

THE COURIER

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WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK 10605

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In the Tiger's Den

We the people at the Courier would like to hear your voice at Highlands! We want to hear about your opinions about Highlands, regarding the rules and practices here. If you want to share your opinions, fill out this form and it might appear in the next edition! To access the form, click [here](#).



Lupia, the stage crew manager. Here is what they said.

This is Mr. Lupia's first time ever doing stage crew! We decided to ask him more information to find out exactly what stage crew does.

Mr. Lupia - Stage Crew

What is the role of the stage crew?

Basically, to make sure everything moves smoothly between the scenes. We are in charge of moving the sets in between the scenes, and setting up the scenes correctly.

What is the process for coming up with ideas for sets and creating them?

That's a question for Mr. Hauser. Ms. Irlen looks at the script and all the pieces they need and kind of relays the idea to Mr. Hauser. He is actually in charge of building the sets.

Do you think it will be a challenge to finish by the date of the show?

It's always going to be difficult, but we have a super focused crew, and for the transitions we are going to just practice, practice, practice.

Next, we interviewed Ms. Irlen, the chorus teacher in our school. Ms. Irlen has been directing the school musical for the last fifteen years. That is every year she has been working at Highlands! She definitely has a lot of experience with this type of work!

Ms. Irlen - Director

What is the most challenging part of directing a school musical?

The most challenging part of directing the show is having everyone who is in the cast here at the rehearsals at the same time. This has been challenging because students are involved in a lot of different activities and classes. We don't always have enough time because of all the things they are doing.

How do you keep yourself and the performers on track to be prepared by the day of the show?

Well, we just have a very specific calendar and we have certain goals every day that need to be accomplished. Once the day is over the next day starts, and we know we have deadlines every day to complete.

Which song are you most excited for?

I don't know- that's hard. I'm not sure I can choose just one, there are so many good songs in the show! I can't pick one. They all have fun stuff. Everyone in The Circle of Life and everyone in the finale is fun. "I Just Can't Wait to Be King" and "Hakuna Matata" are good, too.

The Lion King Jr. - Coming to the Stage!

By Cristina Damato

The show must go on - two years later. Two years ago, before COVID happened, Highlands was supposed to perform the musical The Lion King Jr. For obvious reasons, we were unable to do so, and it remains unperformed to this day. This is soon to change.

With a completely new cast, the show will go on. The Lion King follows the adventures of a young lion named Simba. Simba's father is the ruler of the Pridelands, and Simba is the heir to the throne. However, their happy life gets disrupted when Simba's uncle, Scar begins plotting to take over the throne from his brother. As the show continues, we see Simba grow up and eventually try to get revenge over Scar.

To understand the work behind the show, I interviewed Ms. Irlen, the director, Ms. Tschinkel, the choreographer, and Mr.

WHITE PLAINS MIDDLE SCHOOL - HIGHLANDS
PRESENTS

Disney
THE LION KING JR.

Fri. 3/18 @ 7 P.M.
Sat. 3/19 @ 2 P.M.

SEATING IS LIMITED | MASKS REQUIRED
Adults \$10
Students & Seniors \$5

128 GRANDVIEW AVE. WHITE PLAINS, NY 10605

Music and Lyrics by
TIM RICE & ELTON JOHN
Additional Music and Lyrics by
LEBO M, MARK MANON, JAY KIPKIN, AND HANS ZIMMER
Book by
BOGOR ASSER & HELENE MECHE
Based on the Broadway production directed by JULIE BAYMOR



Finally, we interviewed Ms. Tschinkel, who is in charge of choreographing the musical. We wanted to get her insight about creating the dance moves for the songs.

Ms. Tschinkel

What is the most challenging part of being the choreographer for The Lion King?

The hardest part of being the choreographer is having enough time to teach the dance moves, so that everybody has enough time to learn the choreography. Time is the biggest challenge.



Which part should we be most excited to see?
"I Just Can't Wait to be King" and "The Circle of Life" because they both involve a lot of group work. They have to work together to make things happen and there are lots of surprises.

Have you done the choreography for any musicals in the past? If so, which ones?

No, this is my first one! I have been a dancer for 25 years but never choreographed for a musical or been in a musical, so I'm excited for this one.

There you have it! An inside look behind the production of The Lion King Jr. You can see the Lion King Jr. on March 18th and 19th. We look forward to seeing the production!



Editorial: Make lockers optional

Dear teachers and staff of Highlands Middle School,
I strongly believe that lockers should be optional. Now, I am sure that complaints from students are nothing new. Every time there is a new reason as to why students whine and nag, the teachers never take it seriously. Please listen, just this once. Lockers are still considered new within our building. Last year, everything was online and everyone was concerned about the coronavirus.

Due to this, we did not use lockers for the safety of both students and teachers. For the first few months of this school year, we used the same system but it wasn't until mid November where we began to use lockers for the first time since COVID first began.

There are many reasons as to why the administration made the decision for our school to use lockers. Reasons such as: lack of space due to backpacks and unknown objects in backpacks. The concern for the backpacks is understandable. However, the locker system is not fit for all. For example, every student has a method best fit for themselves. To some, lockers might be viewed as a waste of time, but for others, it might be viewed as the best and safest way to contain the things that are not necessary for the school day.

