

THE COURIER

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Community Service Backpack Drive
Deya Allen

In the Tiger's Den

Think back to when you were in kindergarten. What school supplies did you have? A backpack? Folders? A pencil? All necessary school supplies for a kindergartner. What if you weren't able to afford these supplies? What would you do? What could you do to make sure that no kindergartner has to go through that problem? The Community Service Club that we have at our school is here to help with that problem. The club is on a mission to help all the kindergartners that have that problem; from April 18th to to May 31st you can donate school supplies for kindergartners in our community.

The Community Service Club is asking for backpacks, colored pencils, crayons, glue sticks, and erasers. Other supplies are appreciated, but the club is trying to make sure that every kid gets an equal amount of school supplies. The Community Service Club is also asking that the backpacks are gently-used or new. The donation bin will be located in front of the auditorium. When you donate you get a raffle ticket in exchange. When the donation is over there will be an announcement saying who won the raffle.

Highlands Talent Show was Back and Greater Than Ever!

By: Eliana Lieber & Stella Khachetoorian

On April 27th, some of the school's most talented joined together for a performance. The talent show was fantastic! 500 people gathered in the audience, and it was live-streamed to the rest of the school. There was singing, dancing, games, and more! We were so excited, and we were wondering how the whole thing works, so we spoke to the people who worked hard to put the Talent Show together: Ms. Davila and Ms. Melendez.

What is the most difficult part of organizing the talent show?

Melendez: Maybe the most difficult part is organizing all the different acts. We have the play, the jazz band, select choir, and all the students who show up. So, I think organizing where all of the different acts are going to go is the hardest part.

Davila: It is not really difficult to organize. Ms. Melendez and I have a formula, and we have it down. Executing is the hard part, if you know what I mean.

What is your favorite part of the talent show?

M: Actually, watching the show come together. We usually work on the show for 3-4 months before we come together. So, it's great being able to see the fruits of our labor come together.

Have you done shows in the past?

M: Yes, this will be our 8th talent show that Ms. Davila and I do together. This will be the first one we are doing in person post-Covid.

D: I used to direct the musicals before Ms. Irlen came. I directed 7, and as Ms. Melendez said, 8 talent shows!

What is the most rewarding part of

organizing the show?

M: Just watching the show come together. In our show we give our MCs little scripts and acts. It is good seeing our scripts come from paper to life. This year they will be doing 3 skits.

D: Seeing the audience's reaction, and then seeing the performer's reaction to that reaction. I love seeing the elation after seeing how the audience reacts. Even not out on stage, with stage crew, we are like, "Yeah! We did it!"

We also were wondering what the performers thought, so we interviewed them, too.

What made you want to do the talent show?

"I love to perform, and I will take almost any chance to show off my talents."

"I love performing in front of an audience and I love talking, so I figured being an M.C would be fun"

"I thought it might be fun!"

"Mrs. Davila asked if i wanted to become an MC and I said sure as I wanted to try it."

"When I heard that we could audition for being MC's, I realized that I've always wanted to announce something or do something fun and funny with my friends while still being up there on stage."

Was it hard to decide what you wanted to do for the show?

"No, I like to play the piano so it was pretty obvious for me what I would do."

"Not really. I usually do tap dance for school talent shows."

"No, I did singing last time I did a talent show, so I knew what I was going to do."

"Yes, it was really hard, I had to pick a song that fit my range."

What is the most stressful part of acting in the show?

"The schedule. We meet every other day so it's sometimes hard to manage."

"The most stressful part of doing the show is getting past your nerves to perform in front of other people."

"Not knowing what people think of your act."

"The most stressful part about acting in the show as an MC would be making sure everything is perfect and presentable as we get closer and closer to the show."

"I would have to say the most stressful part of acting in the show was definitely the roast skit. Every time I thought of it, I got super nervous it wouldn't work, or that no one would laugh."

"As an MC, I have to memorize a lot of lines and it's much harder since a lot of our lines as MCs are very random commentary or explaining something for a skit."

What's your favorite part of the show?

