



The Talon



Volume II

Issue III

Onteora High School

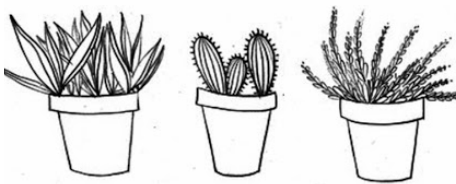
Boiceville, NY 12412

March 2020

What's Inside:



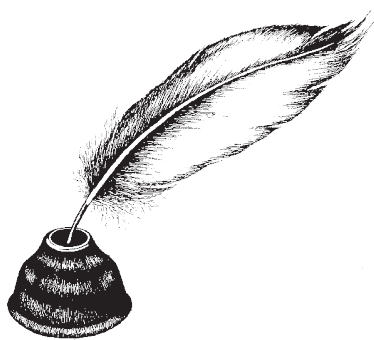
Wildfires Rage in Australian Outback
By Shane Stackpole



Top 10 Houseplants for Beginners
By Ava Maki



District Reconfiguration Update
By Emily Peck



An Open Letter: What It Really Means to Be Gen Z
By Shayne Durkin

RETRACTION:

In Issue II of Volume II of The Talon, released in December 2019, an error was made in the article entitled "The Trend of Declining Student Enrollment in the Onteora District," wherein it was implied that the Zena Elementary School was at one time a part of the Onteora School District. The Talon Staff would like to clarify that the Zena Elementary School has never been a part of the Onteora School District. Thank you for your continued support.

Onteora Star Jake Stern Scores 1000th Point

By Ori Grady



Jake Stern scoring his 1000th point against Dover High School.

Courtesy of Jake Stern

The Onteora crowd was on its feet. The mob of the Varsity Basketball team was swarming their senior star player, Jake Stern. Everyone in the gym was jumping up and down, all full of sheer excitement. Just seconds before, Stern had pulled up with the ball from way behind the line, feet and shoulders squared, and released the ball just like he had done thousands of times in the past. Yet this time, as the ball came soaring through the air and landed perfectly into the net making the famous "swoosh" sound, the shot meant something even greater. This time, Stern's three-pointer totaled up to his thousandth point, an accomplishment dreamt of by many but only accomplished by few—by the greats.

But wait, there's more. Just the next week, Stern achieved another accolade in one of the biggest games of the season, the division game against Ellenville. To say that the game was hard-fought is an understatement. Both teams poured their heart and sweat into every second. The game was filled with scoring runs that, by the end of the game, brought the crowd to their toes. Ellenville scored a deep three from the corner to give themselves a quick 59 to 58 lead with just over a minute remaining. Onteora had to score, but who would have the ball? The answer is simple: Jake Stern. Just moments later, with ice in his veins, Stern calmly drove to his dominant right side and floated the ball into the net with ease, as if it was just another easy shot taken in his driveway at home. The crowd erupted. Onteora ended up winning the game, thanks to the clutch game-winner by Mr. Stern. These two examples are only a few out of many that have made Jake Stern an absolute legend here at Onteora.

Stern was born with a basketball in his hands. By just 2 years of age, he was already playing with small basketballs and shooting them into a small indoor hoop, probably already swooshing most.

"I started to learn about basketball and how to play at around the age of 2 or 3 when my parents got me a Little Tikes basketball hoop for my birthday," said Stern. His love for the game would only increase over time. Stern would play in leagues in Kingston and AAU tournaments until middle school, when basketball starts at Onteora.

Stern commented, "Since Onteora is small, I was able to make JV and Varsity at a young age. Playing with the older kids molded me into a better and stronger player."

Here at Onteora, Stern found his home, and over four years he has showcased his talents night-in and night-out. And he has enjoyed every second of it. When asked about what makes basketball so special, Stern answered, "My favorite part about basketball has to be the team energy and excitement that goes with the game. There is no better feeling." This feeling of excitement is one that can't exactly be described in words, but we all know how it feels. For Stern, it's also the "feeling that you get when you win a hard-fought game." All of these hard-fought games have been dreams of his ever since Stern was little.

The drive for winning has always been one of his top priorities and goals. Another goal that has been important has been reaching a thousand points and being in that club. Stern said, "Ever since I saw the big banner with the list of thousand point scorers, I knew that I wanted to be on it. It has been a major goal of mine since I was in 7th grade, and knowing that I'm only the 4th male to accomplish this [at Onteora] means a lot to me."

To be recognized as one of four basketball players out of hundreds that have played since Onteora was established in 1952 is an achievement never to be forgotten. To the people who were cheering in the stands and stomping their feet with excitement during

the moment Stern became one of those four members of the thousand point club, just know how rare and special of a moment that was. It's something that has only happened four times in all of the 68 years of Onteora history.

Stern hasn't been alone on his road to success. He has taken advantage of the opportunities that have been placed in front of him, but just like in basketball, he has had people that helped and supported him along the way. Stern made sure to first praise his amazing teammates at Onteora, stating, "My teammates all throughout high school have pushed, guided, and helped me grow as a player into what I am today." He then acknowledged his coach Sam Guest, who has been a huge factor and figure during his career; "Coach Guest has been a major part in teaching me all I need to know about the game."

Stern finally recognized the people who have been around him the most and raised him: his parents. "My parents have been the biggest part of helping me through my basketball career, from teaching me how to dribble to driving me all along the east coast for AAU tournaments. They have always supported me no matter what." By hearing these words, you can't possibly say that Stern's teams, both on and off the court, haven't been anything short of integral to his career.

Stern's memorable career here may be almost over as the number of jump shots is winding down, but his legacy is certainly not. When asked about his time at Onteora, Stern replied, "I wouldn't be the player I am if I went to any other school." Thank you, Jake. Your name will be carved into Onteora's wall forever.

