The Badger Pause

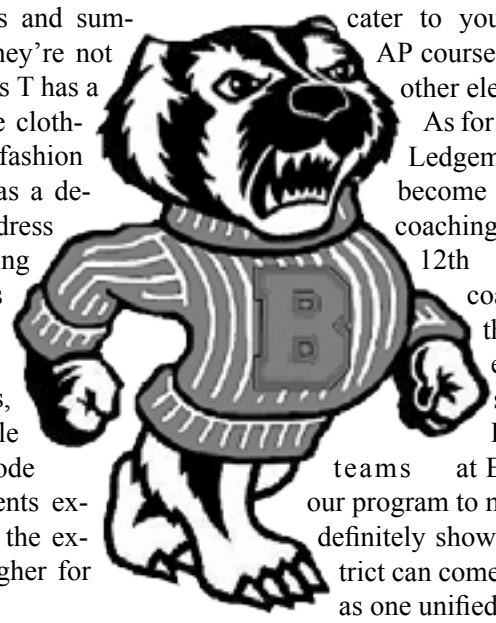
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New season, new school, new rules

by Lexi Sell, BP Staff Writer

Welcome Ledgemont students! As the news of the merge becomes concrete we wanted to add a warm welcome note from The Badger Pause. I'm very excited for this consolidation, along with the new ideas that will come with the fresh faces of the 2015 and 2016 school year. Our lovely Berkshire High holds seventh through twelfth grades and consists of about ninety students per grade. This may seem large to Ledgemont, but we are definitely a small, close knit community. This school year is well into its last semester, and as we draw closer and closer to next school year it may bring many new changes to you all.

Our principal Mr. Reedy and vice principal Miss Timmons, "Miss T," have made the last few years their building blocks for a better enforced dress code. So, if you're still wearing yoga pants and leggings, they sadly have to go. When it comes to the hot Burton May school days, the dress code does not let up on the four finger rule for tank tops (the straps of tank tops must be four fingers wide). Just like any student, I love wearing shorts and summer skirts, but if they're not fingertip length Miss T has a stack of appropriate clothing choices for the fashion offenders (as well as a detention slip). The dress code is something Berkshire students still struggle with, but if the teachers can follow the rules, so can we. The whole point of our dress code is to improve students experience by setting the expectation a little higher for presentable attire.



While having an enforced dress code can be a bummer, we do offer some really interesting classes, such as History of Rock and Roll, Theatre, and the return of our Family Consumer Science classes (Child Development, Exploring Foods, and Life Studies). Our school also provides many other class selections to cater to your desire, such as AP courses and a plethora of other electives.

As for our athletics, many Ledgemont students have become familiar with our coaching staff. On March 12th a few Berkshire coaches introduced themselves to the eager Ledgemont student athletes. Having bigger teams at Berkshire will open our program to more talent and will definitely show how well our district can come together and work as one unified team.

If sports are not your thing, Berkshire has a multitude of clubs. As a Student Council member, students can voice their ideas and make a difference, and the club often visits Burton Health Care to meet with the residents. I think joining clubs is a wonderful experience allowing Berkshire students to be able to help others and meet new people. Student Council also puts on homecoming each year; as a group we decide theme and decorations. We also have two clubs at Berkshire that can be joined during the school year for high school credits: Artistic Layout and Design (yearbook) and Journalism. Care Team, Actively Caring for People (AC4P), and Interact are a few of our extra circulars created to get our students involved with others in the community and see a new perspective on our small town. A new club to Berkshire is Be the Majority, a club that brings awareness to drugs and alcohol, and the preventions that can be taken by students in our district. Berkshire is filled with many wonderful groups; being part of something other than your daily routine can expose our students to new scenarios and accomplishments by helping those in need.

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You are what you eat

by Suzanne Koziol, BP Staff Writer

You are what you eat that's how the saying goes. However, according to recent genetic studies you are what your mother, father, grandparents and great-grandparents ate too. One's diet, whether it be good or bad, can actually change the nature of said person's DNA which can then be passed down to an offspring.

Epigenetics refers to changes in a gene from outside forces. Unlike a mutation, epigenetic changes occur in the DNA rather than in its surroundings. A recent study done has shown how nutrition dramatically alters the health and appearance of many animals, including humans. Researchers claim that if we damage our health at any time in life we're likely to change the way our genes perform, increasing our risk of diseases like diabetes, cancer and obesity. Even more frightening is that these alterations can be passed on to future generations through the protein molecules in our chromosomes.

Studies that examine multiple historical events, such as a famine in Holland during World War Two in which children were born underweight, found that those children were more likely to experience obesity, diabetes, and cancer and their children and grandchildren tending to have low birth weights. Numerous studies on insects and animals along with other historical events suggest that human' health is partly determined by the lifestyles and experiences of their parents and grandparents.

There are a few things you can do in order to give your future family the best genetic start in life. First of all, eat sensibly, too much high fat food not only results in weight gain but also increases risk of cancer and other illnesses. Another bad habit to avoid is smoking; not only does it induce many health risks for yourself, but it also exposes future generations to harmful toxins, so don't do it! Finally, eat more greens such as kale, broccoli, red and green lettuce, cabbage, and even spinach. These and other vegetables are full of vitamins and minerals that protect you from many possible diseases. Remember that a poor diet can affect future generations in many ways, but a healthy diet can help them live a full and healthy life.

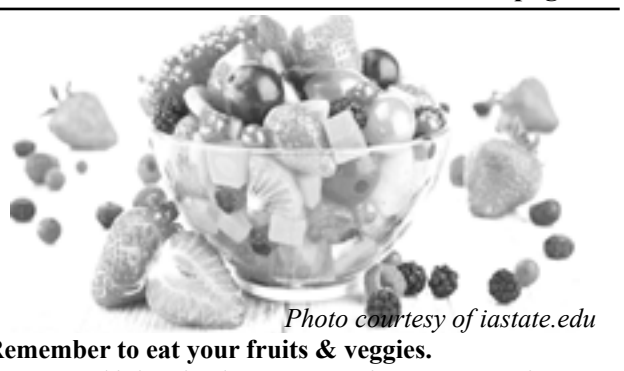


Photo courtesy of iastate.edu

Remember to eat your fruits & veggies.

Think about your possible posterity! How you behave and what you eat may either make or break future generations!

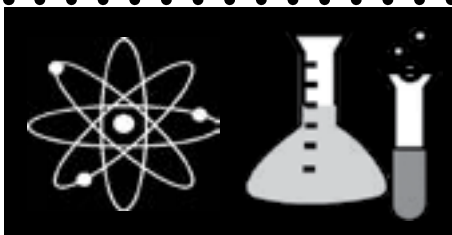


Are you curious as to what your future holds?

See Pseudoscience on Page 4

Although extroverts get all the credit, introverts are influential too! Page 5!





Paints, and roller-coasters, and dry ice, oh my!

See Girls & Science on Page 8

Learn about the different jobs your classmates have!

See Page 9



Maple crazy

by Julia Losasso, BP Staff Writer



Photo courtesy of pinterest.com

You can see many buckets like this one collecting sap.

Spring is in the air, and with the warm(er) temperatures and sun comes the thawing of the maple trees. It is high time for maple sugaring season due to the warm temperatures, the sap that has been frozen all winter thawing, and the beginning of the 'run'. The procedure, in a nutshell, begins when the spiles are drilled into the trees to extract the sap, which is then boiled down to make syrup. Though the process may seem simple, it can take over forty gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup (depending on sugar content) and many days to achieve the perfect flavor and light amber color of those you buy in the store. Sugaring season lasts for around two months, contingent on the weather. Cold nights and warm days are perfect for maple trees, because the sap will flow in the day while the trees are able to "recharge" at night. When the weather gets too warm the trees begin to bud, which makes the flavor of the sap bitter.

In the short window of time, for maple syrup producers it is key to get as much made as possible so it can last the whole year. Sugar maple trees are only found in the Northeastern United States and Canada. Here in Burton, Ohio, we are lucky to be in the heart of the maple syrup production. When driving through Burton, or the surrounding area, if you look outside, usually on the edge of woods, you will spot the familiar sight of a sugar shack. They resemble a small barn with steam rising from the top, surrounded by trees with buckets or bags attached to them, and are the place where sap becomes syrup.

Continued on page 3

How to Spring Break: The Ohio way

by Kayla Hadlock & Emily Shantery, BP Staff Writers

Spring: a time to be born, a time to die. And supposedly a time when there's a nice break from school and epic memories to be made, but are they really? Spring break is just around the corner and soon we'll be basking in a week of freedom. As it approaches, just remember that most of us will still be in Ohio - which is a huge setback on why spring break may not be quite as epic as we had hoped.

When you hear the glorious words "spring break" you can't help but picture the 90210 lifestyle, where teens do whatever they want, sleep by day, and party by night. We also can't forget the ocean and the sunny beaches. In reality, you can forget it because it's probably not what your spring break will be like.

This doesn't mean that Spring Break 2K15 should only consist of Netflix, take out, and your bed (although that doesn't sound that bad...). Break doesn't have to bore you just because you're in Ohio, and there's most likely still snow on the ground. We've come up with some ways to make this spring break Ohio-style one for the books.

First of all, don't be afraid to be the first one to call up some friends. Take charge and make plans, otherwise there is a guaranteed movie or TV show marathon awaiting you. When deciding what plans to make, you don't have to do the same old thing as always. Mix it up! You can still "get away" for spring break, yet remain in Ohio. There are several fun and exciting vacation spots within a few hours from here such as Kalahari, Great Wolf Lodge, and Castaway Bay. Places like this are great for a quick getaway so you can relax and make awesome memories with your friends. Indoor water parks such as these may be in good old, snowy Ohio, but you will feel like you're in the midst of a tropical island vacation. Other places to go to have a great spring break are Put-In-Bay or Kelly's Island which provide tourist attractions with lodging, camping, and a ferry boat. There's a lot to do, and it can be a nice, relaxing, and quaint place to hangout for a couple of days.