"I don't have a favorite part of the show. Everything is really cool!"

"The community and 'family' that we have."

"The funny skits we get to do."

"Definitely the beginning. The moment where the MCs come in I find funny."

"My favorite part about the show would be when I announce people because I get to add my own twist to things and get the audience hyped for the act."

"My favorite part of the show had to be definitely getting to rehearse and practice with my friends and the great teachers like Mrs. Davila and Mrs. Melendez, they made everything stress free, and I'm super grateful for leaders like them!"

Is it hard to perform in front of other people?

"Not really for me, though for other people it is very hard. I like to perform."

"I personally think it's easier to talk in front of others rather to dance or sing, but an audience adds pressure as well as excitement."

"My answer is that yes, I do, but in order to get over it and feel comfortable when everyone's watching you, is to do it and get the experience!"

"Very. Especially when your lines are very... strange."

"I have a little bit of stage fright, but once I get past the nerves of going out on stage, I just live in the moment."

"It is hard for me, as I find it hard to sing in front of other people."

Have you ever acted in shows before?

"I was just in the Lion King!"

"I have, I've been in Nickelodeon shows as either a background character, a survey kid, or small speaking rolls in movies. I've always found acting fun, but a little scary"

"I did my 5th grade talent show with my two friends."

"Yes! I have done a lot of acting in summer camp and also have many piano/clarinet recitals."

"I am a competitive dancer, and I've been in many singing showcases, and 15 local musical theater shows."

To everyone who participated/organized the Talent Show, you all did AMAZING!!! We're all so glad to have been able to be in the audience of this stellar performance.



Women's History Month at Highlands

By: Cristina Damato

"From the first settlers who came to our shores, from the first American Indian families who befriended them, men and women have worked together to build this nation. Too often the women were unsung and sometimes their contributions went unnoticed. But the achievements, leadership, courage, strength, and love of the women who built America was as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well." -Jimmy Carter, in his speech designating March 2-8, 1980 Women's History Week. Every year in March, the people of the United States take some time out of their busy schedules to celebrate Women's History Month: a month to honor the women of the past who made amazing contributions to society, and to inspire the women of the future to make a difference, just like their forebearers. Women who are well known as well as those whose names are not often spoken have helped to mold this country - and this world - into what it is today.

Among the most famous of these women is Maya Angelou - a poet and civil rights activist. She is best known for her book, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, which mostly discusses her childhood struggles. She was extremely prolific, and published about 50 books in her lifetime, seven of which were autobiographies. Though she was recognized due to her career in acting, singing, dancing, and composing, she became very well-known after she wrote and performed a poem called "On The Pulse of Morning" at Bill Clinton's inauguration. She was also given the Presidential Medal of Honor in 2010, the highest civilian honor in the US. She passed away in 2014 at 86 years old.

I had the opportunity to ask Ms. Cadet about this topic. In addition to what she thought about women's history, she told me that students could get involved. If you would like to see Highlands do something for Women's History Month, make sure to speak to a member of the SO or email a teacher or administrator. Here is what she had to say:

Is Highlands doing anything for Women's History Month?

"I would love to do something, but I would need to hear from folks who are willing to help. For Black History Month, Ms. Ciofolo and Ms. Washington

usually put something in place, but for Women's History Month, we do not have somebody who traditionally organizes it. Just before the pandemic we had the same thing happening as we did for Black History Month, highlighting a different person in history every morning, but then the pandemic hit in March, and we couldn't continue. I am totally open to doing something, but I would need someone to be willing to organize it."

What do you think is important for students to know about Women's History Month?

"I don't know if it's just about month, but just historically, women's contributions go uncelebrated. Men get a lot of credit, but behind every good man usually there is a team of women helping to support him - starting with mom. I would want people to pay attention not just to the main character, but also to the supporting characters. Also, women need to learn to toot their own horn. When a man is a leader, he is seen as assuming and forthright, but when a woman is leader, she is seen as pushy, bossy, or moody, while men are considered determined. Again, I'm talking less about Women's History Month, but more about being mindful and respecting contributions of women and allowing them to step in and be seen as leader."