Interference: Loud and Fast

By Oliver Milford



Courtesy of Oliver Milford

I could feel the buzz of the doorknob as I opened the door to the Rock Academy rehearsal space on a frigid Sunday morning. Overwhelming punk filled the room as Interference practiced for their upcoming gig. They wrapped up their song, and we sat down on the couches to talk about their music, history, and what they're looking towards next.

Braden Gregory, lead singer and frontman of the band, describes their sound as "heavy, quick Rock." Having started as a punk band they initially

had a lot of that influence, but over time have added untraditional elements to their music based around their other musical interests and inspirations.

"It kind of went haywire, and we started adding bits of doom, little bits of thrash, straight up metal." Bob Gregory, the band's bassist, went on to explain the way the different musical styles fit together, "Even if it's just in the chords we choose for a progression or just the rhythms we play off each other, it just sort of finds its way in."

Braden Gregory grew up sur-

rounded by punk music with his dad Bob Gregory. He mainly draws inspiration from bands such as Body Count or the music that they covered starting out.

"I'm a child of the 1970s, if the 1970s happened in 2004." Bob Gregory listens to Hardcore, Punk, and Prog. He shares interest with Marc Poldino, the band's drummer, in metal. "If we didn't listen to the same stuff we wouldn't work nearly as well together," he told me. Poldino previously played in the metal band Element 13 and continues to use his interest in the genre through

his contribution to Interference.

Though all the members have a diverse interest in genres, David Langan, Interference's guitarist, has the most widespread taste. His taste ranges from funk, to blues, to classic rock and more. "If music is like the food chart I'm getting all the different stuff. I've got sugar, meat, protein, vegetables... bananas."

"The problem is that he's a diabetic and on a keto-diet," Bob cut him off.

Having been working together for around a year and four months, the members have found a sense of comfortability with each other that shows onstage. This means backstage there are insults hurled and constant poking at one another, but it's not taken to heart.

"Oh we're awful to each other," Langan said with a smile, "We trust each other enough to know that none of us are actually terrible people."

The band started out as a punk tribute project, with just Bob Gregory, Braden Gregory, and Poldino. They planned to cover Dead Kennedys, the Dead Boys, Black Flag, and some more bands along the same vein. Five weeks after their first rehearsal they asked Langan to join the group. Poldino mentioned, "Since the first time we had met for the project, I'd thought that if anyone would be in on it it'd be David, because he pretty much listens to somewhat of the same music we listen to, and he's also a wicked guitar player." After Poldino brought Langan to the band they had the solidity they needed to make the impression they do today.

For their first gig they partnered up with the Adam Hendricks Experience, and though their venue cancelled on them last minute due to being short staffed that night, they still managed to have a successful show. They played a combination of

covers and originals to an audience of 30 people outside on AHX's bassist's front porch. Since then they have expanded their gamut into an all-original music band, and have been playing their own music since.

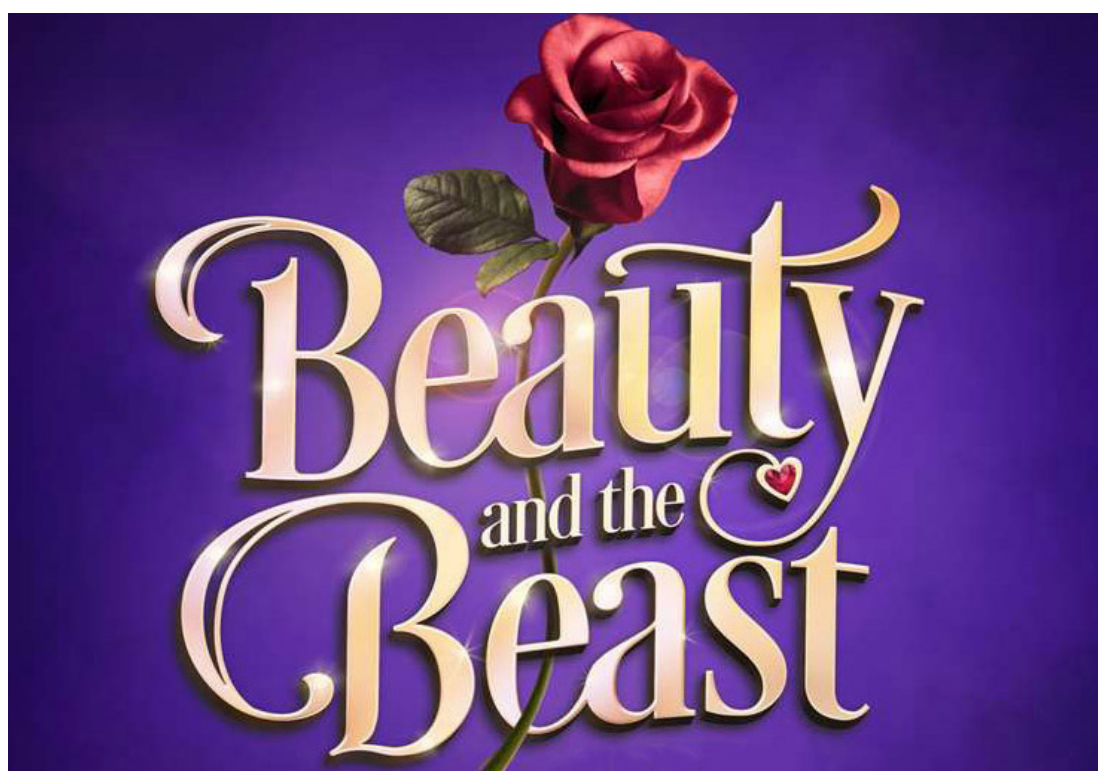
"It's really democratic," Bob Gregory explained of their songwriting process, "One of us will bring in something, and we'll work on putting it together, together." Rather than clashing, their separate influences mesh together to create the sound that is Interference. Braden Gregory and Langan are the primary lyricists for the songs, but their styles differ.