Photo courtesy of blog.cleveland.com.
Tower City Center is one of the many great destinations in Cleveland.

If you're trying to stay even closer to home than those places, but still want to have fun and try something new, just look into some hot spots in the Cleveland area. There are many places to go, great food to eat, and fun times to be had with some close friends. You can visit the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Great Lakes Science Center, The Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and The Cleveland Museum of Art. Depending on your mood, these are all extraordinary and interesting sites to see and admire all Cleveland has to offer. Other places in this area that are a lot of fun are Tower City, Coventry, and Little Italy. Tower City is a shopping mall with restaurants, a movie theatre, and many different types of stores. Coventry is a street in Cleveland Heights with many unusual stores and restaurants, including the Grog Shop, a concert venue. It is a very interesting and diverse area to visit.

Little Italy is a small area full of Italian restaurants and shops. If you enjoy Italian food, you're guaranteed to love whatever you decide to order while in Little Italy. Mangia! Since bigger amusement parks won't be open by the time of spring break, you could also check out the I-X Indoor Amusement Park, which is open from March 27 to April 19. There's a ton of fun activities and rides to enjoy inside since the weather still won't be the best.

Even though it may seem that spring break has to be filled with awful, boring memories, it doesn't have to be. There are a ton of entertaining and enjoyable things to do in Ohio even when the weather isn't that great, so don't let yourself have a dull and uneventful spring break just because you're stuck here! Be safe and enjoy your break, Berkshire!

Prank the night away

by Gwen Losasso, BP Staff Writer

There's something about spring fever that makes for a lighthearted mood. Although people play pranks throughout the year, there's something about the end of winter (and beginning of spring!) that says pranking like nothing else. Everyone has either played a great prank on someone, or had a prank played on them. Whether or not they want to share these memories, or even remember them, is a whole other story. Here are some pranks that Berkshire students have had played on them or have done to others:

"I told my friend that another friend and I were fighting. She ended up coming over and hid in my closet so we could scare the other friend together."

"At camp the girls would attack the boys with buckets of water."

"Someone woke me up by hitting me in the face with whipped cream."

"We told Jessi Simon that Carolyn Mayer's grandma was the Queen of England and that she had bought her the shirt that she was wearing."

"One time my twin and I switched places for a day. It got us an ISR but it was fun."

"We have a sink-hose and I tie a rubber band around it so when people turn on the faucet it sprays them right in the face."

"These girls threw ice water on me while I was in the shower."

"The first counselor to fall asleep at camp always gets shaving creamed."

"Every year on April Fool's Day I tell my mom that I wet the bed. I started doing it when I was four, and I still do it every year."



Photo courtesy of spongebob.wikia.com.
Practical jokes are right at home in Bikini Bottom.

"I put make-up on my eye and told my parents that I had a black eye. They totally bought it."

"In 8th grade my sister and a friend were downstairs while I was showering and two boys were banging on all the windows."

"I hit my brother in the face with whipped cream…he then kicked a hole in my door."

"My dad told my boyfriend that he had run over my boyfriend's LeBron's."

"I froze my dad's toothbrush in a block of ice."

"I TP'd your [Gwen's] house."

"I once convinced my brother that I was bleeding using red velvet cake batter."

After all these ideas being put out there, the next time you wish to prank someone be sure it is thoroughly original! Although no one was harmed in the making of these pranks, safety is another thing to keep in mind. We don't want anyone being over-pranked or have a prank induced injury. Anyways, enjoy the pranking season!

New season continued from front page.

The Berkshire school district is a compilation of Burton, Claridon, Troy, and now Montville and Thompson residents. Many students at Berkshire have come from closed schools (Troy Elementary and Claridon Elementary) and know the bittersweet feeling of leaving your memories behind. I moved from Claridon Elementary to Burton Elementary when I was young and know the difficulty of leaving the only thing you have ever known. This transition can be difficult but with the open minds of our students and staff we will make this work, just like the many times we have done before. We are excited for something new and different, and in the long run we hope this will make our community stronger.


The Ledgemont students' new mascot will have to say goodbye to their old mascot, the Redskins, and embrace being a Badger.

Fanatic fandoms for dummies

by Kayla Hadlock, BP Staff Writer

Over the past few years, use of the term "fandom" has increased an awful lot. If you're not sure what a fandom is, chances are you're not a part of one. This is totally okay if you're not into the whole "I need to know what this celebrity is doing at all hours of the day and where the photos of them from today are because I haven't cried over them in almost two hours" kind of thing. I wish that was an overly exaggerated explanation of what it's like to be in a fandom, but it's not. If you're still wondering what a fandom is, it is a subculture made up of fans (hence the name fan-dom) that come together to discuss the celebrity, movie, show, or book that they're interested in. Or, as Christin Dornback defined it, "intensely passionate people connected by one source of entertainment." While it may seem as if it's simply a fan base, there's more dimensions to it. Being in a fan base is merely enjoying whatever the source of entertainment is, but belonging to a fandom brings a whole new level of emotions and chaos. Which brings us to the question, what exactly is it like to be in a fandom?



Photo courtesy of 51allout.co.uk
Die hard fans often make signs and posters.

Through my time on Tumblr and being in several fandoms, I can tell you that being in a fandom can either be like riding a never-ending emotional roller coaster or extremely laid-back and casual. There's really no in-between. The Harry Potter fandom, or "Potterheads," is a prime example of a laid-back fandom…most just read the books, watch the movies, and occasionally blog about them. They're the more normal ones. On the other hand, you have fandoms such as the "Directioners," as younger One Direction fans like to call themselves. They're the ones you wouldn't want to express your negative feelings about the band, music, or tattoos to.

I've realized that the fandoms of musicians tend to be more extreme than those of movies, shows, and books (possibly excluding the Supernatural and Dr. Who fandoms). Being in a fandom for a music group is practically like being in a cult in the way that you pretty much worship the person you're obsessing over. Nearly all of your time is devoted to stalking them on social media, viewing every picture and video of them that has ever been posted (usually crying over them), blogging about them, and reading or writing fanfiction about them. Oh, and let's not forget spending money that you can't really afford to spend on concert tickets. So, right now you're probably wondering why anybody would think "Hey, I think I want to join this fandom so I can spend all of my time sitting in the dark corner of my room obsessing over this person/thing and waste all of my money on them."

Well, becoming a part of a fandom doesn't really happen like that. When it comes down to it, you never really make the decision to join a fandom; it just happens. For a while, you're the typical fan, enjoying the source of entertainment, then, all of a sudden, you find yourself making up excuses when asked to hang out with someone so you can continue blogging about that thing you're interested in, reading fanfictions and occasionally crying about them, and buying $350 concert tickets. Once you're in, it's nearly impossible to get out. So, if you somehow end up in a fandom, good luck. I hope it's not as stressful and emotional for you as it is for others. If you've escaped one or have the strength to avoid being sucked into one, you're the lucky ones. Trust me, you're not missing out on much. You still (hopefully) have somewhat of a social life. And money. So good for you.

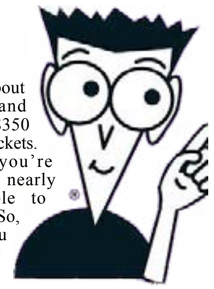



Photo courtesy of sugarnova.tv
Shaking and shrieking are common among fandoms.

How the Internet saved my life

by Carolyn Mayer, BP Staff Editor

Is life too difficult? Are ordinary, everyday tasks too taxing? Do you wish that all your struggles would just disappear? We at The Badger Pause have got you covered… Introducing: The Internet! The Internet may be a helpful resource for your English paper, but also for Teen Life Hacks! Teen Life Hacks are ways to make everyday responsibilities, quicker, easier, and more fun. Let's take a look at a few of our favorites!

It's common knowledge that smartphones have a limited, and quite meager, battery life. But what if you're out on the town with a couple of your buddies and you need a charge-up so you can post that rockin' selfie of you and your friends trying on sunglasses in Kohl's? This problem is easy if you had a pocket charger, but we've got a hack that makes charging your phone loads of fun. Thanks to the innovations we found on Vine, all you gotta do is take a decent-sized watermelon,


Photo courtesy of homejelly.com
Watermelon is more than just a tasty. treat.

and put it in a bowl of ice-water and salt, plug your phone into the melon, and—voila!—you've got yourself a charged phone. So go ahead and Insta- that pic because you've got a full battery.

Hungry? Cold? No problem. The Internet says that you can take the single-greatest chip in the history of cheese foods—Doritos—and use them to start a fire. They burn slowly, so they act as great fire kindling, and they taste like heaven, so they also act as a great snack. (I want to be friends with the guy who first decided to set Doritos on fire! He would be great at a party.)

Photo courtesy of mydailylaughter.com
Literally flaming hot Doritos.

According to Pinterest—the best way to procrastinate while doing homework—you can easily hide money inside an empty ChapStick tube. I would never be able to do this because 1) I NEVER finish an entire tube of ChapStick, and 2) it's because I always lose it. Even if I were to finish the tube, I would lose it soon after, and then I would find it on the floor of the laundry room two months later, along with my lunch money.



Photo courtesy of pinterest.com
What a fun little hiding place!

Whenever you're at a party, and the lighting is just too boring, the Internet has you covered. Just turn on your phone's flashlight, and place an unopened Gatorade bottle on it. This creates a great lantern. And since the flashlight app on your phone will drain the battery, keep a watermelon on hand so you can keep your phone charged and the party pumpin'.

If you're a cat owner, you understand the frustration of coming home and finding that your cat has unrolled the toilet paper while you were away. One trick to keep that from happening is to tuck the end of the toilet paper into the roll so that there is no loose end. Or, you could just do what I do: don't have a cat.

Another hack about cats—because the Internet is obsessed about cats *horrible flashback to Nyancat*—is if your cat loves sleeping in inconvenient places, like on your laptop's keyboard, just place an open and empty board game box near the afflicted area, and you'll never have to disturb Fluffy while he's sleeping on your computer ever again.