Is there anything else you would like to add about this topic?

"Most of our teaching staff and most educators are women and I think it is interesting that most teachers are women, but most administrators are men. I think that that is an example of stereotypes that are not always true here, because we have men who are teachers and women who are administrators. We should encourage everybody to start thinking about the women who can be administrators or leaders. Think about ways you can step up, not to help someone else, but to let your own voice shine. This is an example of gender norms in society: TV, ads, and the media make us think certain things are normal, but are really just keeping sexism going. It takes work to challenge stereotypes, and we definitely need more men who are teachers and women who are administrators."

The women who helped to build this country left a legacy that continues to impact us today. To all the girls and young women out there: if the women of the past did nothing else, they should have showed you that you can stand up and do something. Make a difference, and maybe you will be in a Women's History Month article 50 years from now.





constant banging of the chairs against table legs, which can be annoying and distracting when you sit in it.

You should not have to suffer through back pain during school. If I could, I would run for head of the Board of Education so that we can hire a sensible and competent company to make suitable chairs.

After doing vigorous research I have found that the current chairs are from the 1960s, meaning we have not had a change in educational furnishings in over 6 decades. This is completely outrageous and unacceptable. We need reform now!

These chairs can cause serious issues later in life and they are given to children to sit in and suffer. It's not surprise to anybody that school isn't everyone's favorite place to be. Giving us a chair that is comfortable to sit in, while doing something we don't always love, will make the school experience just a bit better. Especially because we have to sit here all day!

The School Chairs are Severely Below Average!

By: Jacob Cohen

This comes as no surprise to anyone who has ever sat down in them. They are a very harsh shade of blue and they are very wackalicious. They have zero support, they are poorly designed, they are uncomfortable and they are outdated.

When you are sitting all the way back in the chair you still have to lean back to use the chair to its full extent. This can be damaging to your back as your back is not straight which can lead to permanent spinal damage. Also, the material of the chairs is not comfortable which can be a hindrance to learning, as kids will be more focused on trying to be comfortable than actually learning. The back of the chair is curved in a way where only parts of your back are touching the back of the chair which gives uneven support. Furthermore, if you try to lean back you will find yourself getting poked by the back of the chair.

Also, the designers who designed these chairs can't even make a chair that is remotely decent and useable. Additionally, legs come off from the chair at a very obtuse angle, making for a constant obstruction as you move the chair around. The chairs are also wobbly due to the



Mentors Make Cupcakes

By: Stella Khachetoorian and Lucy Wright

The mentoring program at Highlands is a great opportunity for students to have an adult in their life to support them. You may be asking, what is mentoring below the surface? I interviewed some of the incredible mentors during the recent cupcake making event, and here is what they have to say about it.

What is mentoring?