"Braden tends to write really serious and kind of gritty songs about the way the world sucks, and I write kind of just nutty songs with weird times and bizarre themes." Langan told me they have enough material for an LP, which they would be interested in recording going forward.

The next steps they're looking towards include recording their 40 minutes of original songs and adding a new member to Interference. Aaron Kosinski would be their second guitarist and has been practicing with them for the past couple of months.

"Me, Marc, and Braden are off to the side while they're over there and David's showing him the riff, and simultaneously we look at each other and Marc goes: 'He's the one.'" Bob Gregory and the other members were originally opposed to the idea of adding an additional member to the band, but when they played together their opinions flipped, and they've been practicing together since.

For information on upcoming shows and other details find them on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and Soundcloud with the username Interference845, and they can be reached at interference845@gmail.com



Courtesy of Mrs. Carroll

Come to the Onteora Theater Department's spring musical!

Beauty and the Beast

Show Dates:

April 17 & 18th at 7pm and April 18 & 19th at 2pm

Buy tickets at ticketstage.com

THIS EVENT IS FREE ALL ARE WELCOME

CLOTHING SWAP

April 19th 5pm @
Rhinebeck Town Hall

Help the environment and refresh your wardrobe by swapping your old beloved clothes for new favorites! The second largest polluter after Oil and Gas is Fast Fashion!

Drop off clean clothes in good condition here in the provided boxes anytime, or on April 19th 1-3PM

Brought To You By Hudson Valley's chapter of
Extinction Rebellion Youth

Contact
xryouth.hudsonvalley@gmail.com for questions

Impressive Ashokan Rail Trail Unveiled

By Emily Peck

Have you ever looked out upon the vast swaths of forest along the Ashokan Reservoir with longing, dreaming for the day you can explore its pristine views and barely touched land? Well you do not have to long anymore.

The Ashokan Rail Trail, an 11.5 mile crushed-stone path along the Ashokan Reservoir between Basin Road in West Hurley and Route 28A in Boiceville, opened on October 19th. On its first day it received 600 visitors, and it is predicted to receive 100,000 visitors annually. Anyone can stroll along its paths without permits or fees for the first time since the completion of the Reservoir in 1918.

The Ashokan Reservoir is a massive water basin that provides 40 percent of New York City's drinking water on any given day, and it also supplies clean water to communities in the Hudson Valley such as High Falls and New Paltz, servicing a total of 9.6 million New Yorkers. The Ashokan Reservoir is also one of only six unfiltered water supplies of its size in the US.

But, the Reservoir's history is contentious, as its cre-

ation forced 2,000 people out of their homes and hundreds of homes to be destroyed. But the water supply is now a link between those in upstate New York and in the Big Apple. Now Ulster County and New York City have partnered again to create the Ashokan Rail Trail.

Freight trains stopped running on the Ulster and Dutchess Railroad in 1976, and Ulster County bought the railroad in 1979. These tracks laid largely dormant until the construction of the Ashokan Rail Trail began in 2017. Building a trail of this size was a daunting task that required removing thousands of rotten rails and creating miles of new drainage systems. But, a whopping 16.5 million dollars made the project successful.

At first glance some locals may be confused as there are numerous hiking trails throughout the Hudson Valley with incredible views, and the reservoir already has the Ashokan Promenade, a 2.8 mile walking trail. But the Ashokan Rail Trail is a unique and valuable entity in and of itself. The Rail Trail is conveniently located near Route 28 and has three public



Courtesy of Natalie Horberg

trailheads for easy access.

It also allows for a more casual hike. The rail trail does not have the intense topography of hiking trails, but it does contain sections that are fully surrounded by woods in contrast to the Ashokan Promenade's open-air style. Now those in the Hudson Valley do not have to climb a mountain to see a new and impressive view.

When visitors take their first stroll down the rail trail, they are often astounded by the views. The trail does not only house a path along the 60 foot Glenford Dike, which is an engineering

marvel that was built in 1912, but there are also swaths of picturesque reservoir views that are now unearthed to the eye of the public. One of the DEP's goals is to expand public access to its resources, and the Ashokan Rail Trail does just that.

Beyond its visual value, the Rail Trail supports local tourism, improves public health, and cultivates an appreciation of nature in the Hudson Valley. The Ashokan Rail Trail has an activity for everyone. It is open dawn to dusk for hiking, biking, and running, and can be utilized in the winter for snowshoeing and

cross-country skiing. Even those more sedentary residents can sit on one of its many benches and admire the views. The trail is ADA compliant and fully accessible to people with disabilities. There is also signage of the region's history along the trail and markers every half-mile.

If you're looking for something to do this winter, pop over to the Ashokan Rail Trail. You won't have to spend any money, and you will be getting outside while appreciating nature and history.

The State of the County Address: County Executive Patrick Ryan

By Sophia Roberts

On January 30th, County Executive Patrick Ryan addressed students, teachers, politicians, and community members in the auditorium of Kingston High School. Ryan's State of the County Address was the first ever delivered at a high school, but it was fitting considering the focus of Ryan's speech.

Shortly after Ryan was welcomed to the stage, he arrived at his main point: Ulster County has a lot of potential and we all need to work hard to reach it. He emphasized that there is a local future for the youth, defiantly stating,

"The idea that you need to leave Ulster County to be successful is bullshit."