Personally, I believe that the lockers are a hassle because often, it takes multiple tries to open my lock. I am expected to go to my locker four times a day (morning, before lunch, after lunch, and the end of the day). It is also stressful since there is a time limit.

Speaking of which, many students are late to class because of their lockers. Sometimes students use it as an excuse. A couple weeks ago, I asked many students on whether they believe that lockers should be optional. Out of all 50 people, 96% agreed with my opinion. I'm sure that even teachers are unhappy with this since a student could be missing class time due to the lockers.

However, the lockers could also be very useful.

The lockers are indeed a secure place to store your belongings. The students that play sports previously had difficulty trying to carry around their equipment but now, their lockers help them. That is why I don't necessarily wish to abolish the lockers.

I hope that this belief of mine will be widely spread among the adults of our school. I also hope that they will be accepting of our opinions and try to make a change for the better. Many students agree with these statements so I hope that this word will get to the ears of the adults. Thank you.

Editorial: "The Influence"
By Isabella Urbano

People think that they are their own person, but as soon as they enter this building, I find they lose their personality. Changing? It's not a problem but changing for something or someone else is the issue. Doing stuff because it is "cool," or "fun," trying to impress, wishing that you would gain more friends. Though it might work, is it really worth a shot?

There are all types of people and personalities here. Differences don't make us less or bad, but we've got to remember we are in school, it might be boring for some, but respect the rules. Many issues in this world, let's try to work hard to make it pure and safe for everyone.

People are smoking, insulting, disrespecting, bullying, all because you want to impress the rest? People are suffering, feeling as if they were nothing, no longer having confidence, feeling alone. If you don't enjoy school, that's fine, but there's no need to hurt others emotionally or physically just because you're bored, don't like them, or need to have some "entertainment."

We need to put a stop to this and teachers can't be with you 24/7 to supervise you because you can't behave properly. I think we all are old enough to at least understand this is not a playground. No one is here to entertain you.

This is a place for education. Just do your part and we all will be fine. We all have a voice and if you think something is unfair say something about it. Stop making excuses, you don't lose anything with speaking out about it.

WORLD NEWS

Water Pollution: Effected Areas and How We Can Prevent It

Written by Olivia Tuzel

Water pollution – a topic that succinctly passes through conversations... if it passes through at all. Insubstantial numbers of people have paid only the slightest bit of attention to problems such as water adulteration. Despite that, the individuals that do end up devoting their time to viewing this issue typically set it aside after all the necessary information has been gathered. As we continue to ignore that our planet's water is rapidly growing contaminated, we also allow a hazardous "yellow brick road" to form ahead of us. It only seems appropriate to point out that disregarding a serious matter like this is very detrimental for what lies in the future.

Three Bodies of Water That Have Been Disturbed by Water Pollution

Various regions have materialized a path that can lead to the downfall of Mother Nature, even if there had been an acknowledgement of the consequences that could arise from their actions. Perhaps some of you know about the ongoing water crisis that had first struck Flint, Michigan in 2014. When the city of Flint decided that there was a cheaper option as to how water could be accessed, there had been a switch in water sources. Flint would no longer purchase water from Detroit, but instead, obtain water from the Flint River. Citizens would later notice that their new water source provided them with only dirty, putrid water. After various complaints, multiple tests had been done on the foul liquid, revealing high lead levels contained within. Although this issue had made its first appearance seven years ago, it still has not come to a close. However, Flint's situation is mere compared to water obstacles other districts face.



Citarum River, Indonesia

Welcome to the river that can flood your home... with animal carcasses. The Citarum ("si-taare-um") River boldly stands on the podium labeled as "The Top Three Most Polluted Bodies of Water on our Planet." Located in West Java, Indonesia, thousands of tons of trash make their way down the currents of this river daily. If you were to take a brief glance at these murky waters, you would (by no doubt) be able to see at least one piece of trash floating around. It is no secret that this river is so unbelievably contaminated. The people of the Citarum are aware of the sickness the water bears, yet at this rate, it is nearly impossible to go, "Poof!" and get rid of all the junk that burrows within this river. A myriad of people relies on Citarum as, "it provides ecosystem services such as food, drinking water, and flood protection for approximately 25 million people with 15 million people living around the river." (The Irony of the Citarum River - cleancurrentscoalition.org). That does not stop neighborhoods, industries, and companies from releasing pollutants into the waterway. From cattle waste to plastic, whatever seems to be "rubbish worthy" will be tossed into the waters. Over the years, the Citarum has grown so polluted that the levels of faecal coliform bacteria – simply put,

water bacteria – goes higher than 5,000 times on what was supposed to be the mandatory limit (according to the Asian Development Bank). This river is so ridiculously dirty that it exposes people to the plausibility of contracting conditions such as dermatitis, rashes, bronchitis, and even birth defects (if one is pregnant). Nevertheless, humans must do what they can to survive. Inhabitants still have to fish, even if what lies in the animal is nothing but poisonous. Thankfully, organizations such as Clean Currents Coalition, Waste4Change, and others work to slowly purify the Citarum River.