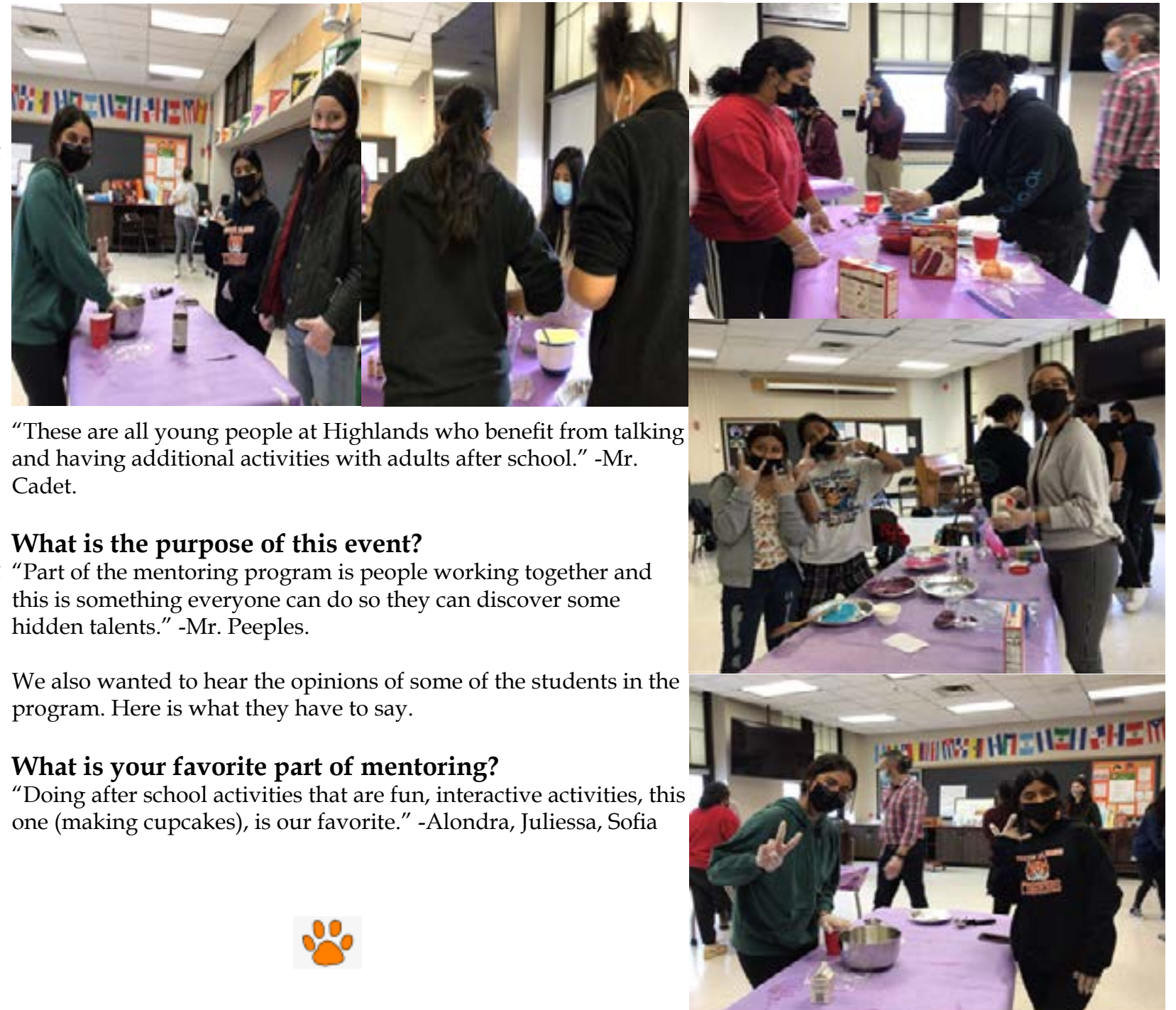
"Students are paired up with different staff members, not necessarily teachers (there is a secretary and school psychologist to name a few), and they meet with students once a week, just to check in and provide them with any support they need, like getting organized. Whether it be in school or somewhere else, so they have a positive adult in their life to go to." -Ms. Ortiz, School Psychologist.

How do you select people to be in mentoring?

Perfect practice makes perfect!

This past April, Cristina Damato competed in Syracuse, NY for a state gymnastics tournament. She is a level 6 gymnast at age 13! As one of her good friends, I am writing this article as an appreciation post. Cristina is one of our beloved writers here at the Courier. She practices at the YWCA in White Plains. She goes four days a week, sometimes five, for 10-12 hours every week and even volunteers there to teach others about this amazing sport. She puts so much into her gymnastic career and schoolwork and always does amazing. Years and years of practice has gone into this sport for her. Here is Cristina explaining what this state competition is and how it works. "It was state championships. It was split into age groups, so I wasn't competing against everyone joining the competition. I competed in group senior A. Then our team was ranked by best in state not using age groups." We are so proud of her hard work and dedication

-Esperanza Cylich-Schneider



"These are all young people at Highlands who benefit from talking and having additional activities with adults after school." -Mr. Cadet.

What is the purpose of this event?

"Part of the mentoring program is people working together and this is something everyone can do so they can discover some hidden talents." -Mr. Peeples.