Ryan wants to concentrate on growing the opportunities available in Ulster County. Currently, only 15% of high school students report that they are planning to stay in Ulster County, and a major goal of his is to create a county that students want to stay in, and provide students with enough opportunities for this to be possible.

Ryan discussed how even though the Ulster County economy has improved since IBM left in 1994, there is still work

to be done. Ryan stated that four out of ten people live paycheck to paycheck, and although unemployment is down, the jobs that are available offer lower incomes, with an average salary of \$20,000 per year.

To keep from sounding pessimistic, Ryan mentioned many of the accomplishments of his administration. They passed the lowest tax levy seen in decades, built 23 halls, and put 3 million dollars toward mitigating the opioid crisis plaguing Ulster County.

Ryan's idea for a bold new step was to get young students involved. He addressed the many high school students in the audience, saying "I'm gonna put a little bit of pressure on you... but we are here to support and empower you."

In an effort to do just this, Ryan has proposed a series of new initiatives in environmental reform, economic development, and service.

Ryan campaigned on the idea of im-

plementing a Green New Deal in Ulster County with a goal for Ulster County to be using 100% green energy by 2030.

In conjunction with his Green New Deal plan, Ryan has proposed a series of environmental initiatives for youth. The first is the Green Youth Fellowship initiative where students will partner with green businesses and nonprofits, to help students build experience working in a green field.

Ryan's administration is also exploring the Green Careers Academy, a part of Suny Ulster that concentrates on the environment and green energy. Students who enter this program are eligible for a \$250,000 grant to help cover students' tuition.

A long-term workforce in green energy is necessary, and the green industry is a fast growing field. In Ulster County, positions in the green industry pay higher on average compared to other jobs. Ryan also stressed the importance of service and called the youth to action. He directly addressed the students in the audience, telling them they need to step up and assist the community. In conjunction with Ryan's call to service, he is creating an Ulster County Executive Call to Service scholarship to help especially civically engaged students with their college tuition. In concluding his address, Ryan recognized that the speech had been especially kid-focused but countered that that was "kind of the idea," because "the future is these students."



Courtesy of The Talon

The Talon Staff



Editor-in-Chief:
Miriam Silver-Altman

Managing Editor:
Emily Peck

Copy Editor:
Sophia Roberts

Assistant Copy Editor:
Simon Rands

Layout Editor:
Eva Donato

Student Journalists:

Ori Grady
Oliver Milford
Emily Peck
Shane Stackpole
Sophia Grinberg
Shayne Durkin
Nelson DelTufo
Ava Maki
Gem Foster
Sophia Roberts

General Staff:

Sophie Frank
Nelson DelTufo
Emily Peck
Sophia Roberts
Shayne Durkin
Brian McHugh

Graphic Designers:

Natalie Horberg
Tahlula Potter

District Reconfiguration Update

By Emily Peck

Over the past five months, Dr. Kevin Baughman conducted the most extensive study of Onteora School District in the district's history. This study's purpose is to identify and analyze multiple grade level configurations and assess the instructional and operational benefits and concerns of several different scenarios. Dr. Baughman is not at Onteora to recommend a future course of action, as he often stresses. Instead, his goal is to provide the community, board, and administration of Onteora with the information they need to decide if and how Onteora will be reconfigured.

Dr. Baughman is more than qualified for the task ahead, with his 25-year career in school administration, including 11 years as superintendent of schools. He has also worked as a full-time professor and coordinator of the Educational Leadership Program at The College of Saint Rose, and he is

now advising schools on strategic planning, leadership training and searches, and grade level configuration studies.

The strategies to accrue information for this study range from reviewing district documents to meeting with 110 people in the school and community. Dr. Baughman approached the issue from every possible angle. He got a feel for the district by touring every school, meeting with administrators and community members, consulting the transportation department, and conducting hours upon hours of research and composition of his report.

Dr. Baughman's survey is a particularly thorough and detailed method of information collection. The survey was released on October fifteenth and closed on November sixth. It was advertised through notifications to students, staff, and parents; hard copies at local libraries; and local media. The survey

was open to anyone with a link and was available in Spanish. The abundance of community awareness of the survey led to a turnout of 560 responses. Notably, Onteora's student and community response surpassed those observed by Dr. Baughman in similar districts.

Textual survey responses were analyzed using word clouds, common word phrases, and the labor intensive review of individual textual responses. As Dr. Baughman's primary concern with his survey was understanding the values and opinions of Onteora's community, his analysis of survey responses was thorough.

To learn more about Dr. Baughman's study's purpose, his report can be accessed under the "Our District" tab on Onteora's website. Don't forget to tune into the next Talon for coverage of Dr. Baughman's proposed reconfigurations and his key findings.

Onteora Athletics: Winter Pep Rally



Courtesy of Kim Pilla, Athletic Director

Wildfires Rage in Australian Outback

By Shane Stackpole

Around December of last year, photos of injured koalas and blazing fires began to spread on the internet. These photos were alarming to us all, and receiving the news of Australia's catastrophic bushfires was heart-wrenching. Australia had been grappling with these fires for months before posting photos of koalas became a trend on Instagram. These fires are immensely detrimental to Australia and to our lives.

In 2009, Victoria, Australia went through the Black Saturday Fires. The fires killed 173 people and more than one million animals. Australia has a season of bushfires every year, which typically peaks in late January. Each year, the fires have differing degrees of impact on Australia depending on how hot and dry their summer is. The Black Saturday Fires were the most detrimental fires in Australia's history, but after this year, that will be forever changed.

This year, Australia's fire season has broken records. Due to climate change and rising temperatures, Australia is currently facing one of the worst droughts in decades and the most scorching heat wave ever recorded in the region. Climate change has amplified the yearly fires to a humanitarian disaster. Some days have reached an astonishing 113–120 degrees Fahrenheit. The extraordinarily hot and dry climate of this season has been a perfect catalyst for the fires to grow and spread across Australia at a terrifying rate.

