upon due to his thoughtless actions. We hiked up the long dirt road without speaking, passing the vast forest and beautiful, shimmering river. What a shame that such a gorgeous, tranquil body of water had to

be located right next to a forest full of dangerous secrets and unforgiving darkness. Lately I'd heard a rumor that a horrid, legendary, beastly creature had taken shelter in that very cluster of overgrown trees. I shivered and continued the journey to the castle at a significantly faster pace.

We arrived at the huge golden doors to the mystical castle. Uniformed men standing beside the doors gracefully opened them so we could enter. My son and I strutted forward, making a memorable entrance, and kept going until we were face to face with the king and queen. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the queen's mouth sag slightly at the sight of our inappropriate attire. Although, it wasn't really inappropriate, just not the vibrant, colorful silk robes she was used to. The king cleared his throat, preparing to make a speech.

"I'm sure you all have heard a legend about a mystical creature called the Jabberwock. You probably, along with most everyone else, assumed this creature was solely fictional. Now, it has come to my attention that people have been spotting this creature, realizing that it is alive and real. Not only is it alive, but it is alive within the borders of our town, in the vast, dark forest beside the river." My son and I both nodded our heads, as we too had heard that. I gulped nervously, as now I understood what he wanted me for; a sacrifice. Well, he probably wanted me to slay the monster, but even he knew that attempt would just result in my death. Sure enough, that was the next thing he asked me. I started picking up my satchel, ready to politely decline, when his gruff voice echoed once again through the palace.

"If you can slay the beast

and bring me back his wretched head by midnight today, I will reward you with a whole new wardrobe, forty pounds of food, and a delightful mansion on the site of your choice. Choose wisely, Alexander, as this may result in death or glory." He handed me a long, sharp, silver sword, and backed away. I knew what I had to do.

Two hours later, I was approaching a family of trees. They swatted at me with their skinny branches, laughing at my stupidity to enter their home. The moon was full, providing luminous light in the unfriendly darkness. Birds chirped in the distance, the wind swayed peacefully to the music of the night, and every once in a while I heard a faint *hoo, hoo* from neighboring owls. I leaned against an aged oak tree, thinking about how I should approach the Jabberwock. While I pondered, I heard a quiet rustling in the bush in front of me. I carefully stepped forward, treading lightly across the forest floor and squinting to identify what was causing the commotion. A humongous creature stood before my eyes. Slimy, green scales covered his entire body. His claws were filled to exact points, so sharp that it could pierce anything. His teeth were shaped like a razor-sharp dagger, ready to rip apart fresh flesh. I slunk back in front of the tree, finding comfort in its tearing bark. Why did I think I could slay this monster? What have I gotten myself into? A million rhetorical questions played like a ticker tape in my brain, but I tried my best to push them away. The Jabberwock stood before me, with eyes of flame, flaring nostrils, and snorting rage. I drew my sword and halfheartedly swung a couple times. He flapped his heavy wings, which were

double the size of his body, and curled his tail in anger. He flashed me his teeth, revealing his utter annoyance, and swung his monstrous claws at me. I was slammed against the hard, dirt floor, his eerie figure hovering over me. Rapidly, I reached for my sword, and took one final swing.

It all happened too fast for me to remember. All I recall is hearing the giant thud of a ninety pound head fall to the forest floor. An automated program took over me after that, carrying out all of the normal human functions I forgot to do myself. It made me grip the slain head tightly, exit the frightening forest, and wander back to the royal castle. I didn't think about making a grand entrance to reveal my heroic entrance; the program did it for me, as I was still in extreme shock. The king and queen welcomed me with friendly, outstretched arms and joyful grins on their wrinkled faces. The kingdom was now safe, all thanks to me. Now, people would not sprint past the forest out of fear, but they would stroll by it and admire its natural beauty. As I walked to my old home, even the tree branches and plant leaves seemed to perk upright. It was definitely the most exciting moment in my entire life, as I had done what was seemingly impossible to ensure safety for the rest of the town. I had impressed my son, who lived a fearless, daring life. Now Charles would no longer have to be shameful that his father couldn't live up to his title; he would boast that he exceeded it, and became the mightiest man ever to walk the earth. Although everyone was so proud of my audacious actions, no one was more proud of what I did than myself. 🐉

Poems Galore

Waking Up

The sun shines through the window,
I open up my eyes.
I look around the room then
I crash back down and die.

My alarm clock goes off then.
I grunt and blink three times.
I stare at my alarm clock;
the time must be a lie.

I crawl out of my blankets,
then get out of my bed.
I stand up straight yet woozy-eyed
I'm feeling so brain-dead.

I wobble to the bathroom,
I collapse on the floor.
I need more time to sleep now,
I need to sleep some more.

I pick up my brush and stare;
I ponder what to do.
I lumber right back out then
I'm feeling really blue.

By Zoe Tishaev
Grade 6

S.S Embarrass

I try to look so causal
then comes my worst nightmare.
Time slows down as I drop my book
It floats down through the air.

Everyone in class turns and stares
The ship has just set sail.
The S.S. Embarrass as everyone starts
To scream the word, "FAIL!"

Everyone laughs at what I did
I wallow my head in shame
The worse punishment is this of
course,
It's super, duper, lame.

I right glance toward my enemy,
A smile in his eye.
I pick up my book and bury my head,
I feel I'd rather die.

For there's nothing more humiliating
than to try to look so cool,
Only to drop something obvious,
and only to look like a fool.

By Zoe Tishaev
Grade 6

Cloudy Game

I watch the trees as they start to shake.
I watch the rain as it fills the lake.

Clouds high above, up in the sky.
Rain starts to fall, leaves start to fly.

The ball whizzes past my ear.
The trees quiver, shake in fear.

The dew-filled field; rain starts to fall.
I think it's time, to start playing ball.

By Zoe Tishaev

Positive Poem

As the final bell of middle school rings
high school begins.
RING!!! Goes your three years
Your body morphs like a caterpillar's
Into a new you
As you walk in through the
The doors of your future
The air travels into through
Your mouth
And out through your nose
You hear the faint sound of older stu-

dents
You are one of us
Repeating and repeating

By Kai Hu

Apprehensive Poem

As the final bell of middle school
rings
high school begins.
NOOO!!! You think
High school will be your personal
murderer
Your friends who go to different
schools
You say goodbye
For eternity
As you walk in through the
The doors of your nightmares
The air pulling you into darkness
Your first class begins
BAM!
The sound of your first homework
assignment
Due the next morning
Your feelings
Immediately slump down like a
sloth's

By Kai Hu

Life on the Hill

Rocky Hill's Got Talent

By Anita Tharmarajah
Editor
Mahi Ganatra
Staff Writer



Kayleigh Nelson sings her heart out

This year's Rocky Hill's Got Talent show went off without a hitch. With acts ranging from break dancing to yo-yo tricks, the crowd was kept engaged the entire way. Mrs. Belman, one of our amazing Spanish teachers, puts the entire show together every year. The show took place on April 9th afterschool. Getting into the show is not an easy process. You must prepare your audition and perform for our wonderful panel of judges and get selected among many of your peers to participate in this memorable event.