We also wanted to hear the opinions of some of the students in the program. Here is what they have to say.

What is your favorite part of mentoring?

"Doing after school activities that are fun, interactive activities, this one (making cupcakes), is our favorite." -Alondra, Juliessa, Sofia



Teachers Thoughts on Dating in Middle School

Have you ever wondered what our teachers think when they hear about our relationships? Probably not, but pretend you do for the sake of the article! We love hearing different perspectives on this topic, especially since we keep hearing that “times have changed.” We hope you enjoy it!

We interviewed five different teachers about this topic. It's color coded so you can keep track of what each teacher said. Please note we chose to keep these teachers anonymous!

Do you support dating in middle school?

-No, because I don't know if students are emotionally ready for the challenges that dating presents.

-I don't see anything wrong with dating in middle school, I think it's important to learn (trial and error), and know what healthy relationships are.

-No, because school is where you come to get your education; students will have many opportunities to date. I tolerate high school dating, as students get older.

-As a teacher, I support deeper friendships, which means two people getting to know each other, intellectually and emotionally, while making connections. Emotionally, middle schoolers might not be ready for dating; there is a lot of pressure from social media. As a teacher, when two people become physical and then they break up there are a lot of traumas. As a parent, I think dating in the middle school is way too young. I don't mind a deeper friendship; however, these young people don't have the ability to differentiate what their bodies are telling them to do, and what is right.

-No, y'all are too young. I guess the issue is do you have the nuance, are you actually in love or like the idea of being in love?

-No, I feel like middle school students are too young. I think that going out in groups of friends is perfect at your age. You guys are so young, and students don't even know themselves, why date someone else? Great age to go out, not date.

What's the difference between dating in middle school vs high school?

-More mature.

-People take dating more seriously as they get older,

thinking long term instead of short term. It's also more about what the student wants, and not peer pressure.

-Age, a middle schooler is 6-8 grade, being 11 - 14. At 11, nobody needs to have a “boo.” Students now a days have a better relationship with their phones than they do with their classmates.

-Mutuality, they can differentiate between what they want versus what society wants; they can kind of figure out what is best for them. Also, I think with high school comes maturity. Dating is about getting to know someone's likes and interests, as opposed to fitting into a part. It's so petty, and not thoughtful in middle school.

-I guess it is because when you are this young, it's hard to see the difference between the idea of love versus actual love, because I believe when you're young, you think that everything seems so permanent, something you don't grow out of until your early 20s. Physically, yes there are differences, but the brain doesn't stop maturing until 24.

-In high school, a lot of high schoolers start driving; so, they have a car. If you ask someone out, you can take them somewhere without having your parents to drive you. I also think in high school, students make their own money, and so they can pay for everything on your own, showing responsibility. When you go on a date you shouldn't bring your parents along and you shouldn't have your parents pay.

When did you start dating?

-Grade 10.

-16 years old

-The summer of Freshman year

-15, high school, sophomore year

-Sophomore year.

What dating advice do you have?

-If a student were to date, my best advice would be if anyone ever tries to take the priority away from school, it's not a good relationship. No one comes to middle school to meet their life partner. Students should really put focus on school.

-Take it slow, be sweet, be interesting, get to know the person who you want to date so that you can show an interest level. Don't base it just on looks because there is so much more.

-I would say be honest, take a risk. Make sure you do it and not a friend. Be genuine.

-Be apologetically yourself, because if you don't love yourself, who will?

-I would say go out with another couple, or a friend on a date during the day. Keep it short, like a movie.

CREATIVE WRITING

The Teacher

Hello, this story is from an incident that occurred not so long ago. This story comes from my junior year in high school when I was just 16-years old.

It was a Sunday evening, I sat down at my desk searching for a college to apply to. While scrolling, I received a notification from my phone. I saw it was from my best-friend Gavin. Gavin and I had been best friends ever since we were little kids. He was my trusted pal since he moved in next door. All the good memories from the past came back to me, bringing a sense of happiness. I would soon realize that all the good memories would become the worst nightmare I've ever had.