Finally, the most ingenious Life Hack I saw on the Web, was about—what else—easy phone access while in bed at night. Just put Velcro on your phone so you can attach it to your bedside table. This allows for expert midnight video watching that keeps your hands warm and your heart happy.

Even though none of these hacks will change your life, they will help you to continue your daily life in an even lazier manner than you did before. You're welcome, and stay curious.

Maple crazy continued from front page.

During sugaring season, the log cabin in the center of Burton is home to a boil, making maple products that are for sale inside. This is just one of the great attractions in Burton, also known as "Pancake Town USA." For many of the late winter months into spring, Burton becomes home to dozens of pancake breakfasts that offer genuine maple syrup for the top of the stack. These breakfasts, held anywhere from the fire station, to our very own Berkshire High School, welcome tourists and community members alike. Often times there will be extended family, neighbors, and friends all gathering together to enjoy a Sunday brunch. As for tourists in the small town of Burton, a quaint and delicious breakfast and walk around the square to see the log cabin and the source of the syrup is one of the most popular and enjoyable reasons to visit.

Liquid gold, as some (fanatics) call it, is at the center of our community, economy, and tradition in Burton and northeast Ohio. So whether you spend your spare days outside hauling buckets and boiling sap, or enjoying the fruits of that labor on some pancakes, you're in the right place.


Photo courtesy of media.cleveland.com
Burton, Ohio AKA Maple Town U.S.A.



Know your pseudo

by Clare Lynn, BP Staff Writer

As a fellow Berkshire student, you've probably been taught at least a science course or two. However, I can make a safe bet that none of you have ever taken a course on the mysterious realms of pseudoscience, that is if you even know what the heck it is. Well let me be the one to introduce you to your new basic pseudoscience professor Miss Lynn! It's me...I'm not getting paid for this, though.

Many of you probably know your horoscope sign and have probably heard of tarot cards and fortune telling, but beyond the basics what do you know on this subject? Did you know that crop circles, levitation, and ufology (study of UFO's) are all pseudosciences? The dictionary definition of pseudoscience is "an unscientific or trivially scientific theory, methodology, or activity that appears to be or is presented, as scientific." Therefore, many, if not all, people in the scientific community believe pseudoscience to be nothing but poppycock.

I am completely fascinated by pseudoscience, hence my intended, vague educating on the subject, but because of it's sheer enormity, I will only be touching on two of the better known subjects. The ones you can be interactive with, and that claim to know your FUTURE.

Palm Reading

Palm Reading otherwise known as palmistry is the act of determining personality traits and possible future outcomes through analyzing certain aspects of one's hand. Palm readers will look at not only the lines of people's palms but also fingernails, hand shape, and finger length. If you'd like to know some basics of palm reading or want to bring a cool party trick to a gathering instead of your gross store bought hummus, first things first. Pick a hand—but not just any hand. For insight into your work life and how you present yourself to the world, focus on your dominant hand. To examine personal relationships, dreams, and emotional struggles, look at the other hand. If you're having trouble seeing the lines, cup your hand slightly. Keep in mind: according to palm readers, a less prominent line reflects an area of life that may need work, while a deeper one signals that the characteristic related to that line is strong and fully developed. There are three significant lines on the hand: the life, the heart, and the head. The heart line is the line that goes horizontally across your hand below your fingers. For your heart line, if you have a long, straight line (ending below the index finger), you're a rational, analytical thinker who always considers others' feelings, and people appreciate that about you. Short, straight line (ending between the middle and index fingers): You need your freedom. You show your love through actions more than words. Long, curved line (arcing up and reaching the base of the middle finger): your passions and desires drive you. A short, curved line (arcing up and ending about a half inch below the base of the middle finger) means that you are reserved and prefer small groups to big ones. You open up in one-on-one settings.



If you find a shop that advertises palm reading, stop in and get your pseudoscience on!

Tarot Cards

Sadly, unlike palm reading, you'll need a deck of tarot cards for this fortune telling session. There are many different spreads of cards you can perform when doing tarot readings but the most common is the "past, present, and future" three card spread. In a deck of tarot cards, much like a deck of playing cards, there are suits. However, the suits in tarot are: cups, wands, pentacles, and swords. There are many cards considered more important than the regular suit cards. Death, probably the most renowned, is actually not at all a negative card. All the death card means is that a sudden change will be taking place in one's life. When doing tarot, good cards to look for include: Wheel of fortune, Strength, Temperance, World, Star, and the Sun. Cards you'll want to avoid are: Devil, Tower, Fool, and sometimes the Moon.

I am not encouraging anyone to rely on these fortunes in any way but to rather treat them as a fun pastime. The moral of this story is that no one really knows what the future holds for them or anyone else. Only you can form your own destiny, but a little pseudoscience on the side is always fun.

What does school really teach children?

by Julia Losasso, BP Staff Writer

Children in the United States are required to go to school until they are well into their teenage years, anywhere from age sixteen to age eighteen. The main idea behind this is raising a well educated, knowledgeable youth that will one day be the future of our world. The longer students are required to go to school, and take a variety of classes, they will be better prepared for going to college, finding a job, and one day starting a family.

But is this idea of the well rounded student who will be able culminate knowledge throughout their entire educational experience (which is also their entire life), and carry it on into the real world, not to mention pass it on to future generations, simply an unreachable ideal?

The standards of education, such as dropout age and minimum test scores, were created for a reason, yet with questions regarding "what do students actually learn?" or "how is this going to help me in real life?", one wonders if they are in fact the right standards to make. Would standards regarding how lessons are taught, or the environment in which they are taught, make a better impact? Maybe an impact so great that students wouldn't drop out of school due to dislike or lack of interest.

School does not only teach young people facts and important information, it teaches us, though mostly indirectly, social skills. For example: how to interact with others, problem solve, manage time, and be a part of a community. This social development, can be hindered though, by our learning environment, especially in adolescents. Seven hours a day, five days a week; that is how much time the average student spends in school, working to improve his or her future, amassing knowledge that will be held throughout his or her life, and being a part of something bigger than him or her self.

Yet some students paint a very different picture. It is a common occurrence, to hear someone question a teacher, "how many points is this test?", because they know that tests make up a majority of their grade. Students are taught to memorize and spit back information to prove they have mastered a topic, but when asked about the same thing months later, none of the information has been retained. Information is handed to each student practically on a platter, with little to no individual exploration or effort put in. In many schools, classes are fifty minutes long, and before the bell even rings, students are packing up, attention broken, to shove through the halls to arrive at their next class on time.

It seems that students are taught to obey and be silent, only asking questions if they dare. It is somewhat ironic that the most engaged student in class may not also be the "best" student in that class, grade wise, due to poor test taking skills. Students are taught that teachers are not there to help us, but to strictly drill information into our heads and grade papers, occasionally yelling at us in the hallway.

So is school really teaching us these "valuable life lessons", such as social skills and time management? In a roundabout way, yes. Whether it is in a particularly challenging class, or by the time they get to college, most students are forced to learn time management. Social skills are acquired along the way throughout school, mainly high school, where they are key to survival, it seems.

While the bottom line is yes, schools are teaching students life and educational skills that look good on paper, a test for example, the classroom or inner workings of the educational system need improvement.

Improvement could be anything from student driven learning, where the students determine the method of teaching a specific lesson according to their interests, to simply a new grading scale, where class participation or interaction counts for a greater amount of a grade, and testing is not held to such high acclaim in judging a student's ability and knowledge. Schools have incredible, power to make a change in future generations, and the most effective way to do that is not necessarily a change in the material being taught, but how it is being taught. The question is not "are schools teaching us the right material?", but more like "are schools teaching material in the right way?", and with that, the answers to both questions will become "yes".

Conspiracy theories: You decide

by Lauren Peterson, BP Staff Writer

Humanity struggles to find reason behind all of the calamity and tragedy in the world. As part of this universe, we always try to come up with conclusions as to why these bad things happen, and when we can't fathom that it just simply is what it is, we turn the blame to the supposedly shadowy forces of power that linger in the shadows.In the last 50 years, our society has turned away from blindly accepting basic facts,and instead we have begun to circulate in speculation and hearsay.

Conspiracy theories – we are obsessed with creating these crazy notions to make up for the things we don't understand. A conspiracy theory is defined by Merriam-Webster as a "theory that explains an event or set of circumstances as the result of a secret plot by powerful conspirators, people or groups." Anything that is unknown, misunderstood, or difficult to accept has a conspiracy theory attached to it. These theories can vary anywhere from government controlled assassinations or attacks to fake deaths all the way to extraterrestrials.

Some of the most popular conspiracy theories revolve around celebrities. Unless you live under a rock, you probablyknow of or have at least heard of these conspiracies. The most famous celebrity conspiracies involve musicians and their deaths. When stars pass away due to a tragic death, it is often difficult for us to accept that they were destructive drug addicts or unhealthy beings in trouble, so we seek to find another reason as to why they are no longer with us. Michael Jackson hadn't even been dead five minutes before people were creating death-hoax rumors. Apparently, "The King of Pop" was in a ridiculous amount of debt at the time of his death, and according to theory, Jackson faked his death to cash in on his album and merchandise. Completely laughable theory, right? But it's not the only one. Since 1977, Elvis Presley's death has been the center of one of the biggest rock and roll hoaxes. "The King of Rock and Roll" has allegedly been sighted all over the world. There are many theories as to why "The King" would fake his death, but the largest speculation that exists to support any of these theories is the belief that the body in Elvis' casket at his funeral service was made of wax. Of course there is no actual evidence of this. Despite all these theories, the most controversial death (and maybe the most skeptical) of all time is the death of the rapper Tupac. Following his death in 1996, he left behind a collection of unreleased music that is still seeing light even to this day. Conspirators point to various lyrical references and coincidences surrounding his death.