Since September, at least 27 million acres of land have been burned, approximately

24 people have died, and between 2,000 and 2,500 homes have been destroyed. State and federal authorities have been doing everything they can in order to abate the fires. There are an estimated 3,700 firefighters, 440 emergency personnel, and 3,000 Army, Navy, and Airforce reservists risking their lives each day. Collectively they have managed to mitigate some of the fires, but the most intense and destructive ones will continue to spread uncontrollably.

Additionally, the fires are a tremendous financial burden on Australia. There have been differing estimates of exactly how much money the fires will cost. One analysis concluded that fires are costing Australia 50 million dollars per day, and another approximated that it will take billions just to clean up the ruins that the fires will leave. Between the number of buildings and homes demolished, medical bills, and paying those working to put the fires out, Australia's economy is suffering immensely. In addition, due to the fires, tourism revenues have fallen by about one billion dollars, which has added to Australia's financial difficulties.

As traumatic as it is for one to lose their home or a family member, Australia's fires have triggered problems that are far more detrimental in the long run. So far the wildfires have killed a staggering one billion animals. This is made worse by the fact that biodiversity across the globe is already in steep decline. Australia's once great biodiversity has been jeopardized by threatening invasive species,



Courtesy of Creative Commons

habitat destruction, and climate change, even prior to the fires. The number of animals being lost in the fires is tremendously damaging to biodiversity not just for Australia but also for ecosystems that are collapsing across the planet. Around 8,000 koalas have died, and the death of rare or endangered animals in Australia is ultimately the most damaging biodiversity issue. There are endangered species only found in Australia that have small populations, and, as it is, are close to extinction.

Ecosystems act like dominoes; every species is connected in some way in the food chain, and the fall of one species impacts every other. If animal populations continue to decline at this rate, diversity among global ecosystems will be in great danger, and they will collapse even faster than they already are.

Climate change amplified Australia's bushfires this year, and now Australia's bushfires are amplifying climate change. Forests and trees absorb carbon

dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. They're the giant air filters for our world and without them human life would not exist. Australia's bushfires have burnt 46 million acres and an uncountable number of trees and plants. In addition, the fires have emitted a whopping 400 megatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere in the past three months.

The scarce number of trees and the added carbon dioxide has made the air quality in Australia very poor. In January, reports stated that Canberra, Australia has the worst air quality of any other place in the world. The exceptionally poor air quality is a big concern for those not only in Australia but also for many across the globe.

Smoke from wildfires travels long distances. The smoke produced by Australia's fires have already swept across the Pacific and reached Antarctica. The smoke has begun to affect the air quality of New Zealand and other in South America.

The carbon dioxide added to Australia's atmosphere has intensified the greenhouse effect and magnified global warming. This effect only makes Australia's climate warmer and drier than it already is, thus allowing the fires to spread and grow at a much faster rate. This uncontrollable climate feedback loop is very concerning.

Many of Australia's bushfires have fortunately alleviated since the fires first broke out last year. As relieving as it is that some of the bushfires have been put out, Northern Australia is now facing damaging winds, torrential downpours, and flooding. What Australia has been dealing with is incomprehensible, and it's quite difficult to imagine being in their shoes.

It's our responsibility to prevent bushfires and other climate calamities to transpire and worsen in Australia and in the future around the globe. For if they do, the results will be irreversible and our world could be changed forever.

The Reality of Being First Generation American

By Sophia Grinberg

Everyone seems to think they know what it's like to have parents that are originally from another country as if they all go through the same thing. I am not sure if it is just a human quality or an American quality, but it almost seems as if we take comfort in having problems not many can relate to for the sake of all the attention. I am guilty of this too. I'm always complaining about how much it sucks having Russian immigrants as parents. Sure, it's no picnic, but make no mistake, I am very grateful for the life my parents have carved out for me no matter how uncomfortable it may be. The truth is that I would be

much worse off if my parents had decided to stay in Russia and raise their family there. Anyone who identifies as an immigrant or as a first generation American can agree on one thing: America is a gift.

The stereotypes about having immigrant parents are abundant and usually not good ones, but Russian immigrant stereotypes are even worse. Everyone has the "Russia is evil" image burned into their brain. Personally, I think it hasn't gone away because of cinema and how the antagonist in many movies is always portrayed as some type of Russian spy. Growing up I've had a lot of people say rude things about my heritage

to my face. Dull, irrelevant boys teasing me, faking Russian accents, and abusing two words someone probably older and thicker in the head told them were Russian. As I learned to be proud of my heritage I stopped paying any mind to these simple-minded people. As a little girl who knew more Russian than English and even spoke with a slight accent, I was very shy and self-conscious. I just wanted to be like everyone else. Although it was a little rough at first, I have grown to be honored to be part of my family. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Even though some stereotypes are inaccurate, some are quite the opposite. Everyone knows about the pressure non-American parents put on their children. I know why they do it; I can see everything from their point of view. My parents built themselves a life and a family here but it definitely wasn't easy. All they want is for my life to be easier and more successful than theirs were. The only problem is the way they go about what they want. Pressure can make or break a person. Even though putting pressure on a kid will probably make them work harder, it kind of dulls childhood. There is nothing like childhood, it's only a part of life you experience during the beginning stretch of it. Being stressed out for the most important

years you remember can dim the future, but potato patahto, no family is perfect.