The opening act was an intriguing performance of Korean drums. A group of students came together and played harmoniously to the beat. Camila Pesquera moved her hips gracefully to the beat of "Moves like Jagger" with about a dozen hula-hoops. It was spectacular! Eighth grader Navyada Koshatwar sang and played the piano for "Come Home" by OneRepublic. Isabelle Sigler fired away the soulful song "Titanium" by David Guetta ft. Sia. Ethan Goldberg played the classics on the piano with

the pieces "Minuet" and "The Entertainer." Samantha Mensah and Lae'lah Patterson strode across the stage in matching diamond-patterned leggings, a plain white shirt, curled hair, and matching Jordan True Flights. They wowed the crowd with their hip-hop dance.

Cameron Gandy gave the crowd a taste of many flavors of music on his electric guitar. Katie Clagget sang a medley of pop songs that had everyone singing along. Alex Cabrera impressed us all, break dancing to the song "La La La" by Naughty Boy ft. Sam Smith. Anita and Shani performed a duo, Anita playing the piano and Shani singing, to the song "Stay" by Rhianna. Jeevita Tharmarajah sang a lively song called "A Little Bit Gypsy." Casey Devine and Julia wise cracked up a storm of laughter with hilarious jokes; and these are just some of the many performances we were lucky enough to see. Kayleigh Nelson sang a fantastic rendition of "The Way" by Ariana Grande (ft. Mac Miller) while grooving along to her own beat

Ms. Belman once again brought out the very best of Rocky Hill to light. It gave us a chance to experience Dr. Eldridge as an MC. Although she did her best to keep Ms. Smetanick from performing during the talent, she could not stop her from bragging about her super talented students. Rocky Hill's got talent!



Thank You

By Shelby Wilson
Staff Writer

On my first day of school I was scared because I thought I wouldn't have any friends, and I would be late to all my classes. One of my biggest concerns was how my grades would turn out and I wondered how I would manage all of my classes especially the advanced ones. I could not imagine getting good grades with all of these things going on. It turns out though that this was one of the best school years of my life. I made a lot of new friends and kept getting good grades, but most importantly; Rocky Hill made this a great experience for me and most other 6th graders.

Rocky Hill has done all they can to make this an incredible experience for the newest Wildcats! From the very beginning we learned about Outdoor Ed and what a fabulous experience it was. Mrs. Quinn worked very hard with the whole 6th grade team to prepare us all for Outdoor Ed. This was the ultimate trip of teamwork and independence. By the time November rolled around I was all ready for session 2 and I was ready to go to Summit Lake! I learned how to navigate the woods and really appreciate nature. Outdoor Ed was awesome for many reasons; I learned about teamwork and learned to be more independent.

P.E has been another experience that prepared me for success this year. During P.E we were encouraged to run the mile even though it's tiring and it's a lot of work. The teachers were always by our side, encouraging us to do our best and never give up. That's one

of the very important lessons you need for middle school – **NEVER GIVE UP!**

I am also thankful for the many afterschool activities and intramurals that Rocky Hill has to offer. 6th graders have the opportunity to participate in many clubs and intramurals. Participating in these things helps you to feel a part of Rocky Hill and teaches you how to manage your time. Managing your time is key for succeeding in middle school.

One of my favorite places of the whole school is the media center. Ms. Gramatges and Mrs. Heidary have done an amazing job in the media center. The *Mega McCafe*, Book Bites, and competitions are all wonderful ways to immerse yourself in Rocky Hill's atmosphere. Ms. Gramatges and Mrs. Heidary have made the media center into a library paradise, and in this paradise you not only have fun but you learn a lot!

So I ask you fellow 6th grade students, on the last day of school don't forget to say thank you to our Rocky Hill teachers, our main office, guidance counselors, administrators and security and building service team and especially our principal, the one and only Dr. Eldrige! They have made this year a year we will never forget. We have all learned a lot academically but most importantly we have learned new things about ourselves. So thank you Rocky Hill; you've made this one of the best school years of my life. Thank you for providing us an environment where we can learn and achieve great things with hard work, dedication, and pride.

By Mae McDermott
Chief Editor



Ms. Gonzales
Math Teacher

An amazing teacher is level-headed, dedicated, and most importantly, genuinely cares. Ms. Gonzales is all those things and more, and a great gift to all of her students. Teaching sixth and eighth grade is not an easy task, but Ms. Gonzales can always be found helping and guiding her students to success. Her unwavering commitment truly makes her an amazing teacher.

TWR: How long have you been teaching?

Ms. Gonzales: I have been teaching 22 years. I have taught in Texas, Colorado and Maryland. I have taught grades three, four, five, six, and eight. I also taught three and four

-year-olds for one year...that was the hardest! They have a lot of questions. I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from the University of Maryland and joined Teach for America when I graduated. I earned a Masters degree in social work at the University of Denver and a Graduate Endorsement in Special Education at the University of Colorado.

TWR: How do you feel about being nominated?

Ms. Gonzales: I am very honored to be nominated. I have amazing students who make my job easy.

TWR: What path has brought you to being a teacher?

Ms. Gonzales: I really never thought that I would be a teacher. When I graduated I wanted to give back to the community and I explored programs like the Peace Corps. I heard about a new organization called Teach for America which placed non-teachers in schools in areas of need (where there were not enough teachers) for two years. After an interview where they described how difficult it would be I thought I would do something different and did not finish the application process. When they invited me to move to Texas to teach anyway I figured I would give it a try. It was harder than I ever could have

imagined but when I left after my two year commitment I couldn't wait to get back.

TWR: What do you think makes you special as a teacher?

Ms. Gonzales: I think what makes me a little different as a teacher is that I entered the field because I wanted to help students in need... not to deliver content. I have always felt that I need to continue to learn how to teach more effectively because I did not initially have the teacher training that most do. I try to always be open to new ideas for helping students to learn and am constantly searching for how to be better at what I do... I love to see how other teachers set up their classrooms and deliver instruction.

TWR: What do you think makes you special as a person?

Ms. Gonzales: If I were to ask those around me what they think makes me special as a person I think they would say that I am almost always very positive and try to find solutions to problems rather than dwell on them.

TWR: What thing(s) do you consider most important as a teacher?

Ms. Gonzales: The most important thing for me as a teacher is to make my classroom an environment where students feel comfortable to take risks

and make mistakes. I have learned that this is the best way for students to progress with their understanding of the skills we are learning. I want every student in my class to feel welcome in my classroom and I try to make sure they enjoy being there.