One of the greatest government conspiracies to exist in the United States revolves around the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. This much we know for sure: JFK was shot on November 22, 1963, struck by two bullets – one in the head, one in the neck – while riding through Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas. Lee Harvey Oswald alone was convicted with the murder of JFK, but this conclusion didn't go over well with the public. According to a poll taken by ABC News in 2003, 70% of Americans believe Kennedy's death was the result of a much broader plot. Some conspire that there was a second gunman, but others came up with an even broader conclusion. Severalpeople believe that Kennedy was killed by a CIA agent out of anger. While others believe that Kennedy's assassination was the result of a mob act. There are many further speculations surrounding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, but what actually happened? We may never know.

Now on to what you've all been waiting for – aliens; ancient aliens to be exact. According to ancient alien theorists (yes, ancient alien theorists), extraterrestrials landed on Earth thousands of years ago to share their advanced technological knowledge and expertise with early civilizations, changing the course of human history forever. The ancient alien theory grew out of the centuries-old idea that life exists on other planets. The theme of human-alien interaction plunged into the spotlight in the 1960s. Most ancient alien theorists point to two types of evidence to support their ideas. The first being ancient religious texts in which mankind either witnesses or interacts with gods or other beings who were noted tohave descended from the sky. The second is artwork. Ancient artwork found often depicts "alien-like" figures. Also, along with the evidence of artwork is ancient architecture like the pyramids of Egypt and Stonehenge. Ancient alien theorists argue that people of the earliest civilizations wouldn't have been able to build such architecturally advanced monuments without modern technology. To get into the minds of these ancient alien theorists, watch the television series Ancient Aliens on the History Channel or Netflix. If aliens visited Earth in the past, will they make an appearance in the future? That's up to you to decide.



Photo courtesy of atrl.net

Elvis Presley & Michael Jackson, pictured busting a move, are subject to many conspiracy theories.

Somewhat along the same lines as the extraterrestrial theory, is the hollow Earth theory. Hollow Earth conspiracy theorists have been trying to prove that there is a hole in the earth leading to a whole other world within our own. In 2002, a strange guest by the name of Dallas Thompson called into an American radio show, Coast to Coast AM with Art Bell. He had told a brief background story of his life, and then confessed that his life had changed forever when he got into a terrible car accidentfive years prior. Thompson shared his very vivid near-death experience stating that bizarre knowledge of the world had been poured into him. He claimed that the Earth is hollow and that there is an opening to the center of the Earth at the North Pole. Two months after his radio interview, he disappeared and has not been seen nor heard from since. Crazy and totally unbelievable, right? But wait, there's more – Admiral Richard Byrd. US Naval officer, Richard Byrd had a secret diary containing descriptions of his 1947 expedition to the North Pole in which he describes that after passing over a mountain at a certain point, he saw deep valleys filled with lakes, greenery, and ancient creatures, such as mammoths. Byrd writes stories of being pulled into the center of Earth and exploring Earth's interior. But these stories don't stand alone, there are several other crazy aspects that go along with the hollow Earth theory.

Now for the conspiracy theory of all conspiracy theories – the grand unified conspiracy theory. The grand unified conspiracy theory is the idea that all of reality is controlled by a single evil entity. It can be political or metaphysical, but this entity is responsible for everything bad. Michael Barkun coined the term "super-conspiracy" to refer to the idea that the universe is controlled by an all-connecting ladder of conspiracies.It works like this: every other conspiracy theory has been purposely constructed and placed in society by a remote sinister force to divert us from the truth. This is the ultimate conspiracy for the paranoids.

Do people really believe in conspiracy theories? The answer is an overwhelming yes. The impression that these beliefs are only held by a bunch of nerdy white guys living in their parents' basement is a myth. Surveys by Uscinski and Parent show that believers in conspiracies "cut across gender, age, race, income, political affiliation, educational level, and occupational status." Which is pretty amazing if you ask me. Who would have thought that the only thing we needed to bring everyone together was aliens.

The power of introverts

by Erin Wiggins, BP Staff Writer

What sounds better to you, going to a big party and being social or curling up on the couch and reading a good book? Chances are, if you chose the latter of the two, you're an introvert. Now what exactly is an introvert, you ask? Well, an introvert is someone who tends to look inward for motivation and inspiration. When you break down the word to its latin roots, intro meaning inward and vertere meaning turning, it makes sense (inward turning).

Now, let's just get some stuff clear right off the bat. Introversion has NOTHING to do with shyness or social anxiety. Yes, introverts can be shy but extroverts can be as well. Shyness is just how a person deals with new situations and meeting new people. Also, a common misconception of introverts is that they don't like to talk. This just isn't true, plain and simple. Introverts tend not to like small talk, but if you get on a topic they are interested in: they'll talk forever. Lastly, the biggest fallacy of introverts is that they are terrible public speakers. WRONG. Some of the greatest leaders in history have defined themselves as introverted. Some of these great leaders include Mahatma Gandhi, Barack Obama, Bill Gates, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln (just to name a few).

So by now you're probably thinking… *Okay so what's so good about a bunch of homebodies?* First off, rude *snaps fingers in a Z formation*. Introverts hold a lot of power within their sanctuaries of solitude.

Continued on page 12.



Photo courtesy of livelightbeing.com

An Open Letter to College Credit Plus, probably Governor Kasich, and anyone who thinks sending seventh graders off to "college" is a good idea

by Christin Dornback, BP Staff Editor

College Credit Plus is a new program going into effect starting next school year, which allows Ohio students to pursue higher level education while still enrolled in either junior high or high school classes. This dual enrollment program will replace the Post Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO), and will allow students to follow two pathways, either earning fifteen or thirty credit hours towards a college degree. For more detailed information, check out www.ohiohighered.org/ccp and explore to your desired extent.

If you are at all interested or angered by the following unadulterated, singular perspective rant, please feel free to contact me and we can duke it out over coffee or maybe some lovely scones.

Dear College Credit Plus,

I don't like you. I don't like you one bit. And no, this isn't some silly school girl grudge I'll be over by the time I come back for a high school reunion, or some pretentious way of saying that the program you are replacing, Post Secondary Enrollment Option, or PSEO, was tons better than you. No. I am systematically against you. In all ways.

Now that we've established the extent of my scorn, I admit I am completely, totally, one hundred percent biased and no where near as educated about this program as those who 1) created it 2) are participating in it, and 3) have the time, patience, skill, and interest to read the total bill Governor Kasich signed. But that doesn't mean I don't have worthy points. In fact, take this letter as a frightfully honest (albeit irritated and admittedly ignorant) admonition from a current high school and PSEO student. The main problem that I would like to focus on in this letter is the fact that this program is open to seventh through twelfth graders: centering in on the seventh and eighth grade eligibility this program now grants. Now, I'm not attacking seventh and eighth graders, as painfully cute and socially awkward as they are, they have a place in this world – I just don't believe it's in a college setting, and I don't think it's their wishes or fault that they're a part of this program. First things first, let's talk logistics, eh?

Looking at the spread of universities, satellite campuses, and community colleges where College Credit Plus would go into effect, not all are based in cities. A lot of campuses aren't within walking distances from middle and high schools, so transportation would be an issue. How many parents are willing or even able to pick up their preteen and drive them to and from their college class? Not many working parents, that's for sure. PSEO was previously open to ninth through twelfth graders, yet the majority (of Berkshire's PSEO students) were juniors and seniors, who could either drive or be driven by a friend. However, an answer to a FAQ College Credit Plus question states that some courses "may be offered at your high school." … Oh. You know who had a similar idea? The College Board's Advanced Placement curriculum! Hmm, funny how that works. I feel like one of us is grasping for something…like money…

Yet perhaps the real butt of my argument can be neatly laid out in a comparison of the high school environment and the college environment. Transportation can be managed; the difference between high school and college cannot be avoided. Now, I get it. Adults, and those in the fancy suits and shiny shoes making these programs become reality, are often years removed from the jam-packed hallways which smell of sleep deprivation, coffee breath, and teenage emotions, might think that kids are desperate to get out of there. And we are, I can sincerely assure you of that. However, that doesn't mean that the college environment should be available to students before they even get to don the term "upperclassmen." So yeah, maybe we upperclassmen are a bit worn out, but if you take a trip down a junior high hallway, and beneath the Axe Spray masked body odor and gossiping whispers about Suzy and her best friend both liking Jimmy, you can get a sense of the hope and potential, not to mention the life lessons, that these young students have yet to learn from a high school setting.

The high school environment, as painful and monotonous it may be at times, is necessary for social development. Students are surrounded by other students close in age at all times, teaching them how to interact with their peers, among other things. Doing this gives them a chance to learn about themselves as well as others in their age group, which arguably is just as important as academia in terms of our future, is it not?

But academically speaking, there are few students, if any, ready for college in junior high. That's the bluntest I can be. While discussing this with other students in my class, we cringed as we thought of ourselves in our younger years. I'm neither bashful nor boastful when it comes to my academics, and I humbly agree that my peers who are at the top of the senior class and I were no where near college ready five years ago. Why? Because becoming college ready is a target objective throughout high school; it is learning as we go, and having the time to do so. It is not something that the majority of students are prepared to do beginning in seventh, eighth, ninth, or even tenth grade. Those skills come from upper level classes, as well as through natural maturation and gradual increase of manageable responsibilities. This gradual increase of academic accountability allows students to succeed and thrive, rather than feeling inadequate and overwhelmed so early on.

My freshman year, we were told to appreciate the amount of points we could earn through certain worksheets, activities, and other assignments because once we got to junior year, the amount of opportunities to earn points dropped significantly. This, disappointingly and frustratingly enough, was true. But we had time to get used to it, and now, we're ready to take on college assignment weighting and scoring like champs. Right? Right.

So, what about students whose grades have always been cushioned by the "easy points" from in-class work sheets and reading assignments? Well, I imagine they break. Visualize a seventh grader, sitting in his or her college class. The professor hands out the syllabus on the first day, explains there are two tests, a midterm and a final, each worth 30% of the semester grade, two eight page papers, each worth 15%, and then a smaller writing assignment which amasses the remaining 10% of the semester grade. There will be wide eyes, and a lot of anxiety – anxiety that should not be placed on twelve and thirteen year olds; I don't care how college ready they were dubbed or how eager they were to be enrolled in "really big kid classes." There's just no sense to it.