Most people also think that being first generation will get you into college for "diversity" reasons. That can be wrong, it still matters where you're from. I identify as a first generation Russian Jew. Anti-semitism is still very much a problem no matter how hard the government tries to shield it from our eyes. The fact that I'm Russian can also still pose a problem. When I was younger I wanted to be part of the F.B.I., C.I.A., or just the police force in general. I told my dad about my dreams and he laughed at me. He told me that the American government would never trust a Russian not to be a spy and that I could never get a job that was government related. It hurt to hear, but sometimes the truth hurts.

Through the injustice I still stand tall, I continue to be proud of who I am and who I've become. Being a first generation Russian-American doesn't define me, but it is a part of me, a part of me that I am not going to be ashamed of no matter what other people think about it. At the end of the day we are all people, big, small, brown, white, fat, thin etc. The day we all realize that we are more similar than different we will begin a new path towards true equality.



Courtesy of Creative Commons

An Open Letter to Older Generations: What It Really Means to Be Gen Z

By Shayne Durkin

Despite certain misconceptions, we were not born with screens in our hands. In fact, many of us grew up on big block TVs from the 2000s and CD players. We may not have grown up with the Cold War or the AIDS crisis, but now look at us. We are faced with burdens of an unprecedented measure. The burdens that *you* have left us with. You have had the privilege of growing up, having a family, and growing old. Something so trivial, I should not have to refer to it as such. But it is. Why? Because we are stuck cleaning up the mess. So stuck in fact, that we may not get to grow up, have a family, or grow old.

Our planet is burning underneath our feet, and you call us lazy. Are we sitting in our seats making legislative policies? No. But who is? *You*. We're on the cusp of a climate catastrophe, and you call us

lazy? At the age of 16, Greta Thunberg stood before the UN. She told them that they were committing crimes against future generations and against the planet. Who's generation? *My* generation.

Can you understand? We weren't born with remote controls or vape pens. The nicotine epidemic plagues *my* generation in a way that has never been seen before. Kids are sent to hospitals at 19 because their lungs are filled with tar. Smoking may be a personal choice, but the numbers keep rising. Reflect on the time when cigarettes were promoted like candy by everybody from teachers to doctors, even to pregnant women. Our issues aren't all that different, so try to extend some sympathy. There was a time when you were terrified too.

My generation's youth have stood at podiums with clenched fists and tearful

eyes, echoing the voices of their slain classmates' lives. Marches have been led by students who are sick and tired of the exponential increase of slaughtered youth. You say we're unaware, coddled, and sheltered. Did someone ever come into your school and commit a massacre? You lived through a time when it was considered safe to hitchhike and talk to strangers. Now we get bullet-proof glass installed in our schools.

The truth is that you will never know what it feels like to have your heart pound inside you because you don't know if the lockdown is a drill or not. We may not know what it's like to hide underneath our desks from a nuclear bomb that will never fall, but does simply going out in public ever make your heart race? Those problems may not be your fault, but don't you dare call us sheltered.

We have been thrust into the most uncertain time in history. Mutually assured destruction means something entirely different now. School drills hold a completely different purpose now. We do not hold positions of government power, so we rely on *you* to listen and try your best to understand. Understand that we are hungry for our futures. Understand that we crave the lives that you have lived — years filled with life's fluctuating ups and downs, years to build ourselves up, taller and taller. We want that more than iPhones and Teslas, more than AirPods or money. We want to *live*.

But we can't do that unless *you* listen and understand. Understand that this is not meant to chastise or make fun, nor is it meant to offend. This is simply our truth.

The Truth About The Impeachment Proceedings and Process

By Nelson DelTufo

On July 25th President Donald Trump made a call to Volodymyr Zelensky, the President of Ukraine, and asked for the Ukrainian Government to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden for alleged corruption. This phone call, and the subsequent suspension of US military aid to Ukraine, caused a firestorm in the press and on Capitol Hill. For months, the airwaves were choked with descriptions of conversations between official ambassadors and Eastern European middlemen, and headlines were more often than not related to new information revealed during congressional testimony. However, no matter how damning the latest statements against the President were, no matter how close the implicated associate was to the White House, I could never force myself to care about impeachment or the prospect of removal from office.

Prior to the months of investigation, hours of hearings, and dozens of unrelenting press releases by triumphant lawmakers of the Democratic Party, I made a point of keeping up to date on Trump Administration

scandals and unethical behavior. I listened to Michael Cohen's testimony on the radio, and I waited patiently for the release of the Mueller report. I read articles about emoluments and was sufficiently outraged whenever Donald Trump would fire a cabinet official over disloyalty. But when a whistleblower complaint surfaced, and the District of Columbia exploded, I was taken aback. Why, I wondered, is this the scandal which caused Nancy Pelosi to support impeachment? Donald Trump — who had been profiting from the Presidency since he took office, who had stood on a stage in front of millions of television viewers and asked a foreign power to hack into Hillary Clinton's private server, and whose campaign associates and aides are routinely indicted and convicted — had never been under serious threat of impeachment until this. To a young liberal news junkie with no prior experience with presidential scandal, it seemed that Trump had committed a hundred high crimes or misdemeanors before his hundred days were up. Incompetently strong-arming a foreign nation did not seem out of

character, or out of the ordinary.

After a few months of attempting to commit the occupations and loyalties of men such as Gordon Sonderland and Lev Parnas to memory, I cynically gave up. I heard about both the vote to impeach and the vote to acquit a few hours after they happened, and I was not surprised by any single thing about either, save for the fact that I cared so little. I am the kid who memorized all 100 Senators and their party affiliations and political interests, but I just couldn't get myself to care about impeachment. I was never excited by the prospect of removal or indictment, just somewhat frustrated and a little disappointed.