TWR: How would you describe your interaction with your students?

Ms. Gonzales: I try to set up a classroom with clear expectations but also allow students to be themselves. I want to have a classroom environment that allows all students the freedom to learn the way they do best. I want to encourage all students to be involved in each lesson and to feel confident in themselves as a learner and a person.

TWR: Would you like to share any additional information with the students and staff?

Ms. Gonzales: I have worked in several buildings in a few states and I can say for sure that the students and staff here are truly amazing. It is a privilege to work at Rocky Hill! Thank you, Ms. Gonzales, for all that you do for your students! It is a privilege to have you as a teacher and you truly are a gift.

Sports

Redskins Free Agency

By Dylan Maeda
Staff Writer

The Redskins have been busy this offseason acquiring new players and letting go of others. Overall, they spent over 110 million dollars. They added on players including DeSean Jackson, Ryan Clark, and Andre Roberts. But in the process of getting new talent, some original Redskins had to leave, like Fred Davis. The biggest addition made this offseason was the signing of DeSean Jackson who was formerly the wide receiver for the Philadelphia Eagles. He signed a three year, 32 million dollar contract, which means he will get \$10.6 million a year. This speedy receiver will be a great addition, with his speed and catching ability. Alongside Pierre Garcon it will give RG3 a bigger arsenal. Many players have spoken openly about their happiness in signing Jackson. Captain and starting nose tackle Barry Cofield said, "A guy I absolutely hated playing against for eight years and a guy that hurt my teams countless times, so I was very excited getting him." Supposedly Jackson was cut off the Eagles because of bad work ethic, but these rumors aren't bothering the Redskins at all as they are happy about him being on the team. Some people question how he will play with RG3, since Jackson has a reputation of being a selfish player. Many accusations have been targeted



DeSean Jackson

at Jackson, but he'll put all of that behind him before he's ready to play.

On the other side of the ball the Redskins signed Jason Hatcher, a defensive tackle from their division rival Dallas Cowboys. His contract is four years \$27.5 million, which was one of the biggest deals this offseason. Hatcher is coming off of his best season in which he had eleven sacks, but some people question his age as he turns 32 this July. The defensive game he played in Dallas, where he thrived, is very similar to what he will be playing in Washington so fans are hoping he will produce good stats. He could be a great boost to their defensive line.

When London Fletcher announced his retirement late last season it left the Redskins without an inside linebacker position. They fixed that by resigning Perry Riley, who will take Fletcher's spot. The Redskins are looking to be back in the playoffs next season, and if all these new additions work out, there is no

The Washington Wizards

Vikram Jasti
Staff Writer

What a season The Washington Wizards have had, making it to the playoffs since the 2008-2009 season! How impressive is that! They ended the season 44-38 finishing the season with a win in Boston.

The first game of the Bulls-Wizards series in the United Center led to The Wizards win 102-93. It wasn't impressive game because the Bulls lead by six at the half, then they lead by three, and then Washington took over. The Wizards cut a 13-point deficit to win the game. Nene though was red hot this season, plowing through to make points in the basket. He had 24 points, eight boards and three assists. Although, he was fouled out late in the fourth quarter, The Wizards had already taken the lead. John Wall did not disappoint! He led his team to victor over The Bulls. After the game, John Wall told reporters, "It's very intense. I've watched it going to a couple of games, but it's a lot different when you're on the court. There was one segment when I couldn't really breathe when I was going up and down the court." Wizards lead the series 1-0.

The Wizards kept the Bulls on their toes during Game 2 in the series. Although the Bulls were ahead with 26-14, The Wizards rallied to win the game. Bradley led the charts



The Wizards main guys!

scoring 26 points for his team. Nene added 17 points as the Wizards went on to beat The Bulls. Clearly it was a team effort and Wizards fans were energized. "I think we did a great job staying calm and composed," Wall said.

In spite of their losses, most Wizards fans had a lot to celebrate this season. According to Jonathan Munshaw, "Washington has a lot of be proud of heading into the offseason, despite choking away the 19-point lead in Game 4 and losing to Indiana." In retrospect, The Wizards have given fans a reason to hope. Washingtonians have reasons to proud of The Wizards.



More Images from The RHMS Willpower Game



Ms. Tippet demonstrates good sportsmanship.



Mr. James Wilberding flies high to score for the team!



Mr. Lee scores for the team.



It's all about playing remembering and paying tribute.

Costly Mistakes

By Dylan Maeda
Staff Writer



As we all know nobody is perfect, especially in media. But even those who know about media best make bad mistakes and blurt out uncalled for and sometimes rude things. When this happens it will be recorded, shared, edited, and scrutinized.

Recently, a recording of former Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling was leaked onto the internet. In the recording Sterling made racist remarks towards African-Americans. Of course people responded negatively towards him, especially since 80% of the NBA is African-American and over 60% of the Clippers players are African-American! The media was all over the story, from ESPN to CNN. President Obama publicly condemned what he said. Hall of Fame player Michael Jordan said, "There is no room in the NBA — or anywhere else — for this kind of racism and hatred." Several teams retorted by wearing black socks while the fans held up sign insulting Sterling. Everyone talked and waited for the new commissioner of the NBA Adam Silver to punish him. A few days after the recording leaked, Silver sentenced Sterling to a lifetime ban of the Clippers along with a 2.5 million dollar ban and forced him to sell the team. Because of his comment, not many players or fans think highly of him.

Moving from sports to politics, during the 2012 presidential

campaign Mitt Romney made a very controversial remark. He said that certain people would vote for Obama, "No matter what" and that "Worry about those people." He then implied that 47% of voters will vote for Obama because they have a lower income. Though it was known by everybody that Romney came from a rich background, it still doesn't justify why he said it, some people even think it cost him the election.

Of course nobody is perfect, but people question why these people who are in the public spotlight constantly make such bad mistakes as these. Sometimes their whole career can be ruined by one sentence like Donald Sterling so it's important for them to be careful about what they say. The phrase, 'think before you speak' comes to mind when talking about media moguls.

Another phrase I think about is, 'want you say defines who you are' and through media we've discovered the ugly truth underneath the mask they put on for the public. We would like to think that problems such as racism and economic discrimination are behind us now but events like these prove that that is isn't true. In these times it's hard to know if a person we like during an interview is the same person in their house alone. Either way, it's important for everyone to think before they speak.