As a senior, this semester I currently take two courses over at Kent's Geauga campus, and three at Berkshire. My junior year I took a total of three courses through PSEO and five through Berkshire. And since I'm being absolutely honest, I struggled even as a junior. Finding time, managing my grades, trying to keep my stress levels down became an exhausting and self-damaging year long trial. But that's the truth of it. I feel better prepared now, yes, and I'm able to enjoy the mix of classes I have this year with enthusiasm, but if you asked me last year when I pulled all-nighters to study, or double all-nighters to write ten page papers that amounted to 30% of a semester grade, I would've broken down into tears. (And I did. A lot. Ask Mrs. Hull.)

I wholeheartedly support taking college classes as a junior or senior because, in theory, it is a great idea. It saves money, gets you prepared so you're not shell shocked for the first lecture when you head off to college, and is a wonderful addition to the fantastic education that we're provided with. It's a great add-on to the years spent learning basic methods, and information that we're expected to know per our curriculum. It shouldn't act as a replacement of those courses; dual enrollment should serve as an elective for those who want to learn more and expand their knowledge when they are closer to average college age rather than average elementary school age.

But I suppose this really won't affect me since I'll graduate and enroll in full-time college life soon, so with that, I'll leave you.

Best of luck (You'll probably need it),
Christin Dornback

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Stop the terrors of animal testing

by Melissa Braun, BP Staff Writer

The days are isolating. Being kept in a cage most hours, you are full of uncertainty of what's to be done to you next. The only interactions you get outside the confined walls of a cage is to be tested. Your monotonous life includes differing amounts of physical pain mixed with psychological distress only to all end one day when you no longer serve a purpose for research. This is the typical life for the millions of animals used for testing every year. Sometimes people tend to forget that the products they use were first tested and tried on these innocent creatures first.

Animal testing is based on the idea that animals react the same way to drugs, chemicals, and products that humans do. It's not only rats that these experiments are performed on, but it includes so many more: mice, guinea pigs, primates, rabbits, cats, mini-pigs, and dogs. Of course animal testing is safer to humankind than actually performing test trials on humans, which justifiably would be one-hundred percent unethical, but at what cost to the animals? If animal abuse and cruelty is really frowned upon, why are the things being done to these innocent creatures dismissed as a non-issue? What is done to these animals and the things they have to endure are indescribable.

The experiments done on animals serve to test cosmetic, chemical, household, personal care products, as well as medical devices. The poor creatures in cosmetic tests are subjected to skin and eye irritation tests where chemicals are rubbed on shaved skin or dripped into the eyes, many times without any pain relief. In the case of carcinogen testing, animals were exposed to the substance everyday for two years to view its effects. They have to endure force feeding, exposure to chemicals and diseases, being sprayed with irritants, the testing the effects of psychological drugs and so much more just to see how they react to the product which could act differently on human trials. The distinctive differences between humans and animals lead to some of this research proven to be inconclusive and inaccurate tests. Animals are not humans, therefore there is no guarantee that the experiments would yield similar effects; we are simply made of different components. A percentage as high as 92 percent of experimental drugs that are proved safe and effective on animals, fail in the first human clinical trials. Some products could have one effect on animals but a completely opposite one on humans, which means that those animals could have been saved from all the unnecessary experimentation.



Do not support products that are unethically tested on animals.

LUSH, a well known company that proudly advocates against animal testing, has said, "We operate our own unique Supplier Specific Boycott, which states we will not buy any ingredient from any manufacturer or supplier that tests anything they produce on any animals for any reason… We support the development and validation of non-animal tests. Not only is LUSH passionate about the animal testing policy, our passion also extends to the commitment we have to sourcing ingredients from suppliers that are congruent with our ethics and standards." Other companies such as Aesop, Bath & Body Works, Aveda, Burt's Bees, and Trader Joe's Company state that their products are also free of animal testing.

Animal experimentation is a problem that has been occurring since industry called for it. Slowly but surely there is some hope for an animal testing-free future. Science and the immense amount of new technology combined together are making headway to change the way products are tested and something new is emerging from inside the laboratory doors. One new discovery that could potentially put this to an end is the development of an 'organ on a chip.' An 'organ on a chip' is a group of stem cells that grow into other types of cells. These mimic the response of real cells and could likely detect how an individual reacts to the tests. There's also in-vitro test methods and models based on human cell and tissue cultures, and computerized patient-drug databases. These and many more new alternative developments are much more efficient, provide more accurate results, more cost-effective and are precise in mimicking what would actually happen to a human using the product. They are leading the way to finally eliminate animal testing; but the fight is not over just yet.

Maybe, one day, there will be an end to experimentation on animals, and scientists and major companies will begin to use safer, more accurate alternative methods for their products. But unfortunately until then, many companies continue to endorse animal experimentation. The next time you are buying a product, look to see if it has a label that proudly states it wasn't tested on animals.

The questions of athletic salaries answered

by Gwen Losasso, BP Staff Writer

At some point you undoubtedly wanted to fulfill your dreams and become a professional athlete (and maybe you still do). Whether that was a dancer, basketball player, track star, or the next Derek Jeter, everyone had those athletic dreams. However, unfortunately, those dreams are not always a reality and neither are the million dollar salaries that come with them. Here are some athletic salary questions answered:

Photo courtesy of financenews24.com


Lebron James holding a stack of money. Yet this is only a fraction of the $72.3 million he makes a year.

Hey! Why do athletes make so much money?

Well, not all athletes make millions and billions of dollars, even though those who are televised most seem as though they do. These athletes are in fact rich because they are being televised the most. Athletes such as LeBron James, Tom Brady, Eli and Peyton Manning, and Derek Jeter (just to name a few), all make so much money because of their names.

The names of popular athletes generate so much revenue and money for the entire sports world because they are so well known. The media follows the big names, and therefore both the teams and the cities in which they play make more money. Therefore, it only seems fair that these athletes pocket some of this dough for themselves, and thus they are paid millions while the organization or city together may take in billions.

Humans want entertainment, and it seems American's are definitely no exception. This insist for entertainment is what keeps the professional sports industry booming. The popular demand to see LeBron James or Tom Brady is a huge part of why they get paid so much. LeBron James is one of the most popular athletes in the NBA, which is exactly why LeBron James' first game back in Cleveland of the 2014 season tickets were costing 1,200-14,000 apiece, and bringing boatloads of money to the franchise. If someone was making you this much money, wouldn't you pay them millions, too?

Who are the highest paid athletes?

American Professional Boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr. currently rakes in the most money of any professional athlete, earning a whopping 105 million dollars a year. Second on the Forbes Athlete list is Portuguese soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo who is making about 80 million a year. Cleveland's own LeBron James is not far behind and is the third highest paid athlete at 72.3 million dollars a year.

What stops these athletes from making more?

In the 1980's salary caps became a new big thing. These put limits on the amount of money teams can spend on players. The NFL and NHL are the strictest on obeying the salary caps, while other sports such as baseball do not have salary caps. This is why baseball player Miguel Cabrera can sign a 292 million dollar ten-year contract but a football player could not be paid this much.

Can women get these super rad salaries too?

Ha! Gender equality? No, of course not. Unfortunately, it seems as though the field of sports is even more unequal than most other careers. Not only do women not receive the light from the media on their athletic careers, but they make nowhere near as much money as their male counterparts. Not even their coaches make as much as a men's coach. In fact, on average a coach who coaches a mens team will make close to double that of what a women's coach will make.

Even in the collegiate level of sports this is true. Men's coaches will make more than women's. Plus, athletic scholarship preference is given to men over women. Typically, 60% of the available scholarship money will be given to males, only leaving 40% to the females. This happens even though an average of 57% of athletes accepted into a secondary education program are now women.

Girls & science

by Carolyn Mayer, BP Staff Editor & Kaitlyn Moses, BP Assistant Editor

On Saturday, March 14, five Berkshire freshmen attended a series of science workshops called Girls Go! Science, which is a program offered by The Cleveland Science Center to encourage girls from grades six through twelve to persue careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Sadie Hopkins, Haylie Scarton, Alli Dingman, Lexi Caponi, and Joanne Miller were recommended by Kerrie Bocci, their science teacher from last year, to attend this event. There were four workshops the students could attend pertaining to different areas of STEM: Creative Chemistry: The Art of Making Paint, Not All Chemists Wear White Coats, Crash Course in Coding a Website, and Girls Go! Automation.



Pictured left to right, Lexi Caponi, Allie Dingman, Haylie Scarton, Joanne Miller, Sadie Hopkins, and Ledgemont student, Taylor Courtney enjoy a day of science and fun.

Sadie Hopkins attended Creative Chemistry and Not all Chemists Wear White. She said she chose them because she loves painting her nails and says she "thought it would be cool to try out." She enthusiastically explained how in the workshops, they learned how to make paint, they made their own paint, separated the DNA from a strawberry, and even learned the science behind the Internet sensation "The Dress." Because of this experience, Hopkins says that she is interested in persuing a career in STEM after highschool, saying "this really showed me all the different things you can do" in these fields.

Joanne Miller also attended both Creative Chemistry and Not All Chemists Wear White. She had a great time and recommends this program to anyone who enjoys science. She says that she learned that "science is an option for anyone. If you really want to go down that pathway, it's not as hard as it may seem."

Haylie Scarton also attended Creative Chemistry, but she attended Girls Go! Automation, as well. She explained how they built a rollercoaster out of styrofoam which helped her learn about potential and kinetic energy. She had a great time and recommends that "a lot more people should do it because it's learning about science in a really fun way."