River Ganges, India

Considered to be one of the most sacred rivers on Earth, River Ganges/Ganga ("gan-jeez"/"gang-uh") is not so pure as it seems. Ranging from Himalayan foothills to Bay of Bengal, half a billion civilians reside surrounding the river. The Ganges is also home to wildlife such as freshwater dolphins, otters, gharials (type of crocodile), fish and bird species, etc. In Hinduism, the River Ganges is the embodiment of goddess Ganga, embracing the belief that bathing/performing rituals in the river will cleanse one from impurity and sins. Albeit the holy beliefs of this river have remained intact for centuries, the river's physical state has not. Infected with gallons of sewage, animal waste, and even chemically treated flowers, perilous bacteria begins to take form. Eventually making its way into the bodies of residents, the river's bacteria create an entrance to terrible conditions. According to pbs.org, "Experts link pollution in the Ganga and other rivers to India's high rate of waterborne illnesses, which kill an estimated 1.5 million children each year." Regardless of the countless numbers of deaths that result from River Ganges pollutants, some still find it difficult to accept that this holy river is surrendering its clarity. With climate change, this situation is especially challenging to overcome. Alas, the community came to acknowledge that something needed to be done. Since 2014, the water quality of Ganges has significantly improved. Director general of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, had mentioned, "The short-term results are already visible and with the continuous

efforts towards the river rejuvenation, the long term impacts will certainly reflect in the future." Innumerable numbers of individuals have taken their part in cleaning this body of water, and by the looks of it, River Ganges is heading towards a new beginning.



Lake Karachay, Russia

If you are planning to take a vacation to Russia, it would be unquestionably foolish to take a pit stop at this lake. As many diverse sources have said, if you were to spend an hour here, you would find yourself embracing death. Found in the general area of Ozyorsk, eastern Russia, Lake Karachay (pronounced "keh-ruh-chay") is indubitably one of the most polluted bodies of water to exist. Located within the Mayak Production Association (one of the largest nuclear facilities in Russia), or MPA, Karachay has gone through a lot of harm. The area it resides in displayed frequent nuclear meltdowns, releasing many radioactive particles. Additionally, MPA figured that dumping toxic waste into this miserable body of water would be "no biggie." As years passed by, the lake grew so dense with radioactive sediment that it was no longer a safe domain. So, the most cautious step from that point on would be to fill it with concrete. Perhaps if the nearby population had recognized that one of the neighboring lakes was falling into a rather unhealthy state, action would have been taken earlier. But there is a catch. MPA had remained concealed, so until 1990, this nuclear facility clung to the back of the Russian government like a timid child. According to grist.org, "By the time Mayak's existence was officially acknowledged, there had been a 21 percent increase in cancer incidence, a 25 percent increase in birth defects, and a 41 percent increase in the surrounding region of Chelyabinsk." Although it had not been an intentional mistake, the obliviousness of what was getting deposited

into this flawed waterhole deeply affected a good deal of people. Lake Karachay's opportunity to resurrect is already long gone, portraying what can happen to our world's waters if we perpetually neglect the reality we can face from our own faults.



Preventing Water Pollution

On a more positive note, the organizations/groups that have been trying to keep the Citarum and Ganges Rivers clean are stellar examples of how anyone can advocate the idea of change, even if it is an arduous endeavor to take. Dedicating a little bit of your time to cleaning an area such as the beach can do a lot of good. Unfortunately, not everybody recognizes that even if they do not have access to nearby bodies of water, they can still help to promote the objective of putting an end to water pollution. Like, spreading awareness and educating others on the dangers of mistreating this issue. Apart from that, we can also support groups that work to make a difference on our planet. A well-known organization that works to decontaminate our waters is 4Ocean. Members of this company aspire to remove plastic and other waste products from bodies of water, no matter the size. In efforts to achieve this goal, 4Ocean sells bracelets that are made from recycled materials swept from places such as our oceans. Each purchase one makes from their website "pulls one pound of trash from the ocean, rivers, and coastlines." Since 2017, 4Ocean has recovered about 20 million pounds of trash. Although this number pales in comparison to the estimated amount of junk that is found only in the ocean, it is still incredible how big of a difference was made just from humans working together. There are thousands of other communities that

strive to accomplish the same old aspect—eliminate water infection. Undeniably, all bunches of people that are working to reach this target will always be open to support from the public.

Returning Earth to what it once was will be a lengthy, exhausting process. Even so, that is not a reason to lose hope in ourselves, and the future. Remember, the power one wields is a remarkable thing. If the global population continues to fight for the cause of water pollution with all the force they can possibly muster, that minacious "yellow brick road" will have no choice but to disintegrate.

**This planet was entrusted upon us for a reason.
Let's take care of it.**



Social Media Over The Past Decade

Jacob Cohen

Social media has effected our lives drastically over the past decade. From being able to chat with friends to live streaming video games social media has come a long way. Over the past 10 years both good and bad things have come from social media. It has allowed people to connect with each other like they never have before. With instant messaging being relatively new it has exponentially sped up conversations. But with it becoming a big thing threats, scams, and cyber bullying have become a huge issue.

Back in the old days when social media was still very new it was a much simpler time. In 2010 there was about 1 billion users across all social networking sites. Now there are over 3 billion users worldwide. When social media was still new, there were no big

influencers or daily videos reaching millions of views. There wasn't an average of 350 million photos posted daily to facebook. Now every 1 million views on YouTube makes around \$3,400-\$40,000 and it is now a viable job when done well.