I think that cynicism builds upon itself and that that represents a unique threat to democracy. For as long as I can remember, my government is one which spies on its citizens, wages confused wars, and is characterized by debilitating partisanship. I have never known a federal government which is fully functional — one which prosecutes those responsible for financial collapse, can provide healthcare to its citizens, or can respond to natural disaster.



The House of Representatives passes the Articles of Impeachment

Courtesy of Mark Decker

I was born 22 days after former President George Bush stood on the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln and told America that major combat operations in Iraq were over and that our mission there was accomplished. I have not in the past, nor do I currently, trust the Senate that voted Brett Kavanaugh into the Supreme Court to vote to remove a Republican President from office, even in the face of overwhelming evidence.

I love this country dearly, and I don't believe that the current state of affairs are necessarily the norm going forward. But, last year I found myself looking upon my government with dis-

appointment more often than respect. Every time a Republican congressperson who voted to impeach President Bill Clinton would get on cable and criticize Democrats for their partisanship or loose interpretation of "impeachable offense," the cynic inside me was confirmed. The failures of officeholders can only motivate a young person to a point, after which anger turns to resignation. To me, the impeachment saga gave me a brief insight into how it feels to be overwhelmed by the negative aspects of our government.

The Coronavirus Pandemic: Status and Implications at Onteora

By Brian McHugh

COVID-19, otherwise known as coronavirus, has swept around the world and caused a panic. The coronavirus appeared in Wuhan, China in early December of 2019 and has spread globally since then.

The coronavirus is a severe respiratory illness that appears similar to the flu. Symptoms vary in their severity. Those with relatively weak immune systems have a higher chance of contracting the illness and of having more symptoms. There is a significant increase in the death rate of the virus in people over the age of 60.

As of March 12th, 2020, there are 133,000 documented cases worldwide, with over 5,000 deaths attribut-

ed to COVID-19. The CDC has said that there is a 3.4% mortality rate. This rate is high compared to that of the flu, which has a 0.5% mortality rate. In the United States, there have been 1,500 total cases documented, resulting in 240 deaths. President Donald Trump has put Vice President Mike Pence in charge of the Coronavirus crisis, and they are attempting to prevent a national outbreak.

The virus is presently documented in 45 states, including New York. It is a highly contagious virus, which has caused it to become a worldwide pandemic. The CDC has recommended that you wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, cover coughs and sneezes, avoid touching your eyes, nose

or mouth with unwashed hands, stay home when you are sick, and disinfect surfaces that people frequently touch.

The Superintendent sent an email to Onteora staff encouraging the use of standard flu prevention practices, along with additional practices that transportation and building cleaning staff are presently using. McClaren stated the following:

At this time, in order to limit the risks to our students, we are going to limit our field trips for the month of March to those that are close to home.

We currently have three unused snow days that we are scheduled to give back. The first give-back day would be added to spring break. I am

going to recommend to the Board of Education that we do not add this day to spring break. In the event of a confirmation of COVID-19 in our community, we will likely close school for a day or two to work with the New York State Education Department and the Ulster County Department of Health in order to determine our next steps in responding to the situation.

Please know that the health and safety of our students and our school community is of paramount importance to our entire District, and we will do everything we can to support our students and families in light of this situation.

Top 10 Houseplants for Beginners

By Ava Maki



10. Peace Lily

While peace lilies are pretty straightforward to take care of, they can be very fussy at times. Peace lilies are tropical plants native to Southeastern Asia and the tropical regions of the Amer-

icas. In their native habitat, they thrive on the forest floor with constant moisture. Light isn't a huge issue with them, so medium to low light will do fine, but they need constant watering. However, overwatering can leave

them prone to root rot. Another thing to look out for is the type of water you use. If you're using water from the tap, the fluorine could affect the leaves' health. Filtered water is the safest route to go. There's a range in between

moisture and saturation of water which can be tough for beginners to figure out, but overall they're pretty simple plants.



9. Golden Pothos

Although these are meant to be very low light plants, in my experience they tend to be very "diva-y" plants and are finicky with their light needs. Indoors, they tend to need more unfil-

tered sunlight, meaning they'll do well near a window. They have a very shallow root system, so it's crucial to not overwater them. In my experience with my pothos, I typically wait until the leaves droop over since it's

a major concern of mine. The primary problem with golden pothos is that they are very susceptible to pathogens (bacteria and other pests). My own pothos had leaf spot a while back, and it nearly gave me a

heart attack. These plants can be great to own, but you have to be very careful with how you water them and look out for things like spots, little bugs, and browning of the leaves as they could hint to a bigger problem.



8. Chinese Evergreen

Chinese evergreen plants are great air purifiers. Even NASA has praised them on their purification properties. Regarding water, they typically like to be a little moist so wait till the soil

is slightly dry before watering again. Their light needs are similar to the peace lily as they natively live under similar circumstances. Medium to low light is adequate for them. They are also sensitive to tap water, so if you

still wish to use that you should leave it out for a few minutes to allow any chlorine to evaporate. They tend to be sensitive to disease and pathogens, so just be careful to watch out for random spotting or browning of

the leaves. These conditions can be exasperated by overwatering.



7. Succulents/Cacti

When getting a first plant, people tend to gravitate towards cacti and succulents. They're great plants for people who are really bad at remembering to water, as they are notorious for

needing very little. The only thing they really need is a ton of light. Rotating the plants is also very important as they tend to "lean" towards the light when they're not getting enough. The type of soil you're using is also

extremely important. Cacti mixes work decently, not only for cacti but for succulents as well. String of pearls, string of bananas, and pencil cacti are great options to start with.