Lexi Caponi attended both of the Chemistry workshops because she loves science. She had been interested in pursuing science for years, but after learning about DNA extraction at this event, she is looking forward to applying this to her future career. She is enthusiastic about how she wants to work in a morgue to "catch the criminal" by extracting and analyzing DNA in the bodies.

Allie Dingman wants to grow up to do something that pertains to either art or science, so she attended Creative Chemistry and Crash Course in Coding a Website. In website coding, Dingman learned how to use the coding languages JavaScript and HTML to manipulate an image online. There was a cartoon girl on the website, and they sent her to a different planet and changed her clothes. She encourages that many people try a program like this because "it's a good way to get into science if you haven't had the chances to."



Photo courtesy of wealthysinglemommy.com

Techno toddlers

An Editorial by Abby Carlson, BP Assistant Editor

The harsh glow emanating from a tiny iPod screen reflects in her eyes, revealing what the characters of her game are up to. She's so enthralled with her online world that she doesn't even react when her mother calls for her from the kitchen; she just continues to tap the screen as if her life depends on it. She's only six years old.

Although disturbing, this is reality. Kids, younger and younger each year, are logging into their own virtual reality, whether it's a world full of dragons and elves or one with shopping malls and designer jeans, it's their second life. Instead of playing outside, stretching their imagination to its limits, they let their devices create an alternate world for them. I don't know about you, but when I was younger, I was outside from dawn 'til dusk, either playing with the neighbors, my sister, or just hanging out alone, possibly pretending I was a teacher and my rather large collection of stuffed animals were my students. Today, all kids have to do is unlock their ipads, open an app, and touch the screen, allowing the technology to do everything for them.

Now, I understand if you're going on a six-hour car ride, because those are just plain awful, and they go by much more quickly if you have something to distract you. Since you generally can't squeeze a tree house inside, or for some unknown reason, your parents are completely against the idea of a game of in-car dodge ball, a small travel sized gadget can be just the trick to pass the painfully long hours. However, when you get the chance to play outside with friends and soak up the vitamin-D, take advantage of it! Once you hit high school, free time is limited, and if you don't spend time detached from the screen when you have the chance, you're sure to regret it.

In elementary, kids are given recess for a reason, to burn off all that pent-up energy, but if they spend the whole time on their phones checking Insta and Twitter, then recess is completely pointless. When I was in elementary, my friends and I spent the entire time running around, whether it was a game of infected, capture the flag, or just tag, we were actually moving around. And no, walking laps around the playground while glued to your screens does not count. In the long run, you're going to remember playing and having fun during your free time more than if you were to spend the whole period on your gadgets. If you want to argue that there's nothing to do, here are a few ideas to keep you quiet (and they're all pretty fun):

- play in the woods(or just your yard if you don't have woods)
- go for a bike ride
- play dress up
- play with the neighbors
- round up people to play tag, capture the flag, or kick ball
- go swimming
- jump rope
- draw with chalk on your sidewalk or driveway
- host a tea party
- have a water balloon fight
- build a tree fort

Now, let's chat about those seven year olds with iPhones. First off, at that age, you are irresponsible (understandable, after all, you're only seven) and not able to look after an expensive device. Second, you should be outside burning all your energy off; and thirdly, when you're young, you should be interacting with flesh and blood kids, not virtual ones, it will help you with your people skills later on. When I was seven, the most advanced piece of technology that I had, was one of those fake cell phones. You know, the ones where the buttons make different noises when you press them? Why does nobody have those anymore? They were a great form of entertainment, and it was no big deal if the screen cracked or it was dropped in water. So why are we allowing young children to walk around with a highly breakable electronic that costs more than monthly car insurance, when they would have just as much fun pretending to talk to their friends on fake phones? I know I did.

Clare's Comic Corner

by Clare Lynn, BP Staff Writer



Berkshire students' jobs

by Emily Shantery, BP Staff Writer

It may not seem like it, but summer is going to be here before we know it. Maybe some of you are thinking about finding a job. I mean, why not? You could make some new friends, gain experience, and have something else to throw on your resume. Oh, and let's not forget the glorious paycheck that makes it all worth it. I've asked some of Berkshire's own about their jobs to give people an idea of places they may be interested in looking.



Another set of Berkshire twins work at JC's Restaurant, the Koziol's, **Melissa and Suzanne.** They both work about three, four hour shifts a week, but they have slightly different views on their jobs. Melissa's favorite part is the free food, while Suzanne's is her coworkers. Mel dislikes having to fake being nice to people, while Suz dreads waiting on the occasional mean and unappreciative customer. Suzanne mentioned that someone with good people skills who is good in awkward situations would be great at this job, and Melissa said that someone like Alivia Alfredo would be good at this job.



Anna Carlson is a senior here at Berkshire who actually has two jobs. Anna works at the Burton Public Library and the "Burton Chamber of Commerce Sugar Camp" a.k.a. the log cabin in the circle. She works at the library on Mondays and the cabin on Sundays (and Saturdays in March). At the library she loves being around books and at the cabin she enjoys all the customers and sometimes tourists that come in. Anna said that someone with time management and good organization skills would be a good employee that the library. She also mentioned that anyone who is patient and friendly would be perfect for a job at the cabin.

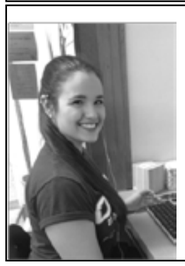
Lexi Sell is a junior here at Berkshire who is one of the many members of the Berkshire-Alpine crew. At Alpine Lexi's job is to scan season passes and to sometimes work the lifts. She works Friday through Sunday and speaks very highly of her job. Her favorite part of work is gossiping with all of her coworkers, but her least favorite part is the cold. Someone who likes people and likes the cold would be perfect for Alpine. Lexi also said that they are always hiring and that the benefits are "bomb".



Ryan Hall also works at Alpine on the same days as Lexi. He operates the lifts here and his favorite part of his job is that he gets to snowboard for free. His least favorite part is also the cold.

Madison Cannella has recently gotten a job at the clothing store called Sanity in Chagrin Falls, where she works about sixteen hours a week. Her favorite part of working there is putting outfits together and styling shoppers, but she dislikes rude customers. According to Maddie, someone who is young and fashionable (i.e. Berkshire's own best dressed), and someone who works well with others would make a great clothing store employee.

Carston Nyerges is a junior who works at Newbury Tires and seem like he really loves his job. He enjoys changing tires, and the only thing that he doesn't like is how dirty his hands get. Carston also mentioned that anyone who can follow directions would make a good employee here.



Lauren Peterson is a senior who works at Dutch Country as a hostess three to four days a week. Lauren likes the money and tips from working (who wouldn't?). She also likes the experience and responsibility of having a job. Her least favorite part of work is that on some weekends she wakes up earlier for work than she would have to for school. Lauren told me that a social person who would be good under pressure would make a great hostess.



Photo courtesy of bookcoverimages.com

Banned books bar brainpower

by Zak Martinjako, BP Staff Writer

You can't handle the truth! Or, at least, that's what many school districts (and even parents) have tried to tell students for decades. What exactly am I talking about, you may ask? I'm talking about books, banned books to be specific. The idea of censoring and banning books, even going so far as to burn them, has existed for a long time, probably almost as long ago as the printing press made mass produced books aviable.

If we take a look at some of the most commonly banned books in the United States, you'll likely see titles that you've read before (especially if you're a junior, senior, or high school graduate). For starters, we have To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee. Here at Berkshire, this is a book that most of us read during freshman year. But historically it has been prohibited from public schools and libraries due to racist themes and language… The irony is that one of the major points of the book is to display the atrocities of racism. But I suppose it's better to try and pretend the US doesn't have a history of horrible racism, rather than show kids that it's wrong.

Another familiar book that's faced the ban hammer is Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl. While students at Berkshire aren't required to read the actual diary (though some classes do read the play based on it), no doubt most are familiar with Anne Frank to some capacity. This book has been banned for a few different reasons, but the most hilarious of which is that it's "too depressing", and yes I'm being serious when I say that a few schools banned it for that reason. I guess kids just can't handle seeing actual historic events through the eyes of another kid. Thankfully this book isn't banned today, especially for such ridiculous reasoning.

There are of course many more books that I could name, such as Catch-22, The Catcher in the Rye, Fahrenheit 451, Brave New World, Slaughterhouse-Five, and The Grapes of Wrath (at least one of these, if not most, should ring a bell). Ironically enough, all of the books I've mentioned, though commonly banned, are also considered highly influential novels; some, even, may be among the most influential English novels ever written.

Continued on page 10

Mitchell Freeman is a senior who works summers at Punderson Golf Course. His job there is to drive people on golf carts from their cars to the proshop with their bags. Mitch enjoys the customers that he meets, but he dislikes waking up early to work on weekends. According to Mitch, anyone who is a people person would be good at this job.



Corey Mraz is a Berkshire senior who is an employee at the Panera in Bainbridge six days a week. There he makes food and puts orders together for customers. Corey likes how laid back his job is and he also enjoys interaction with the customers. Extra cleaning on Wednesday nights and holding hot pans are not his favorite thing to do, but he stated that "there isn't really much I'll complain about with that job." Corey also mentioned that this Panera location is currently looking for new employees.

Samantha Cannella told me about her summer job at Beachwood Family Aquatic Center where she works as a lifeguard nearly every day. Sam's favorite part of her job is making new friends with her coworkers, but her least favorite part is the hours. Sam added that someone who wants to be a lifeguard needs to be a good swimmer!

Villains with something well worth saying

by Anna Carlson, BP Staff Editor

They're the bad guys, the villains, known for lips curled into a snarl, long claw-like fingernails, and an ebony heart of ice. They're the ones who spin the evil plots and provide us with the perfect character to hate (besides the stereotypical heroes provided in each and every film or television show who we've been spoon-fed to love and idolize…even though in reality they just get on my nerves…but we're supposed to want to practically become them so we mimic the way they dress, they talk, they think, and even the way they wear their hair…I'm looking at you Katniss Everdeen). Anyways, we've been programmed to hate these guys, to root for their destruction, and to hope they go down with more than a little bit of pain. But mixed up in all that loathing, I've found that I have a special little spot in my heart for the villains of pop culture. They make some pretty fabulous bad guys to be honest.