Special Features

Service Learning Hour Opportunities

By Katelyn Folmer
Staff Writer

There are many ways to earn SSL hours during the sweltering heat of summer. What are SSL hours, and why do I have to read this, you say? SSL hours are hours of community service (you need at least 75 hours to graduate from high school). How do you get SSL hours? You can get service hours by performing work for an approved SSL organization. This article is all about getting these hours during the summer season. You could go see your teacher from the previous grade and help them out with school! Yes, that is an approved opportunity! Many opportunities are listed below directly from the Montgomery County Volunteer Center website:

Summer Camp Counselor in Training

"This is a great opportunity to hone leadership skills while helping young children have a great summer playing, swimming, and making friends. This is a volunteer job requiring commitment, responsibility, teamwork, self-motivation, and a high energy level." Being a Summer Camp Counselor in training is a great opportunity if you love making friends

and swimming.

Kitchen Helper

"Kitchen helpers help make the meals we deliver to homebound neighbors. The work includes packing/serving cold and hot lunches. Students can help on days off from school and over the summer." Love working with food? Do you enjoy making others happy? Then a kitchen helper will be the right SSL opportunity for you. You could help your neighbors that are too sick to come out of the house by making them food!

Guitar Pals Internship

"Middle and High School students who are currently studying and are proficient in guitar will mentor an elementary or middle school student as part of the after school clubs programs. The younger student will be designated by economic needs and interest in music. He/she will be selected by the school counselor and music teacher as someone who would benefit from, but cannot afford, private music lessons." Do you play guitar? Do you consider yourself good? Do you do well with younger children? Then a guitar internship will be perfect for you. You will get

SSL hours from your talent at the musical instrument. Here is the contact information:

Address: 18108 Metz Drive
Germantown, MD 20874
Phone: 301-916-1439

Tomato-Stringing Volunteer

"This volunteer will help us string our tomato plants so they grow vertically instead of drooping onto the ground--a very important task and good for someone seeking a peaceful, repetitive task in the outdoors. This role is needed once or twice per week, for a few hours between 8am-3pm, May through July. We will provide training on how to string tomatoes!" Do you love the outdoors? Do you like tomatoes? Do you want to know (or already know) how to string tomatoes so they don't droop? This opportunity is a great for you! Here is all of the information that you need to contact and come to this opportunity:

Address: Red Wiggler Community Farm Clarksburg, MD 20871
Phone: (301)916-2216
Email: info@redwiggler.org

Greenhouse Volunteer

"This volunteer will help our Growers seed and transplant plants in the greenhouse and in our program build-

ing. Seeding and transplanting are the important first steps toward growing our vegetables out in our fields. This volunteer must have strong attention to detail, and could either work on his or her own or be comfortable managing or supervising the work of others.

This is an indoor task, for those who would rather not work in all weather outside! This position is needed one day per week, can be done in the morning or the afternoon, 8am-12pm or 1pm-4pm, and is needed March through May." This opportunity is great if you love the outdoors, learning about new things, and working with plants. This is great! Here is all of the information that you need to contact and come to this opportunity:

Address: Red Wiggler Community Farm Clarksburg, MD 20871
Phone: (301)916-2216
Email: info@redwiggler.org

You can be a summer counselor in training, a kitchen helper, a guitar mentor, a tomato-stringing professional, and a greenhouse volunteer all in the one season of summer! Summer is not that long away! Start planning now! Good luck!

Coldplay: Ghost Stories

By Apan Banua
Staff Writer



If you've heard Coldplay recently on the news or radio, great! That means you aren't living under a rock. Coldplay released their new album entitled *Ghost Stories* on May 19, and excelled far beyond what any of us had expected. Coldplay is claimed to be one of the greatest bands in music, using their incredible ability to link relatable lyrics with catchy melodies to their advantage.

Coming off their last album *Mylo Xyloto*, a much more upbeat album, Coldplay decided to go back to their roots. But the question that everybody has is can they bring back the magic they had in *Fix You*, *The Scientist*, and in *Paradise*? Most think their new album is mainly about the lead singer, Chris Martin, and his troubled relationship with his ex-wife Gwyneth Paltrow. The couple split up in March of 2014. From the first song

to the last, *Ghost Stories* creates an obvious theme of heartbreak and helplessness. Instead of giving an inkling or a hint about his emotion and leaving listeners to make theories, Chris Martin comes out straightforward in his lyrics in rather spectacular fashion. Many of the songs in *Ghost Stories* have a nice mellow and relaxing tone, but the other ones sound like a literal ghost is singing.

So if you're a Coldplay fan wondering if they still have that magic, *Ghost Stories* has many rich lyrics with catchy melodies in the background. So yes, Coldplay still possesses that magic they will forever have, and hopefully will continue to create incredible, moving albums for years to come.

Corruption

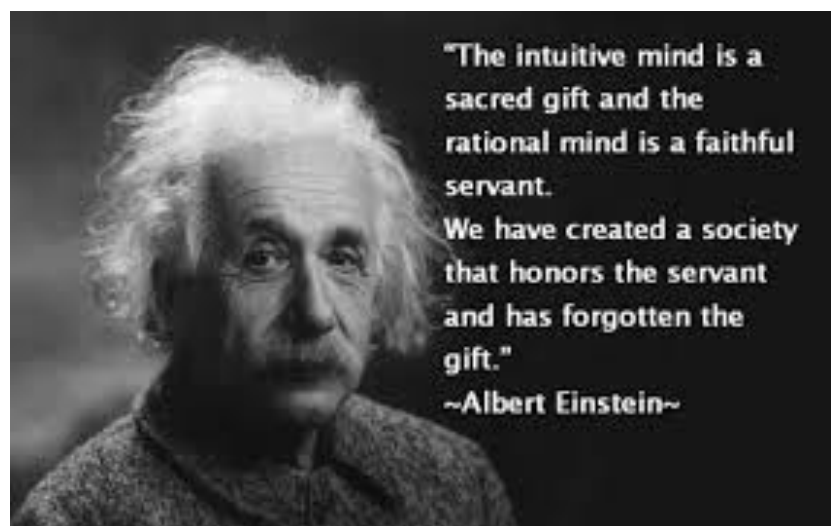
By Sooah Sohn
Editor

Every field has some corruption and backhand deals. There are so many connections between people that want- and face it, every human wants- that there is always a percentage of politics involved. The music field is not an exception. A world that seems bathed in fame and soul, the music industry is as dirty as any. Superiors give positions to those who will unconditionally serve and support them, no matter how morally wrong their roads go. Those with true talent often do not get to experience their full, deserved accolade amidst the fierce competition that brews in our everyday lives.

When stars with immense talent don't have as much popularity as they should, or vice versa, some get the same feeling of frustration as when criminals don't get their proper punishments. Brilliant musicians that are little-known, and those that have no talent at all but make money and

fans effortlessly, are the topics of many conversations among teens our age. Even overpriced concert tickets could be the effect of corruptions behind the camera. The soft, pink light that outlines the much respected worlds of music, law, and even medicine is just an illusion to blind us from the true darkness behind the scenes.