With a large increase in users across all sites many things such as scammers and and viruses have become major issues. In America alone 1 in 10 adults will be scammed every year. About 6,000 new computer viruses are created every month and 30% of all computers have some sort of malware in them. Viruses can delete files, wipe computers, and even steal personal info such as login information, credit card information, or information about you and your family, names, addresses, etc.

With the rise of social media many big internet celebrities have come up. People like the brothers Jake and Logan Paul became popular for their unique content on vine and eventually individual YouTube channels. The internet has also created philanthropists like Mr.Beast who started a small gaming channel before being able to give away thousands of dollars and even \$1 million as well as giving away food around the holidays and hygiene products to homeless shelters.

However when you have very popular celebrities controversial things are bound to happen when they try to get more views and followers. In one vlog Logan Paul is in a forest when he films the dead body of someone who committed suicide. After posting this vlog he received a lot of backlash for what he did and he later made an apology video. Other celebrities have had offensive tweets resurface and have also made apology videos after receiving backlash and even threats.

Overall social media has drastically changed everybody's lives for better and for worse. It is made communication so much faster and now over 4.2 billion people globally can use instant messaging. It has been able to bring awareness to issues around the world which might have never been noticed otherwise. Because of social media we have developed as a society and it has changed the past decade beyond what anything else could have done.

The Vaccine

Cristina Damato

5.47 million people died because of COVID-19. 114 million lost their jobs. Over 150 million were sick long after the initial infection wore off. All because of something you can't even see. For months, companies raced to develop a vaccine to ward off the disease. They succeeded.

Now, over 18 months later, with 205 million people fully vaccinated in the US alone, why are we not back to normal? Some might argue that the answer lies in the children: a vaccine for children ages 5-11 was just approved in late October, and there is no vaccine for children ages 0-4.

Although COVID is not particularly dangerous for children, over 7 million children have tested positive since March of 2020, and COVID-19 was one of the top 10 causes of death for children 5 to 14 years old last year. All of this has forced humans, naturally social creatures, to retreat, separate, and hide from one another. What a year and a half ago was strange and seemed almost science fiction is now normal.

It doesn't have to be this way. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) posted that "People who are fully vaccinated can resume activities that they did before the pandemic." The vaccine is safe and effective: although it doesn't guarantee that you won't get COVID, it reduces the risk of severe illness by 90 percent or more.

Millions of people have safely received the vaccine, under the most intense safety monitoring system in U.S. history. So why wait? Go out and spread the word to friends, family, neighbors: the surest and quickest way to get out of this pandemic is to get vaccinated.

Sources: CNN, NPR, CDC, FDA; As of 12/9/21



Crisis in Yemen

Francis Fokoue



Indubitably home to the largest humanitarian crisis on the planet, Yemen: ripped, torn, and fragmented by war. How does a country end up with two-thirds of its population suffering from food insecurity? Why are its citizens presented with a government backed up into checkmate? What causes civilians to be antagonized with destroyed infrastructure, lack of fuel, absence of basic services, and abusive local security?

Known by many Houthi supporters as the September 21st revolution. More commonly known as the Houthi takeover of Yemen. Keep in mind the Houthis are a group situated in Yemen. Their unrest significantly increased when the government stopped paying fuel subsidies. That is when the government pays a small amount of the price for fuel instead of the consumer. However, the Yemeni government took this away and it was just enough to tip over the glass. The capital of Yemen was stormed on September 21st, 2014. This attack was so devastating it caused Prime minister, Mohammed Basindawa to resign. This, however, was just the start. Soon afterward on January 22nd, 2015, president Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi left office when Houthi forces gained control of the presidential palace, and power the former president possessed. Later the Houthis announced that Yemen's government was dissolved, and, in its midst, they had formed a council of leaders. Could neighboring countries and the world just

watch this tragedy? Certainly not. Saudi Arabia led an intervention consisting of nine countries from North Africa, and West Asia which acted in response to calls for help from Yemen's former president Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi who needed military aid and backing after being driven out by the Houthis. Surprisingly, each party committed war crimes, their attacks on each other by each other indiscriminately killed civilians and soldiers. Both the Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition have killed each other's detainees. Are they helping?

Many parts of Yemen are struggling with an ongoing war of 5+ years. Civilians are devastated. Getting through day-to-day life, something we mostly don't think twice about proves to be a struggle for the people of Yemen. Over 233,000 Yemeni civilians have lost their lives, and approximately 16 million Yemenis do not have access to clean water. 5 million inhabitants are on the brink of famine while around 50,000 are enduring the agony of it. Roughly 2.3 million children under the age of five are severely malnourished while nearly 400,000 face death if not treated. The economy is falling apart, many are losing their jobs, and yet food prices and necessities are on the rise. As Covid-19 began to sweep through Yemen, people who were sick were greeted with armed men to be rounded up into containment centers. Large portions of the sick were too frightened to seek help. Those who sought out help were treated as, not sick people, but criminals. On rare occasions shootings took place. The man in charge of the Houthi Covid response Dr. Taha al-Mutwakel denies the Covid cases and claims for the issues with the numbers of cases and deaths being untrue. He insists that there are no Covid cases in Yemen.