I personally have a deep appreciation for words. Words have the capability to dance and when they do, you can find a deep resonance that connects in a beautiful way to our world. Which is why, I suppose, I rate a movie based on its lines. Sure, I enjoy a bit of action and romance here and there as much as the next guy, but my true love lies in the lines. And you'd be surprised just how many of those fantastic quotes that I love so much come from the lips of the villains we all love to "hate" so much. Sure, they might be evil, but hey, even they have something worth saying.

President Snow from *The Hunger Games*

"Hope is the only thing stronger than fear. A little hope is effective, a lot of hope is dangerous."

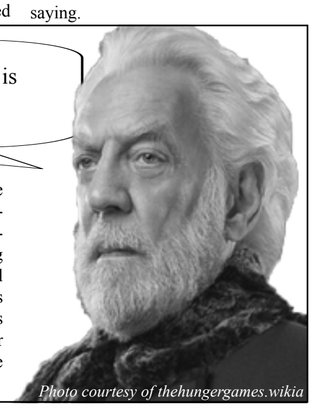


Photo courtesy of thehungergames.wikia

Ah, President Snow. You're a wise man. Kind of a fool, but I suppose a wise one (please just accept the paradox of this statement…smile and nod along). Hope is indeed an incredibly strong emotion, it stirs thoughts and rallies every other emotion to its cause. If you control a people's hope, you control them, it's true. If you take a look at the concept of the Hunger Games in Suzanne Collins' trilogy, you see that the reason for the yearly culling is to keep the Districts from rebelling. At first this might not make a lot of sense. So you take two children from every District, throw them in a hostile arena, and force them to fight to the death. And this is supposed to make the people NOT want to rebel!? But here's the genius behind the deviousness of this plan, the Hunger Games allow President Snow to control the hope of the people within Panem. By restricting the hope of the people to a single cause, the survival of their child chosen as tribute, they are unable to focus that dangerous desire on anything else, like rising up against The Capitol (do you see the absolute pure genius of this!? How could you not love this guy?). It's just too bad that the dear President Snow lost his grip on the hope of the people.

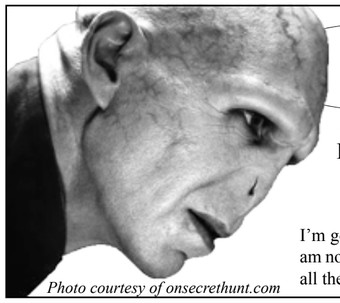


Photo courtesy of onsecrethunt.com

"There is no good and evil. There is only power and those too weak to seek it"

Lord Voldemort from *Harry Potter*

I'm going to admit right up front that I am not a Harry Potter expert. I've seen all the movies but haven't read the books (trust me this goes against every bone in my body since I love books so much but I just couldn't get into them! I'm sorry!) so I don't quite follow the obsession with the boy and his lightning bolt scar. Nor do I quite grasp the memes about Lord Voldemort and his missing nose (seriously though, why doesn't the guy have a nose?) but let's brush that aside for the moment and just appreciate this line. It's an interesting perspective when you think about it, redefining the terms of good and evil for us, categorizing them into a more basic viewpoint of have and have-nots; those who have the strength to do anything for power and those who do not. I get the feeling Lord Voldemort may have been too preoccupied with the idea of power…

Moriarty from *Sherlock*

"Monsters are not born fully developed."



Photo courtesy of comicvine.com

For those of you who have not yet been enveloped by the beautiful world of the highly functioning sociopath Sherlock Holmes…I pity you. I suggest you break down and just watch it. As of RIGHT NOW. I promise you that you will not be disappointed. Not only do you get a screen full of Benedict Cumberbatch's cheekbones, but Moriarty (sure he isn't Sherlock but he's honestly just as cool) is just about the most amazingly complex, chilling, psychotic, emotionally train wrecked villain of all time. Trust me. He's at the tippy-top of my favorite villains list (yes, I do have a favorite villains list). And, man, does he deliver some fantastic lines, (the insane ones always have the most interesting things to say) among which, is this one. It's that age old question of whether people are born evil or made evil by the world around them. The fantastic thing about this quote is that it draws in both perspectives (yay for compromise) and proposes the concept that perhaps nature and nurture contribute to the depth of evil within an individual. That it is not just one nor the other. And Moriarty has definitely reached the very deepest of levels.

Banned books continued from page 9

Today, all of them are integral to higher level education between the facts that they are major parts of Advance Placement (AP) curriculum and that most colleges will assume that you've read them. All in all, quite the bitter irony that those with the most educational value and life changing ideas are those that are most censored.

Fortunately, forbidden books in the United States are not much of a problem anymore. Most people realize the foolishness of restricting anyone from reading what they want. However, there are some who still try. Though banning is now rare, there are still some people that try to get books taken off of shelves in schools and libraries, which is called "challenging" a book.

You may have heard of the case against the Harry Potter series, one of the most challenged book series in the past decade or so. The heavy use of magic is the main point of contention, some take issue with "witchcraft," others may claim that it's "satanic," and others call it "occult" (or supernatural). Ultimately, though, the only thing kids will gain from this series is that you should always stick by your friends, be courageous, and that good can triumph over evil (well, and maybe more active imaginations, but that's not truly a bad thing).



Photo courtesy of Pinterest.com

Be a friend, read a book. You might learn something. That's why it was written.

Many of those who make these challenges are parents. To be fair, most parents challenge books purely with the intent to protect their children. Their intent is certainly admirable. Unfortunately, even the best of intentions can be harmful when they are executed poorly. Prohibiting certain books only shields a child for a little while, and it keeps others from enjoying something that they have every right to enjoy.

There's so much more that could be said about the history of book banning and the challenges that literature still faces in our society. However, the point is that both fail to see one of the major purposes of books, which is to expose the corrupt aspects of our world that need to change, and offer ideas on how to make it better. Yes, people have very opposite opinions, and yes, they write books about their opinions, but shielding children from opinions contrary to those of their parents or their school system does not help them become more intelligent, enlightened people. Children will eventually become the leaders of the world, so don't dull their critical thinking skills and cheat them out of achieving their greatest intellectual potential by restricting them from reading.

Hollywood: We're done with your redos

by Alex Sanda, BP Staff Writer

All good things must come to an end; such is the case of the entertainment industry. Sequels, prequels, and remakes-none of which are imaginative-dominate the movie theaters. The horror genre has been on the brink of death for years, but it now seems like the entire film industry is now dying. Is there any originality left on the silver screen, or has the endless recycling of overused ideas become the norm?



Photo courtesy of screencrush.com

The original well-known and easily recognizable Ghostbusters cast.

Everyone loves a movie that has pop culture status; however, even those movies can turn sour. The newest Star Wars movies have come out recently and are the most infamous and hated topic of discussion between science fiction fans. People constantly complain about their poor quality.

What I usually hear after someone goes to see a film based on a book is something along the lines of "the book was better." It seems like people would rather have entertaining ideas with good writing than entertaining ideas with bad execution. I'm sure the Twilight books have their fans, but I'm not too sure about the movies. Instead of wasting absurd amounts of money on below average movies, directors and producers ought to be putting effort into original screenplays. Originality is more promising than sparkly vampires. At a certain point, you have to ask if movies are produced because they are quick and easy money makers, or because they will please fans.

Sometimes, the first in an installment is so bad that the very mention of a sequel is appalling. For example, Furious 7. Yes, you read that right. 7. There are seven movies in the series. Junior Alyssa Maier, a devout cinephile says "I saw the first two Fast and Furious movies and that was plenty enough for me." The Taken movies are undoubtedly following the same trend. The first had an above average rating but as the trilogy progressed, the quality declined. Hollywood is keeping series of movies alive with mediocre reviews just for the sake of making movies; they could be pumping out new and original storylines.

Many beloved childhood movies have been ruined because of crummy remakes. The most prominent offense is Ghostbusters, and it is yet to be released . Now, I certainly wasn't around in 1984 when the original was released, but that doesn't mean it I didn't grow up watching Bill Murray and Dan Akroyd comically capture the completely ghosts; it would be tough to find someone in our school who hasn't seen or at least heard of the gem. It's easy to see why some are excited for the 2016 regeneration of Ghostbusters--it boasts an all-female cast. Anyone voicing his or her opinion against the remake is immediately dubbed sexist. For many, it isn't the female cast that is so repellent, it's the fact that there even is a Ghostbusters reboot. On top of this, one of the best trilogies of all time (choosing to ignore the fourth installment), Indiana Jones, is being eyed for renewal. Classics are called classics for a reason! These don't need to be modified in any way; the plot, characters, and quotes are everlasting in the original. There's already a film that everybody adores, just leave it at that.



Photo courtesy of ca.celebrity.yahoo.com

The new all-female Ghostbusters cast.

Hopefully Hollywood will learn its lesson someday. With so many box office failures and critically berated films, the film industry might begin to realize that audiences want new and original screenplays, not overused trash.



Photo courtesy of puzzle.de

The Evolution of Disney

by Sam Hargis, BP Staff Writer

Walt Disney, the famous producer of the family oriented cartoons and films, had a purpose of creating meaningful films for each member of the family.Walt and his brother, Roy Disney, started the entertainment film business with good intentions for the future. The Walt Disney Company believes responsibility and integrity should come first.

The Walt Disney Company started with the brother's talented cartoon drawings and evolved into short films. After a professional disagreement the two brothers decided to create new characters: Mickey Mouse as their new star along with his friends Minnie, Goofy, Daisy, Donald Duck, and Pluto. The Walt Disney Studios took off from there, and Disney always tried to incorporate a moral in every original movie or short film made.

The entertainment produced by Disney in the past were primarily cartoons. The cartoons would have stories and storylines that were able to be understood by both children and adults. Disney was successful when it came to their original goal; families all around the world enjoyed their productions coming from Walt's drawings.