What causes this corruption, and is there a way to stop it? The idea of corruption seems almost too ugly to accept into a world that would be much easier without it. The concept of injustice is something that most people reel back at, without knowing how much of it is around them. "A good lawyer knows the law, but a great lawyer knows the judge," is an unfortunately very true statement, not only in the world of law but also in every other field. Because of human greed and cowardliness, there really is no realistic way to rid the world of this injustice. The only thing we can do is to hope we don't get caught in the worst of it.



"The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift."
~Albert Einstein~

Special Features Cont.

Fidelity

By Mae McDermott
Chief Editor

Fortunate people find the right person to share their lives with. She is different—no, *we* are different. We were made for each other.

I cannot remember a moment in my life when we were stripped of each other's company. There is no reason for us to part here . . . we live a simple life from our hilltop, overlooking the glorious acres below.

Tall, strong and majestic, she stands still during the day, gazing onward with a distant smile. Muscles taut, I join her, staying completely alert until the sun ceases to burn above us and the moon has begun to whisper sweet rhymes, lulling Earth's children to sleep. Only then do we creep out of hiding and onto the moonlit grass.

Always filled to the brim with unsaid words, her eyes speak for her rather than her voice. Those beautiful eyes twinkle for a moment's time before we set off, prowling the grounds like panthers stalking their prey. Path after path winds through the endless hills. The turrets of a grand building can still be seen towering above the treetops, their dainty turquoise details turned to a dark navy by the night. The faint sweetness of flowers wafts through the chilled air as we pass the tall garden walls, and with each graceful step she takes, my heart gets a little bit closer to bursting. A gentle breeze lifts her intricately woven hair; we simply go where the wind takes us, with no destination in mind.

Whether we are creeping across the silt of the woods or sifting through the lake's clear waters, we are both content, for we are both together.

Life *can* be as simple as blowing through the breeze with someone you love. Life is as simple as you make it.

Walking along the dirt road and guided by the sunflower fields, we come to a sudden halt. Her fair features sharpen in concern for just a moment, and I bristle, ready to leap



The statue of Diana, perched high atop a hill overlooking the Biltmore Estate, inspired this story. Her faithful companion will always stand by her side.

into action—but her worries have already vanished from her face. When she smiles knowingly at me, my heart swells in my chest. I am proud to know her.

Time to turn back . . .

The long journey back home forbids us from stopping until we reach our perch on the hill. We reach our destination just as the morning light begins to dance in the valleys and birds begin to sing their songs.

I then jump at the sound of something I have barely heard before. Her voice, a hushed whisper, cuts through my reverie.

"I am going beyond the sunflowers tonight, but I must go alone." *Alone?* I wonder. *Why can't I—*

"Because this is a journey I must take on my own," she strokes my cheek gently. Despite her warm hands and soothing voice, my insides have frozen into ice.

"I won't be too terribly long. This trip must be made."

How can I protect you if you are not with me?! my mind screams.

Looking into her pale eyes, like graceful, delicate snowflakes, I can only nod and muster the strength not to cry out in fear.

The following day is painful. I cannot bar my mind from going to dark places. Even the sun's glorious rays are a reminder of what is coming once they disappear over the horizon.

We are connected to such an extent that, if she vanished, she would take a part of my soul with her—I would live a mere half-life. I would be incomplete. I cannot let her go on her own.

As the sun blazes overhead, I am struck by the most horrible visions—I am alone, engulfed in dark, cloudy hues. Crying hollow tears, I lie bleeding on the ground.

My heart burns and my mind spins out of control . . . she is my sweetest dream and my worst nightmare all at once.

The sky has shifted to a pale orange. *All I can do is wait.*

I love her. She revitalizes me and reminds me why I live—to protect her and make her happy. I have

an important job and I cannot not fail. *I cannot fail . . .*

I am pulled out of my reverie by her gently tugging on my ear. "The time has come."

I watch grimly as she steps onto the grass and calmly prepares herself for the journey. *Please don't go . . .*

I jump onto the grass and try in vain to stop her, desperately pulling her arm. She stops and turns to face me, her eyes boring into mine.

Suddenly she sighs and kneels, the soft white fabric of her tunic absorbing the moisture of the lush grass. She takes my head in her hands. "I love you."

My eyes close and I focus on the gentle *thump* of her heartbeat. *I love you too.*

"You are my best friend, and you protect me like no one else." It feels almost as if she is reading my soul before my very eyes. She continues in a whisper, "You revitalize me and remind me why I live."

"You are my sweetest dream; but in order to support the dreams we share, we must both have faith . . . and believe."

"You have to believe that I can protect myself, and I cannot leave without knowing I have your full support."

I feel as though that part of my soul is trying to escape me and my nightmares are being realized. Tears well in my eyes. *I don't want you to go . . .*

Yet I know that she must.

My tight grip on her loosens until my limbs limply fall to the ground. She leans forward and, with a kiss like a warm breeze, disappears.

Here I sit, waiting for her to return to me by daylight, to sit beside me and gaze at the valleys below before venturing into their dark depths by nightfall. There is a dull pain within me, an ache that I cannot relieve.

The battle against uncertainty is a brutal one, but faith will win. For now, I will wait atop my hill—our hill—until I see my beautiful girl round the corner once more.

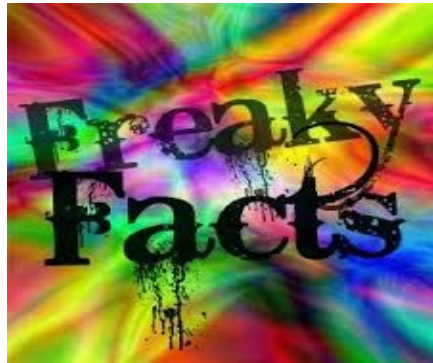
Freaky Facts

By Aleysha Varghese
Staff Writer

All you really learn in school are facts, facts, and more facts. Is there any way we can have some fun with this information?

Yes, there is one way—**FREAKY FACTS**. The amazing book of enjoyable facts truly conveys how wonderfully strange our world is.

Freaky Facts definitely shows how captivating information can be. For example, in Oklahoma, you can be arrested for making ugly faces at a dog. In Kentucky, it's illegal to paint your lawn red. You have a higher chance of getting killed by cows than sharks! Can you believe that these are FACTS?



There are countless facts in the world, most of which are overlooked—like crazy world records, weird laws, and really freaky things. After you read this great book, you will see that these facts are linked to the world around you. When you see a caterpillar you can trace back to the fact that

a caterpillar's first meal is usually its eggshell. Or when you watch Mickey Mouse with your younger siblings and see Donald Duck you won't forget that his middle name is Fauntleroy.