Ultimately the people of Yemen are going through very strenuous times but have shown incredible resolve time and time again. But turning a blind eye to this struggle would be a mistake. The first move to address a problem is to realize it is there and learn about its severity. The more you learn the more you can help.



MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT



LGBTQ+ Hate Crimes and the Panic Defense

By: Eliana Lieber

Daniel Spencer (2015): murdered by his neighbor, Robert Miller.

Jennifer Laude (2014): murdered by US Marine, Scott Pemberton.

Bella Evangelista (2013): murdered by audience member, Antoine Jacobs.

Daniel Spencer, Jennifer Laude, Bella Evangelista. All murdered in cold blood because of their sexuality or gender. Robert Miller, Scott Pemberton, Antoine Jacobs. All committed murder. All got a lessened sentence because they used the Gay or Trans Panic Defense. How is this right? How has this defense not been banned worldwide, or at least in America, the so-called land of justice?

The Gay Panic Defense is a legal strategy that defends the attacker who has committed a hate crime by asking a jury to find that the victim's sexual orientation or gender identity is to blame for the violent actions. They plead defense of insanity, diminished capacity, defense of provocation, or defense of self defense. Oftentimes, these are disproved by the prosecution team, but sometimes it just takes that seed planted in the jury's heads to change the outcome.

In 2019, there were over 1,650 recorded hate crimes against people based on Sexual Orientation

or Gender Identity/Expression. One in five gay, lesbian, or bisexual people in the United States will experience a hate crime, while 1 in 4 transgender people will experience one. In 2020, there were 370 counts of simple assault and 223 of aggravated assault. On average, that's more than one for every day of the year.

As if it's not bad enough that people fear being assaulted, intimidated (which happened 1254 times in 2020), or having their property vandalized (which happened 206 times in 2020), they have to worry about being murdered along with that! 5 people were murdered in a hate crime in 2020. Even more died because of arson and other acts of hate not specifically meant to kill.

Now imagine dying. Being murdered. Your attacker is being put on trial. Great. But then your attacker states that it was your fault. It was self-defense. You made an advancement on them. This defense is not fair at all, but can be used to sway people in the courtroom. As recently as 2018, the Gay Panic Defense has been used to mitigate murder charges. It is still legal in 35 of the 50 states! It needs to stop.

We must call upon congress to make the Gay Panic Defense illegal before more villains' actions are excused.



Famous Screenwriter WENT to White Plains Schools: What!?

By Eliana Lieber

This article is about Jonathan Larson. You may have heard of him. Or maybe you've heard of Rent. Or maybe Tick Tick Boom. Or maybe you have absolutely no idea what in the world I'm talking about.

Jonathan Larson was a Pulitzer Prize winning writer, composer, playwright, and lyricist. He wrote plenty of songs, musicals, and plays. He also grew up in White Plains. He went to White Plains High School, which at the time, was in the Highlands building. You could have sat, could be sitting, right where a famous playwright sat years ago.

Jonathan Larson was born in 1960, in White Plains. As a child he was into music, playing the trumpet and tuba, participating in choir, and taking piano lessons. At White Plains High School, he was a lead role in many productions. He went to Adelphi University in Garden City, New York for four years as an acting major. While he was in college, Larson composed music and wrote scores for cabarets (small student productions) and later wrote the score for the musical Libro De Buen Amor.

After graduating, Larson was a piano player in a summer stock theater program in Michigan, where he ended up earning a membership card for the Actors' Equity Association. He moved to a loft in lower Manhattan where he worked for nine and a half years at the Moondance Diner while writing musicals as well.

Jonathan Larson wrote many theatrical pieces before Rent. They all had a variety of success and production. His first musical, co-written with David Glenn Armstrong while they were both in University was called Sacrimmoralinority. The musical played for four weeks at a small theater in Manhattan, and for it both men won an ASCAP writing award. The main focus of Tick Tick Boom, Superbia, Jonathan Larson wrote between 1983 and 1990. Superbia won the Richard Rodgers Production Award and Development Grant, but it was never fully produced. After that, his next work was an autobiographical rock monologue called tick, tick...BOOM!. It was performed off-Broadway, and



this year, it was produced as a movie with the same title. Some fun things that he wrote songs for that you may recognize include An American Tail, The Land Before Time, and he also wrote some music for Sesame Street!

In 1988, Billy Aronson, (a playwright), came up with an idea to create a modern version of Giacomo Puccini's La Bohème, set in modern New York. Aronson, looking for collaborators, was set up with Larson, who came up with the title and proposed moving the setting from the Upper West Side to downtown. This was where Larson lived with his many roommates in a rundown apartment. Many of his experiences there are what inspired many of the autobiographical parts of Rent. After a long writing and editing process, Rent was scheduled to be performed Off-Broadway.

Jonathan Larson died of an aortic dissection on January 25th, 1996, the day of Rent's first off-Broadway preview. He hadn't been feeling well for a while prior to his death, with symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest pains, and dizziness, but his symptoms were misdiagnosed as flu or stress. The show went on. Out of respect, the cast performed just what they could sing, without costumes and dancing. When the show finished, after the long round of applause, then silence, which was broken by someone in the audience shouting "Thank you, Jonathan Larson." Rent grew in popularity and was moved to Broadway in 1996. Rent closed in 2008, but there is a movie to keep the legacy going.