Walt Disney died in 1966 and many say the production of original Disney films died with him. It is true no one can draw exactly like he did, or create and think in the same way he did. Although the loss of his imaginative mind had a large impact on the Walt Disney Company, they have still continuously created movies and TV shows using idea belonging to Walt, and also those that do not. But what has Disney evolved to?

Within the last decade to decade and a half, the Walt Disney Company has attempted to put more reality into some of their shows currently on air, and many of the cartoons have disappeared. This has also happened to many of the movies. The cartoon effect that Walt put into his work is still there, but TV shows have started their own trend. Real actors and actresses are being used as characters in Disney shows and movies along with real human personalities.

The Disney animated classics are the ones commonly loved by children and families, but the new shows and movies are just like any other movie with sixteen year old actors/actresses playing the roles of twelve year olds. For examples the show currently on Disney Channel, Good Luck Charlie, a Disney Channel original TV series from 2010-1014, starred Bridget Mendler, 21, who played the role of a fifteen year old sister.

Many of the shows also create a bad image for parents or the shows portray parents as being ignorant. The Suite LIfe of Zack and Cody another Disney Channel show from 2005 to 2008, had a set of twins (Zack and Cody) living with their mom in a hotel. The twins often acted mischievously around the hotel doing things they were told not to do. They went against their mom's rules without her even knowing where they were half of the time. Although they'd end up getting in trouble, they still would show how to sneak behind adults backs. Parents are often disrespected on many of the TV shows children and teens are growing up with. What happened to the good, old, loved cartoons. It seems Disney is trying to keep up with the growing technology, social media, and the new generation in general. Is this the greatest idea?

The Disney classics, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Cinderella, Dumbo, and so many more are what most children and teens love. Disney is what many kids learn from and look up to as they age. In that case, shows and movies should continue to have good morals and teachings along with lots of fun. Walt's sketches and stories are loved by a big part of the world and the Walt Disney Company should continue to go down his path; should they not?

Photos. Why?



by Kaitlyn Moses, BP Assistant Editor

It's hard to write about something like photographs and not sound pretentious, but photography is a form of art, truly. A form of art, however, is not an all encompassing name for it. A picture: something that captures a time, a place, moments that existed and then disappeared. Within pictures, there are different instances, different times, and completely different people. A whole different world that occurred, that we have moved on from, but is forever immobilized in a picture.

Photography has come so far, and developed much. We don't use VHS tapes, or phones with rotary dials, but we still make use of photographs; even polaroids are popular— although their use is purely aesthetic now. The images we know were named in 1839 by Sir John Herschel who used the Greek φῶ ς (phos) and γραφή (graphê) to create "photograph", together, the Greek literally means "drawing with light." From 1839 to present day, the name stuck and only varies slightly on some occasions: pictures, photos, etc. We may not use all the technology that was invented so long ago, but pictures have endured.

You'll grow and age and you may no longer be able to recognize yourself or the others in the photographs, but it doesn't matter because it happened; that moment existed and the photos serve as proof, whether in that instant you were full of happiness or sadness, whether it was a good time in your life, or a terrible one, it lives on, forever frozen, but forever living and breathing as well. Years pass by and whole groups of people are forgotten, save what they left behind. The photos remind us of their existence. Pictures are worth more than a thousand words, they're priceless. How can anyone place a value on a fragment of time, stuck in a photo?

The digital world has made it far easier for these timeless pieces to exist; it's important, however, to have physical copies of our memories. To pick up a photo album and flip through the pages has a completely different effect than scrolling through folders on a computer. Computers aren't solid, they can malfunction, contract viruses, or break completely. If anything were to happen to the hard drive of your computer, how many precious memories would you lose? Of course, it's possible to misplace photos or lose them to a fire but, it's most sound to keep a hard copy of photos and have them on a floppy disk or USB drive as well .

You can relive a moment over and over with just a glance at a picture. With the single tap of a button, it's permanent. The memories may fade and blur, but the pictures never will. You can rediscover the time you rode on the back of a motorcycle with your uncle, or when you were ready to head off to school for the first time, it's all there; eternally present in a photograph.

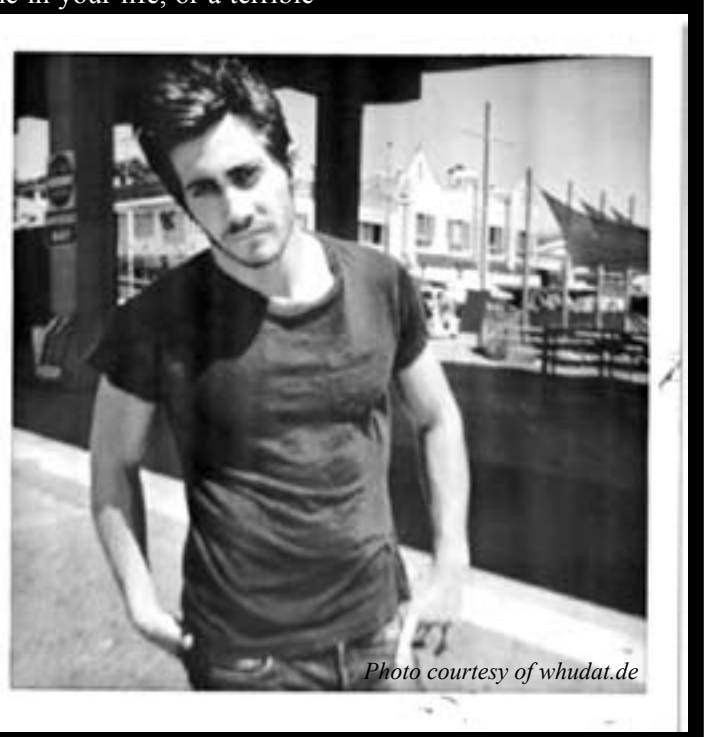


Photo courtesy of whudat.de

As part of the Polaroid Project many celebirites, such as Jake Gyllenhall, have had their images captured in the form of polaroids.

The 36 questions

by Jessi Simon, BP Staff Writer

If you're looking for love all you have to do is ask. Literally! Grab the closest stranger to you, and ask away. According to a study done by Arthur Aron and other psychologists, using a specific set of thirty six questions can lead to an undeniably passionate love. The questions are broken down in three sets, each getting more and more intimate.

The base of this study is built on achieving closeness by mutual vulnerability. Disclosing such personal information with another person can bring the two together, which doesn't seem too crazy, right? Think about the closest relationship you have with someone. Remember those late nights, sitting on your best friend's couch, sharing pizza rolls, popcorn, and life stories. You tell your best friend your future plans, your deep thoughts, and your biggest fear. You two only grow closer because of this. That's what these thirty six questions are all about; diving right into heart to heart conversations full of self-disclosure.

The first set of questions is seemingly innocent, with questions such as: Would you like to be famous? In what way? Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest? Ask your partner, and spill your own answers. The second set kicks things up a notch. What is your most treasured memory? If you knew that in one year you would die suddenly, would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why? Listen carefully to the now not-so-mysterious-anymore stranger share. The third set is where things get really spicy. When did you last cry in front of another person? By yourself? If you were to die this evening with no opportunity to communicate with anyone, what would you most regret not having told someone? Why haven't you told them yet? Of all the people in your family, whose death would you find most disturbing? Why? Gather the courage and set your words free.



Will you find love using these questions?

The last step in this process is to stare into each other's eyes for four minutes straight. No joke. Set the timer, sit back, relax, and get to gazin'. The first two minutes will be awkward, no doubt. But once you push through, you're supposed to feel closer than ever to your partner. So there you have it- next time you find someone you click with, break out these thirty six questions and see if it's really meant to be.

The mysteries of prom unveiled

by Lexi Sell, BP Staff Writer

Theme: Murder Mystery
Color scheme: black, red, gold, and silver
Time: 6pm – 11pm
Venue: La Malfa in Mentor
Dinner served: 6:15 pm

Cost for juniors & non Berkshire students: $65
Cost for Berkshire Seniors: $55.
***Shoes have to be worn at all times, bring comfortable shoes to change into.

The power of introverts continued from page 5

Over three years ago now, Susan Cain (the bestselling author of *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*) gave a famous TedTalk called the Power of Introverts which was punctuated by a standing ovation from an enamored crowd. During her captivating speech she reminisced on her time at summer camp as a girl. She had a vision in her head that summer camp would be a bunch of girls sitting around in a cabin and reading all summer. Once she got to camp, she was forced into chants and outdoor activities because everyone thought something was wrong when she wanted to go off by herself. They didn't understand how someone could crave solitude. Cain says it best herself, "Solitude matters, and for some people, it's the air they breathe." Cain goes on to explain the real power of introverts which is, believe it or not, their leadership skills. An introverted leader will let others voice their opinions and will think before they act or speak, unlike an extroverted leader who might get a little carried away. Although they might not be the most inclined to step up to leadership positions, when they do it's for the right reasons. They take up leadership roles because they feel they have to; because it's the right thing to do, not because they like the sound of their own voice. I think this is best said by the one-and-only Dumbledore, "It is a curious thing, but perhaps those who are best suited to power are those who have never sought it. Those who have leadership thrust upon them, and take up the mantle because they must, and find to their own surprise that they wear it well."

Although it was once believed that only about a quarter of the population were introverted, more recent studies have shown that nearly one-third to half of the population are introverted thinkers. So why is the world so bent on extroversion? Everyday there are teachers that assign group work and group discussions, which is great. Everyone should be able to work and communicate with others. But sometimes we need to be seclusive in order for real, deep thought to happen. I'm not saying you have to find your Walden and go on some kind of transcendentalist journey within yourself. But in order to form your own opinions in life, you must eliminate outside influences and that's what introverts thrive on. They thrive on knowing how they truly feel and knowing they have thought about something thoroughly before acting on it. Now that is, in my opinion, the true power of introverts.