This book was written by workers from "Pocket Pal." This

book has a world record of weird laws and really freaky facts. The purpose of this book was not only for fun information—it was written to express their opinions through the pictures under each fact. I have to admit, most of the facts are accurate—although I am sure that "in Virginia you must take a bath outside" is not. That's a bit of a weird, personal opinion!!

I won't ruin the rest of the book for you, but I highly encourage you to read it. You can take a break off from school or homework and read the book. Enjoy reading!!

Miscellaneous and Current Issues

Message in a Bottle: What's Your Message?

By Mae McDermott
Chief Editor

Imagine a yellowing, worn letter drifting through the ocean in a glass bottle, facing the harshest of storms and the fiercest of ravenous waters. This message will transcend time, sometimes living a longer life than the person who sent it adrift. Bottled messages are the most seasoned of earth's travelers and the most dedicated of messengers – they persist through years and countless miles only to wash up on shore and share their owner's words with the world. These bottles are an extension of their writers' spirit and passion. These pioneers have a beautiful, enchanting magic that is all their own.

The proof lies in CNN hero and Living Land & Waters volunteer Chad Pregracke's river-cleaning experiences. "It's a romantic idea," he admits, "and truthfully, most of them aren't like a treasure map. Usually they're more intimate... they're sort of writing to the universe or the one above, just putting their thoughts out there." A bottled message also reconnected mother Mimi Fery to her late daughter, Sidonie, who was killed by a tragic fall at her boarding school in 2010 when she was only 18 years old. Sidonie has sent a bottle to sea ten years before it was found in late 2012, reading "Be excellent to yourself, dude."

The power of these messages is undeniable, linking people of different times and places who would otherwise remain separate. I began to wonder – what would our RH staff members' messages be if they were



to send their own bottle adrift? What words would they record, messages that could be found years from now?

So, Rocky Hill staff – what is your message?

Mr. Grimes - If at first you don't succeed, never try skydiving.

Mr. Perrone - Scratched into animal hide with a stick and then etched with charcoal. "Never, Ever Give Up!" and "The Treasure is within you! Not in this bottle."

Ms. Stup - "The biggest mistake one could ever make is being too afraid to make one."

I truly believe our mistakes are imperative and lead us to true wisdom. I know, I've made a lot of them. Does that make me wise? Not yet, I fear. I use this quote, personally, to remind me that I shouldn't let my insecurities obstruct my path to that wisdom.

Mr. Ohm - Be kind. It takes effort, patience, and understanding but strive to be kind to others. Some people will embrace your actions and, in turn, help to spread kindness. Some will be suspicious of your intent but may eventually succumb to your sincerity. Be kind, I am trying.

Mr. Heinemann - Live each day to the fullest! Leave the world better than you found it. Make your interactions with others genuine. Stand up for what is right and stand up for others who lack the courage or ability to do it themselves. Do what you love and love what you do. Money isn't everything. Happiness can be found in the satisfaction of a job well done and your impact on others. Those feelings are valuable and they are what really make you rich. Love and cherish your family above all—they are a part of you!

Mr. Sweeney - "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." (Franklin D. Roosevelt). I've always thought that was a great way to describe why we teachers do what we do.

Ms. Paul - Short and sweet: It's easy to forget what's important in life...so don't!

Ms. Engstrom - There are no wrong answers in life. Life can seem like a test in school, full of challenging questions and problems. But without challenges, life would be boring. Take any challenge in life as

a lesson to be learned. Most importantly, never give up from a challenge, unless of course the challenge is unrealistic (like lifting a car above your head). You don't have to be competitive – but you need to be strong. Help others solve their challenges, and allow people to help you. Take yourself seriously and set a goal for yourself. Never settle for mediocrity, set high expectations for yourself. I learned this best through sports. I played field hockey at the Division 1 level in college and was invited to try-out for the United States National Field Hockey Team.

This became a major life lesson for me that I never thought would impact my life so much. I didn't make the team. A coach stopped me before leaving the Olympic Village and said, "you know, you could have made the team if you took yourself seriously". I didn't train hard, never believed in myself, and I got what I deserved. The plane ride back to Maryland from Chula Vista, California only forced me to reflect and gain more confidence and determination. After a year of training hard and studying the game, I returned to tryouts and earned a spot on the US National Team. It was an honor to represent our country and wear that United States jersey.

There are no wrong answers in life, but you must take control of your answers. Find YOUR passion in life. Have NO regrets. Don't let a challenge get in the way of YOUR dream.

Save the Children Advocacy Summit

By Apan Banua
Staff Writer



On April 8 and 9, Save the Children had their annual Advocacy Summit, in Washington D.C. You might be thinking, *What are you talking about?* The Save the Children Advocacy Summit is a two day event where people meet up with congressmen and congresswomen to discuss child issues.

The two issues at this event were *Early Childhood Education* and *Newborn Deaths*. *Early Childhood Education* regards kids under the age of five that aren't getting early childhood education or preschool, thus putting the child up to 18 Months Behind. 90% of the brain is developed by age five, and that is why people are trying to raise their voices about this issue. The other issue was a global issue was *Newborn Deaths*. 18,000 newborns die every day from diseases we commonly get, which are preventable. The number of newborns dying every year has declined from 36,000,000 to 12,000,000 a year, but 12 million is still a ginormous number and it is incredibly sad.

I had the honor of participating in this event, and the representa-

tives that I met were Barbra Lee, Nancy Pelosi, and Jared Huffman. The funny thing about meeting with these representatives was that the staff members didn't really pay attention to many of the adults, but more so us, the kids. Because who would know more about child issues than, well you know, kids. Although we are kids and we don't have as many rights as adults, we still have a major voice—we just have to wield it.

Our members of congress honestly don't care about what adults have to say these days, but they pay a lot of attention to us. Thus, by doing something small, like writing a letter to your state representative about some issues you might have, you could make a big difference.

Hopefully after reading this article, you're inspired to raise your voice about some issues that are plaguing our society. We really *can* make a big difference.

#Bring Back our Girls

By Shelby Wilson
Staff Writer

Aren't you grateful that you live in a country where you are entitled to an education and live where your government supports education for all children? In some countries girls are not entitled to education. This is especially true in Nigeria. An article that was posted on the USA TODAY website reported that "on April 15th, more than 300 schoolgirls were abducted from the Chibok Government Girls Secondary School in northeast Nigeria."

While the girls were at school they heard gunfire and assumed they were military men and went outside. The men were kidnappers. These kidnappers were from a group called Boko Haram. This is a hateful group of individuals who kidnapped more than 300 girls because they consider education a sin especially for girls. The parents of the girls are scared and worried that the men are using their daughters as slaves. Ms. Odey grew up in the southern part of Nigeria. "I can only imagine the horror those girls have had to endure," say Ms. Odey. "I continue to pray for their safe return to their parents."