Larson has received many awards, most of them posthumously, such as the Pulitzer Prize; three Tony awards, Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, and Best Original Score; three Drama Desk Awards, and many more.

As you can see, Larson really made the best of his time on this earth and made some beautiful art. And I don't know about you, but I think it's pretty cool that a famous playwright went to our school.

Water: Top 5 Waters Ranked

By: Nicholas Bucaj



0. Voss Water

Voss water is known worldwide for its pure Norwegian flavors. Voss water is not just for drinking, it is for the experience and taste. Celebrities, such as The Rock, can be seen drinking out of Voss water bottles. Voss is like heaven, but more stylish. It has a sleek and modern bottle design, and the cap can be used as a cup for more civilized hydration. Even better are the glass bottles, which can not only break the teeth of the drinker if knocked into, it will also shatter into razor sharp shards if it happens to fall.

Anyone who has tasted Voss water knows the feeling of enlightenment you get afterwards. Similarly to the

ancient story of the Blind Man who washed his eyes in a fountain and regained sight, washing your eyes with Voss allows you to see beyond reality. The very act of seeing Voss water in a store fills you with a feeling of hope in humanity. I encourage anyone who sees this to experience the life changing phenomenon of drinking Voss.



of the highest quality restaurants of all time, and would be worthy of praise by master chefs, such as Guy Fieri, Alex Guarnaschelli, and Gordon Ramsey. Complimenting their world famous dishes, such as the California Burger and the Athenian Platter, is their water. Their iced water in a plastic cup may look simple to the untrained mind, but to those who take the time to enter the famed establishment

1. Townhouse Diner Water

The Townhouse Diner is one of the finest family owned establishments in the world. Under the ownership of Gus and his wife, Irene, this once meager restaurant has grown into one

will realize the true nature of this divine nectar. The perfect ice to water ratio ensures that every sip is as refreshing as a surging Icelandic fjord. It washes down every delectable morsel of food that you order. And the service from the loyal waiters guarantees that your chalice will always be topped off.



2. Wata

Wata is best known as being the only water available in Jamaica, and man, it's the only water you'll ever need there. Jamaica has become synonymous with beautiful beaches and exotic wildlife. Everyone pays close attention to the robin egg blue coastal water, but not enough to the heavenly liquid located inside a stout plastic bottle. My time in Jamaica was mostly spent in the ocean, and enjoying the natural beauty of the island. What was the perfect cold beverage that was always available when I needed to

quench my thirst? Wata. On top of it's availability, it also has a unique flavor, that never seems to go away, no matter the water's temperature. It also has a very ergonomic bottle design, with a simple, but well drawn coastal design on the paper with the logo and nutrition facts. Overall, the taste, bottle design, and availability of this water make it highly regarded in the water drinking community.



3. Smartwater

Smartwater is a polarizing brand. On the one hand, it is a very nutritious water, packed with electrolytes and minerals, but on the other hand, I hate it. Aside from its health benefits, it doesn't have much going for it; the shape of the bottle is plain, and is quite pricey compared to other brands. However, there is one saving grace to

this mediocre brand of water: the fish on the bottle. It is such a perfect design, with the refraction of light through the bottle providing the illusion of an enlarged fish. The fish itself is a standard orange fish of undeterminable species, but it gets the job done. Even better is the fish related pun underneath the beady eyed sea creature. These puns showcase how

much Smartwater cares about it's customers having a unique experience each time they buy a bottle. The minerals, electrolytes, and bottle design are what propel this particular water to a bronze ranking.



4. Poland Spring (Large Bottle)

Poland Spring is one of the most reliable brands whenever you want inexpensive, readily available, and good quality water. The bottle shape is fairly boring and uninspired, and the plastic is too thin for my liking, but this is reconciled by the logo. The words "Poland Spring" in a unique font, with a backdrop of a raging river, surrounded by tall pine trees has become an iconic logo, not just in the realm of water brands. My only gripe with the brand is the name. The company was founded in Poland, Maine, and the water itself is sourced from natural springs in Maine. While this makes for natural and great tasting water, it can potentially be misleading. When I, as a jovial youth, first took a sip from a bottle of Poland Spring, I immediately thought that it was from the Poland in Europe. Years later, I was extremely dismayed to discover that it was not actually from Poland. I am not Polish myself, but I do enjoy kielbasas, which are Polish sausages, so I was still disappointed.

Though it is not produced in the same country as those delicious smoked sausages, Poland Spring is an exceptional brand, focused on bringing artesian water to the mainstream, and for this, it can be seen as a sort of stepping stone for inexperienced water connoisseurs to get into the so called "deep cuts" in the water industry.



5. Water in a Gatorade bottle.

In this case, the water itself is not a brand, but rather the container. Gatorade has become synonymous with the word electrolyte, as it can be seen all over their packaging and heard in their commercials. After you have finished your brightly colored drink, many people simply throw their bottle in the recycling bin. However, those who are more involved in water culture know that that is simply a waste. Refilling your Gatorade bottle with regular water is an extremely intelligent thing to do for multiple reasons.