Courtesy of Tahlula Potter



6. Lucky bamboo

Growing up, my sister had a lucky bamboo plant and that thing lived for a while, considering that she forgot about it everyday. Lucky bamboo plants don't really require a lot of light

or water, so they're great for forgetful plant owners. The plant is commonly sold in rock arrangements with water. They can put out a lot of growth this way but there tend to be a lot of problems that come up. Their water is

very prone to algae, so it should be changed periodically. Also, lucky bamboo is very susceptible to fungus, so keeping that water clean is very important. The only other thing you should watch out for is fluorine in tap

water. Like the peace lily, bamboo is very sensitive to that sort of thing, so it's best to use filtered water. Overall, they're a pretty good option to start out with.



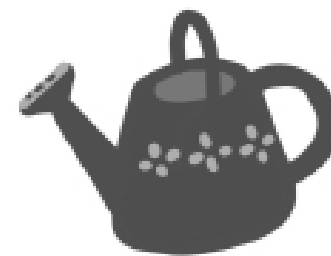
5. Baby Rubber Plant

The baby rubber plant was actually the first plant I had ever gotten. I got mine about two years ago from Target and he's been thriving ever since. You'll typically never find a baby

rubber plant with some sort of disease or pathogen as they are extremely resistant to that sort of thing. They have thick waxy leaves, so you only have to water them about once a week, and they require medium to bright

light. My own plant puts out leaves like crazy and has been one of my favorites for a long time. They're great if you tend to forget to water your plants. You can leave them by the window for awhile and they'll be

just fine. The only problem you'll really see is overwatering.



4. Aloe Vera

Aloe plants typically are very hard to kill. All they really need is a lot of light and a little water now and then, as they store it in their thick leaves. I find it's even helpful to pot them in a cactus

when the soil dries out completely. They're great for office spaces or dark areas of the house that a lot of other plants can't survive in. The only thing you have to look out for is too much sun. Similar to aloe vera,

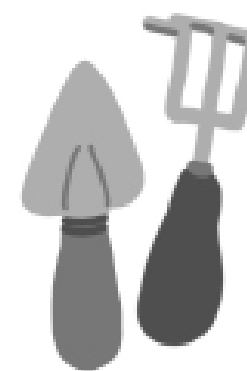
they can get scorched if they have too much direct sunlight.

3. ZZ plant

ZZ plants are best known for requiring very little light. You can have them pretty far away from a window and they'll do just fine. They don't need frequent watering and do best

anywhere and do particularly well in uncommon places such as bathrooms. They're very hard to kill, needing water about twice a week during the warmer seasons. However, I've found that they can go much longer

without problem. The thing I find most appealing is that they grow shoots that can be propagated into new ways plants that grow relatively quickly.



2. Spider plant

You can find spider plants in almost every classroom you walk into. They're specifically known for being low light as well as being very resilient. Spider plants can be put almost

enough to see. They don't even require natural light; they can survive on the light from a lamp. Regarding water, they typically don't need a lot with their thick leaves and all. Once every one-to-two weeks during the spring and summer and once a

month in the winter and fall is plenty. The only problem they can really face is overwatering, which leads to root rot. Snake plants also tend to grow extremely fast so it's often rewarding to the owner to see instant progress with their plant. Snake

plants are practically impossible to kill and they are the absolute best option for beginner plants owners who know absolutely nothing about plant care.



1. Snake plant

Snake plants have a reputation of being practically indestructible. I've seen them thrive in windowless offices, malls, and bathrooms. They are extremely low-light plants and can literally be placed anywhere light

is available. They are very hard to kill, needing water about twice a week during the warmer seasons. However, I've found that they can go much longer

without problem. The thing I find most appealing is that they grow shoots that can be propagated into new ways plants that grow relatively quickly.

Brought to you by PHILOSOPHY CLUB! Illustrated by Natalie Harberg ... Feb 2020

The Absurd arises from the conflict between our desire to find meaning in life and our inability to actually find any meaning.



Humans will always

FAIL

at finding meaning because the world is HOSTILE & INDIFFERENT toward u.s.

SISYPHUS AND THE ABSURD



Every day, Sisyphus pushes this heavy rock up this mountain... over and over again...

BUT

one must imagine SISYPHUS HAPPY

There is no meaning in pushing the rock! And that's OK!



There aren't any good answers to these questions...

WE MUST ACCEPT THE ABSURD

How to make Buttermilk PANCAKES without actual BUTTERMILK. Includes ingredients list (milk, yogurt, butter, sugar, egg, vanilla, flour, baking soda, salt), tools, and a 12-step illustrated recipe process.

Spring Horoscopes

By Gem Foster

- Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces

Courtesy of Janelle Michaelson

Spring has Sprung...ish, and so have these predictions! With allergies and the general green-ness of the area rising, let's have a look at what this season will bring you

Aries (3/21-4/19): Your opinions will seem easier to swallow when everyone can see the flowers blooming. Taurus (4/20-5/20): It's shaping up to be a busy time, but there will be an opportunity for you to inhale the new air. Gemini (5/21-6/20): Indecision, indecision... maybe the right choice will come from relaxing? Cancer (6/21-7/22): With everyone feeling happier, you're not sure what to do. Give yourself a break. Leo (7/23-8/22): Spring now means summer soon, but don't forget to enjoy this season while it's here. Virgo (8/23-9/22): Green has always been your color; show off your wardrobe!

Libra (9/23-10/22): Spring brings new life and new people, along with new opinions to form. Scorpio (10/23-11/21): Get ready for a spring fling. Romance is budding with the flowers. Sagittarius (11/22-12/21): Change has to happen, no matter how much you don't want it to. Might as well change with it. Capricorn (12/22-1/19): Let yourself go out with your friends and enjoy the warmer weather! Aquarius (1/20-2/18): Don't let your inspiration from the foliage wear off too soon. Pisces (2/19-3/20): Oh, the weather outside is delightful, but please try not to get lost in the woods.