Here in our country on social media people are asking for our



awareness and for our government to help Bring Back our Girls in Nigeria.

The #Bring Back our Girls was tweeted out by our First Lady Michelle Obama, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Malala Yousafazi, youth activist. Malala tweeted, "Girls in Nigeria are my sisters." Students from Walt Whitman High School held a candle light vigil for the girls who were kidnapped. This vigil, called "Vigil for the Nigerian 300," represented the hope for freedom for the Nigerian Girls.

I am asking you to work hard in school, especially if you are a girl, to show your support for the girls in Nigeria. Working hard on your own education will show the Nigerian girls and the whole world that girls are smart and deserve the same educational opportunities as anyone else. Our education is the ticket to freedom, hope and peace. **#BRING BACK OUR GIRLS.**

Technology Page

Cyber Friends

Ms. Katie Odey
Supervising Editor

Social media has redefined friendship for millions of people in The United States and abroad. Popular sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have millions of users who spend considerable amounts of time connecting with “friends” online. Many users have over a hundred friends, whose lives have literally become an open book. The knowledge that you have so many friends can be reassuring, but you have to wonder who your friends really are. More importantly, how close are you to your “friends”? A new University of Oxford study found out that despite the number of friends we have, people still have just a handful of people they consider close friends.

It is important to remember that we as human beings feel the need to stay connected with others. Ironically, social media is isolating us and giving us a false sense of community. Imagine having a classic ice-cream social event or a neighborhood meet-

and-greet event. Imagine handshakes and hugs that could lead to lifelong friendships. With a click of the mouse we make friends with people we may never meet. We spend time reading about the lives of others; at the same time we miss out on making real connections with the people meet at school, at work, at church or people with whom we have similar interests. Our techno-gadgets have become our tools of isolation. “The philosophy behind social media (beyond its potential for profits) is that people are longing for connection and that there has been an obstacle that prevents individuals from connecting with one another,” says Joel Bain, Editor-in-Chief of Sour Grapes Winery.

Despite of the success of social media and the possibility of connecting with long lost friends and acquaintances, we cannot overlook the fact that people are becoming more connected to their technological devices. “People today are more connected to one another than ever before in human history, thanks to inter-

net-based social networking sites and text messaging. But they’re also more lonely and distant from one another in their unplugged lives,” says Massachusetts Institute of Technology social psychologist Sherry Turkle, PhD. This trend clearly explains the idea of being lonely in a crowd. “Our real-life social networks are hugely important and vanishing,” says Joe Robinson, author of Don't Miss Your Life.

Friendship takes commitment and requires a deeper connection than the superficial connections we get through social media. According to Joe Robinson, “What we fail to see is that social media does not bring us together, but drives us apart by satisfying ourselves with a superficial level of human connection; one that does not last, nor does it build us up.”

Technology has made communications possible and easily accessible, yet we are missing out on life. Our sedentary lifestyle is making us resort to unhealthy habits because of our isolation. Joe Robinson writes, “It’s a little ironic that, as social me-

dia pushes the virtual friend count to new heights, the culture as a whole is getting ever more isolated. Researchers say that Americans have fewer close confidants outside family than ever before. One in four has no confidants at all. A study at the University of Michigan reported that 75 percent of college students have lower empathy than their peers did 30 years ago, which isn't going to boost the social cause; neither will a spike in students' narcissism over that same period, documented in research at San Diego State University.” How can we have real empathy for others when we don't even care to know who they are? They may be our cyber friends after all.

There are friends to meet and places to explore, even in our backyards. I suggest we give our iPhones, computers and other techno-gadgets a break and enjoy meeting real people and making real friends.

10 Years of Social Media

...and everything has changed.

Pros of Electronic Devices

By Aakriti Mahajan
and Arunima Arun
Staff Writers

Have you ever wanted to use your cell phone or other electronic devices in school? Have you ever secretly used it during class? Electronics can be very tempting for us, but they can also be useful and productive. Using them in our school can engage students to pay attention to concepts, so that they don't sleep during class. There are many schools that are starting to experiment with BYOD (bring your own device). What if students at Rocky Hill could have a chance to do this as well?

School can be a constant struggle especially when you have trouble focusing and cannot understand concepts. Electronic devices have helped students concentrate and make learning more engaging for students. According to an article by New York Times “Officials at the schools say the students’ own devices are the simplest way to use a new generation of learning apps that can, for example, teach them math, test them with quizzes and enable them to share and comment on each other’s essays.” With so many educational apps in app stores, learning can be more enjoyable and easier for students. Being able to use electronic devices is a convenient way to have access to information from a variety of sources. If there’s Wi-Fi, students can find almost any information they need with reliable sources.

Some electronics have access to Microsoft Word (on the app store), so you won't need to use the school computers. Many students have been complaining about the load of textbooks and workbooks they need to carry. According to an article by Cynthia Boris on the NBC news website, “you can easily load a whole semester's worth of textbooks onto an e-reader” Life would be so much easier

without carrying textbooks! Many of us enjoy listening to music on our smartphone, mp3 player or other electronic device. Music can actually help us focus and pay attention. According to a Stanford study “The research team showed that music engages the areas of the brain involved with paying attention, making predictions and updating the event in memory.” Listening to music while running can speed up your pace.

According to ScientificAmerican.com “In the last 10 years the body of research on workout music has swelled considerably, helping psychologists refine their ideas about why exercise and music are such an effective pairing for so many people as well as how music changes the body and mind during physical exertion.” There have been schools all around the United States that have been experimenting with BYOD. In North Carolina Onslow County Schools students were allowed to use electronic devices to encourage math learning. The study got amazing results. Students’ scores increased by 10% on Algebra II and Geometry end of the year tests. Also students scored 20% higher on an Algebra I end of the year test.

Electronic devices can be used for productive purposes in school. Kids would be happier, and will approach school with a positive attitude. Bringing electronics to school can also teach kids responsibility, by making sure they keep their devices safe. As long as we stay responsible with our electronic devices, we can make school much more enjoyable for everyone. Let's all try to get a chance to bring BYOD to Rocky Hill.



Blue Stacks App Player

By Kai Hu
Tech Editor

Are you the type of person that loves playing iOS and Android apps? But care about your phone, so you want to but can't play that long? Well this is the perfect thing for you. Blue Stacks App Player is this new software absolutely free for your Windows computer. It's still in Beta so it still might have some bugs. All you have to do is install it into your computer and that's it. You download your favorite apps like you would on your smartphone.