First, the water absorbs some of the leftover droplets of juice, adding an extra kick of flavor to your normally plain taste. Second, Gatorade bottles are quite large, letting you take a hefty amount of water in one convenient container. Third, the leftover liquid from the Gatorade adds a large amount of energizing electrolytes to your water. Water from a water fountain or tap usually lack the electrolytes of artesian water brands, but that issue is remedied through this method. Refilling your Gatorade bottle with water grants you limitless alleviation of thirst, including one bottle of Gatorade juice, and unlimited bottles of water with flavor and electrolytes. It's a win-win situation, and there is no reason to not try it out for yourself.

Book Reviews

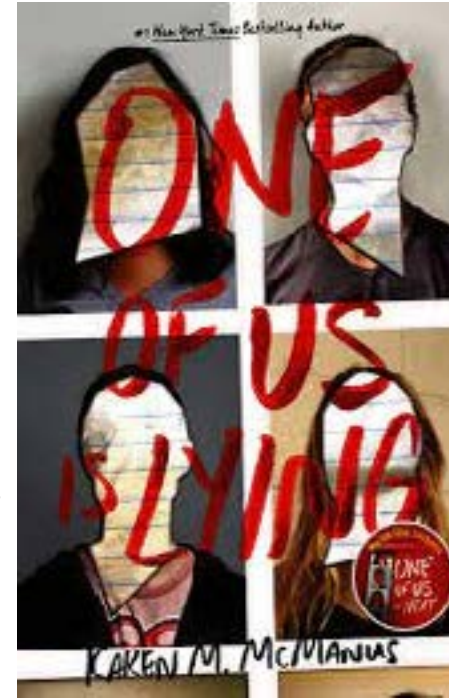
By Stella Khachetoorian & Cristina Damato

One of Us is Lying by Karen M. McManus

Review by Stella

By chance, the all-stars of Bayview High School all receive detention on the same day. Bronwyn, studious and always the star student. Cooper, the big shot baseball pitcher. Addy, the popular girl to end all popular girls. Nate, the bad boy. And finally, Simon, creator and author of all articles on Bayview High's gossip app, About That. By the end of detention that day, Simon is dead.

Everyone in the room is a suspect. They all had something to hide, something Simon was planning on exposing a couple days later. But is it bad enough that they would kill someone to protect their reputation? I would recommend this book and give it 4/5 stars. It is captivating and I wasn't able to put it down. I gave it 4 stars instead of 5 because parts of the book seemed to go on for too long and I felt that the pacing needed work. It has a sequel as well.

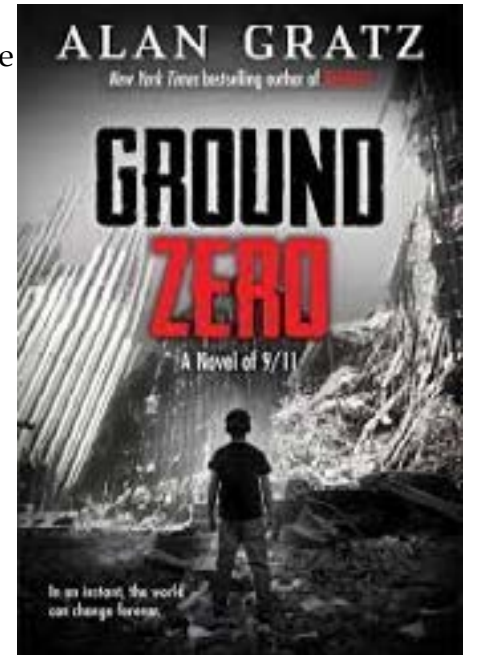


Ground Zero by Alan Gratz

Review Written by Cristina Damato

On September 11, 2001, a group of terrorists crashed planes into the World Trade Center. A third plane crashed into the Pentagon, and a fourth crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. 8 paramedics, 60 police officers, 343 firefighters and 2,997 civilians perished because of these attacks. And many more are still dying from breathing in the toxic dust. We vowed never to forget these people. But a new generation has been born without any memories of this day. They know of the pain, but they don't feel it. However, this is soon to be changed. Alan Gratz's Ground Zero puts readers in the shoes of a 9-year old boy named Brandon who is in one of the twin towers on 9/11. We get to feel Brandon's pain and experience his terror. We get to walk with him

while his life changes forever. And that is more powerful than all of the facts in the world. But this book doesn't just take place in America. We also get to see the story through the eyes of Reshmina, a girl living in Afghanistan 18 years later. Reshmina's entire life has been shadowed by war. While she hates the Taliban, she also resents Americans for filling her home with violence. Then her life gets even more complicated when she finds an injured American soldier near her house and is faced with a decision: Should she do the right thing and help him, possibly endangering her entire village, or should she leave him there to die? Ground Zero is a heartbreaking novel that opens kids' eyes to the horror of 9/11. I would definitely recommend this book for people of all ages, and give it 5/5 stars.



Note from one of our Editors!

I'm going to guess that all of the people that don't really read on a daily basis find this section really dull. We promise you that all books that are featured here have worn pages, caressed by the writers of these book reviews. So, each and every book here deserves a chance to be discovered by other readers. Even if you wouldn't really call yourself an avid reader, it's never too late to pick up a book and envelope yourself in a world of possibilities. Perhaps these books will be the start of your hidden passion for reading.