Now your may ask how do gameplay work. Well usually it's whatever your tap for your phone you mouse click. And for games that you tilt your phone you use the up down left right buttons on your keyboard. I asked some people after trying it out for themselves and how they felt about it. Kevin Curry says “the best



user interface among the rest”. Malek Shedid says “It's is very good, useful with me. thanks very much. I like it. Happy playing”. Onani Banda says “As it is in Beta phase I expected a few problems so was pleasantly surprised that the only flaws were a few crashes when closing apps and the lack of a PC file transfer method.

Overall I see a bright future for Bluestacks, as long as development continues to improve.” I personally love it and I think you might to. If you want to try it out for yourself go to <http://www.bluestacks.com>!

Nintendo Shutting Down Wi-Fi

By Kai Hu
Tech Editor

Nintendo is ending certain functions offered through the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection on May 20, 2014. The discontinued service will affect online play, leaderboards and matchmaking for many Nintendo Wii, DS and DSi games. Users of the consoles can still play the games in offline mode. “On line play for Wii U and Nintendo 3DS games will be unaffected (aside from the Wii mode on Wii U and Nintendo DS games on Nintendo 3DS family systems). Other online functionality, such as access to the Wii Shop Channel, the Nintendo DSi Shop and video-on-demand services, are also not affected at this time,” said Nintendo in a statement.

Beyond the closing date, the services that will keep working on the DS include the DSi Shop, DS Browser and DSi Browser. Netflix NFLX, Hulu, the Wii Shop Channel, Internet Channel, Pay & Play and YouTube will continue running on the Wii. The Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection removal affects 20 Nintendo published games like Mario Kart Wii, Pokémon Battle Revolution, Mario Kart DS, Super Smash Brothers Brawl, and pretty much all 15 Pokémon games for DS. Nintendo originally launched the Wi-Fi Connection service in November 2005. On March 31, 2014, Nintendo will also shut down the Nintendo Video Service in Australia and Japan for the Nintendo 3DS. The Nintendo Video Service offered free 3D videos for the 3DS since July 2011

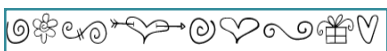
Thanks for the Memories

By Linette Kingston
Staff Writer

It wasn't too long ago when we walked through the front door of Rocky Hill, or so it seems. We walked into this enormous building with eyes glued to our schedules, frowns on our faces, and obvious trepidation as we tried to navigate through the confusing school. Now, walking around the school is like a second nature. With familiar faces all around, it's amazing how long we've known our fellow peers. We remember these events: Outdoor Ed, Suessical, PRIDEaPaloosa, the Talent Show, Medieval Times, the Bowling Trip? Below are some of your fellow 8th graders' favorite memories.



Hannah MacTaggart
My favorite memory at Rocky Hill was when the chorus and band groups [and orchestra] went to Hershey Park. The day started at 4:30 in the morning and ended at midnight. The first thing we had to do was sing in front of the judges. But after that we all got to walk around the park in groups with our friends. Without a teacher! The funniest but most annoying part of the day was when we waited in line for an hour and a half, yet by the time we got up to the front, we had to go to the awards ceremony. After it was time to go, everyone fell asleep on the bus, and the people who were awake put popcorn in their mouths. Ha. That was my favorite memory at Rocky Hill.



Roshni Patel

Medieval Times was a great trip! It was towards the end of the year, and it definitely took stress off of students. Being able to go someplace fun with your friends is all a student really needs to make a great memory.



Mike Koanang

My best memories at Rocky Hill were made at those three days spent at Outdoor Ed. We sang songs and played so many games. I got to meet new people, to try different things such as going to the river to find bugs, and to go on scavenger hunts. The best part of this all was sitting around the campfire, talking to friends, eating s'mores, and relaxing.



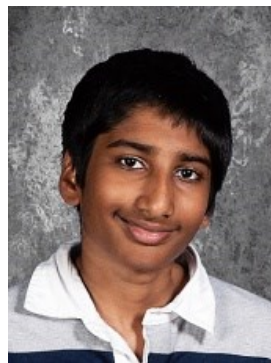
Sam Wellington

My favorite memory from Rocky Hill is when the Boys' Basketball Team beat the Neelsville team at Neelsville. The entire team worked together, and it was our first win.



Michelle Sung

My favorite memory was when we went to Medieval Times in 7th grade. It was interesting to see the show and also get to hang out with my friends. I also thought that Outdoor Ed was memorable because I had a broken arm during that time. I was limited in what I could do, but it was still fun.



Chandan Murthy

The teachers here at Rocky Hill have inspired me to do my best. Whenever I don't understand anything, they help me until I understand the topic completely. They let us have fun, but teach us at the same time. The thing that bothers me is that many students do not respect teachers and do not understand how much teachers do for them. Teachers work hard, but they don't receive anything in return. My teachers inspire me to do my best, even if it doesn't seem rewarding.



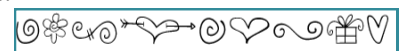
Zarafsha Uzaman

My favorite memory was during our winter concert last year. The music was pretty difficult since it was "Hallelujah Chorus," a world-renown song. We had worked for months on this piece. Our moment finally came at the concert, when we sang loud and proud. When the song finally ended, the audience rose to their feet and started clapping and applauding for us. It was a standing ovation and we had never gotten such a reaction before. And the feelings I experienced couldn't even be described. It was a mix of so many emotions. I wanted to laugh and cry at the same time! All that hard work had paid off and we were extremely proud of what we had accomplished.



Ali Tzyma

I have learned, while at Rocky Hill, that food is the only way to make it through the day without clawing someone's eyes out.



Life Hacks

By Mahi Ganatra
Staff Writer

The Internet has been a great resource for us. It has given us many things in the past and one of the most useful things are life hacks. Life hacks are simple "hacks" that can have to do with anything! Here are a few:

If you like sipping your soda with a straw, place your straw in the hole in the tab of the soda can.



You can make a bowl for your chips out of the bag itself by folding the bottom ends inwards, and rolling the bag up from the bottom. Great for parties!



Cut a small piece of cake or cheese or any other soft solid with unscented dental floss. Hold it tightly and horizontally over the slice and pull straight downwards.

Don't have a Snuggie to keep you warm? Pick up that bathrobe that's been hiding in your closet all year and wear it backwards!

Are you a neat freak or do you just want to look cool while eating Cheetos? Try eating them with chopsticks. A great way to avoid the orange powder getting all over your hands.

Don't have a chip clip to seal your bag of chips? No problem! Get a pants hanger and snap off the clips and use them to seal your bag.



You've been using ketchup cups wrong your whole life! Unroll the rim to get more than 2x times the ketchup you could usually get.

Do you love making pancakes? Pour your pancake batter into a ketchup bottle for a mess-free experience.

Want to keep your phone up somehow but don't have a dock? Use a cassette case to hold your phone.



These are just a few of many of the amazing life hacks that you can find from the magical thing we know as: the internet.