To all the people that do read on a daily basis and enjoy reading these reviews, thank you so much! Do not fear, there will be more book reviews coming your way in the upcoming edition.

I plan on writing about my top 5 favorite books and why I love them so much, so I hope that somebody out there will be looking forward to that. Also, if you would like to submit any book reviews to the Courier, make sure to send them to Ms. Tschinkel! We'd love to have them featured here, too.

-Olivia T.

CREATIVE WRITING

Gemma's Revenge Chapter 1

By: Madison Steptoe

It all started in Emma's junior year of high school.

Everyone called her Emmi. One thing about her is that she loved fashion/clothes. But her style was... interesting. She dyed her hair a different color each day and wore goth clothes.

One day, everything changed.

Emmi always takes the subway to school because she lives in the Bronx and her school is in Manhattan. But when get got on the train, she realized no one else was on the train. At first, she didn't think anything of it. She liked having no one on the train. For half an hour, she had a mini dance party. Suddenly, the lights started flickering, and then the power went out.

The conductor came on the announcements, "Lady and Lady the train just stopped we will call the fire department to rescue us from the tunnel, but it will take a while since there is no service. Thank you for your patience."

"Lady and Lady? I'm the only one on the train.

"No, you're not," said another voice.

Just then it was pitch black. "Who's there?"

"It's meeeee!" Then, Emmi realized who it was, it was her younger sister, Gemma.

"Gemmi?"

"Hello Emmi, it's revenge time hehe...." Gemmi giggled as she disappeared.

Just then the lights and power came back on.

"Good news Emma, the lights are back on and your ETA is 10:04 am.

"Oh geez, now I'm going to be late" Emmi groaned.

"Tweet, tweet" Emmi's phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Time for revenge, Emma Claire Edwards hehe" said the other voice on the other end.

"Oh no, it's time" said Emmi, shaking.

To be continued.....

Please enjoy some fantastic writing from our Tigers! The following poems and memoirs are from our Tiger Community. Thank you to all those that contributed!

"I, AM"

Rayna Agyapong

I am the darker version of human kind,
While I walk in stores,
Rocking my beautiful melanin glowing complexion,
I get stares and whispers,
Wokers behind me keeping an eye out,
America literally having my back,

Is it because of my skin I say,
I, am a person of color walking the streets,
Rocking my beautiful complexion knowing someday
everyone will be treated the same,

Tomorrow,
I shall be able to walk freely,
Without the stares and whispers

"I, see America"

By Pierce Biffert

I see America,
it's joys inaccessible to many,
while the fortunate take it for granted.

I see America,
a place of prosperity to the wealthy,
and poverty to the suffering.

I see America,
whispering it's hope to some,
while snatching it from others.

I see America,
a country accepting of any
race, culture, or style.

I see America.

AMERICA, I TOO

Sherlyn Cuateco

I see, *Dreams and Hope*

Dancing and partying.

I smell, Food being sold on the streets,

Or inside.

I hear, Buildings being renovated,

Or **HUGE TALL** buildings being made

Or **HATE** going around with words or looks,

That needs to stop.

I want What's being trendy,

Or what looks expensive.

I feel Creative artwork,

OR AMAZING STATUES TO TAKE PICTURES WITH,

Or water fountains where you can toss a coin and wish..... hope

I taste, The amazing food,

And the joy going around

I Too, *Want sadness to stop*

I TOO, WANT HATE TO STOP

I Too, **LOVE THE BEAUTY OF THINGS**



I TOO, AMERICA.

PIC•COLLAGE

I Need America to Sing by Luisa Suarez

No matter the tune, we must hum along.

Hard times,
 hard lives,
 stay at home,
 black lives matter,
 climate change,
 COVID-19.

What else could there be?
Not only 2020, but sadly
2021, the hardest time of them all.

No jobs,
 no money,
 no home,
 no laughter; but a slight hum of

Hope
What else could go wrong?
 protest,
 don't give up,
 mask up,
 get vaccinated,
 whatever you do, don't stop
 making a sound
 because,

once you do, our world will stop
our world will collapse
our lives won't breathe
we just want
to
stop,
and fly.

But when we fly we need each other
we need to come together to sing,
 not like a county but a nation
 not just a nation, but a community
 not just a community but a huge umbrella
 that can guard us from the strongest storms.

Our world may not be perfect.
Coming from someone who was born in America,
but has the heart of a Colombiana,
nobody
is.

But no matter the imperfections,
we need to sing,
not a perfect song

but a song full of
accents
languages
and hope.

Just remember that we come together to form
one
BIG
glistening
flag!



Waiting For America To Sing

By Hayley Brick

I hear America singing, but not your average song.
I hear the future generation whose voices get lost
Along the way.
They struggle to find their calling, as life steals their
Songs away like a little sibling with your phone.

I see the barista with dreams of becoming a singer,
Only to find that she is stuck between a rock and
A hard place financially.

I see the children cowering at school, fearing if the
next day is their last.
I hear false promises of everyone is equal, only to see
that people, innocent people are on death row for
something they cannot control.

I see people living their dreams wondering if COVID will
steal them away.
I see women and girls hiding and fearing their lives as their
Rights are taken away like candy from a baby.

I hear America singing, but not your average song.
I hear America's cries of help and pain.
I hear America singing, but it is not MY song.