I was in and out of flashbacks until I heard a buzz sound, snapping me back to reality. It was another notification from Gavin. I clicked on the message he sent, when I saw a video with a message under it. “Watch this.” I clicked play and the video began, It was a black screen with no sounds or anything. Until I heard sirens, police sirens. The screen then changed to a woman is being arrested by the police. She was wearing ripped clothing, and covered in blood.

I was shocked at first, wondering what happened. I didn't understand why Gavin sent me this videotape. I was just gazing at the screen until I looked a bit closer, inspecting the woman's features and that's when it hit. After my realization, my whole body shook in fear, trembling about what would come next.

I saw the woman in the video and my face turn into a ghost. I was sitting on the couch. I snapped and stood up from the couch and texted Gavin. “Hey! How did you get this video?” He left me on read. I messaged him again asking about the video.

I was anxious for what he would say next. My mind turned blank, flashbacks from the past had came into mind. I was still processing everything that was coming to mind when I heard a buzz from my phone, it was a notification from Gavin. I clicked on the message, dead silence roamed the room. The moment I saw the text, my high esteem became weak. I had goosebumps

all over my body. The message from Gavin is a continuation of a recent journey I went on.

It was 10:00pm. I was still frozen, gasping for air, trying to regain my stability. I didn't want to believe what I had left in the past, that I would never come again. I wanted to see if the video was fraud. I clicked the video and pressed play again, trying to hold back my tears. As I started to analyze the videotape, I figure it had been taken where I once used to live, my home in Massachusetts. I dropped my phone on the floor. As I picked it up, the lady charged towards the camera and I fell onto my couch. My heart froze. I knew inside that I was no longer safe, knowing that woman would find a way to capture me.

Let me take you back to where everything had started, in my junior year.

I had a teacher for one of my classes which was ELA. Her name was Ms. Dalton, she was a very nice teacher who was loved by everybody for her nice and kind words. For me, she was just like any teacher, but for some reason I always had the feeling that she would follow me wherever I go. Although I thought it was coincidence from the beginning, I now know the truth behind it.

It was one day at school almost near summer break. I came early to finish missing assignments. I took the chance to go into the classroom, since the staff allowed me to go in before the others. I walked up the stairs to room 341. I entered the hallway where my class was, ELA, 1st period. As I turned the corner, I saw that the blinds of the classroom were covering the window and the door seemed to be closed. I decided to put away my stuff in my locker and take my supplies out for class. As I started to work, I felt a cold chill down my spine.

Suddenly, I heard weird noises coming from the classroom. I decided to take a peak through the creak between the door and floor. From there I was shocked from what I saw. Something that I could never forget...

(to be continued in our next issue...)

WORLD NEWS

Coral Reefs: What's Happening to Them?

Olivia Tuzel

When we think about coral reefs, the first thought that typically pops into our minds are the vibrant colors that these striking organisms display. Perhaps, we think of the marine wildlife that can be found encircling these water structures. Either way, it is easy to say that coral is ensconced near the top of the list for the most captivating natural wonders of planet Earth.

Channels such as BBC Earth and NatGeoWild have been capturing the beauty coral reefs exhibit over the years. However, that flamboyant beauty is slowly slipping away. As the Earth's conditions change, so do the conditions of our reefs. To understand how coral has been negatively impacted by these sickening changes, it is important to grasp onto how reefs function and maintain a balanced life.

Coral's key points

There is more to coral reefs than what meets the eye. Based off pictures seen on the internet and magazines, you may have noticed that not all coral looks the same. It is obvious that they all vary in color, but what about structure? There are two head categories in the family of coral: hard corals and soft corals. Out of the two, hard coral is responsible for building the structure of reefs. Hard corals create skeletons out of calcium carbonate, which is a hard substance that becomes rock. As time stretches on, the skeleton spreads out, providing space for baby corals to flourish.



Meanwhile, soft coral is what resides on hard coral. Soft coral resembles plants and trees as it not only has a flexible, naturalistic figure but also lives in colonies. They do not have stony skeletons and are not core builders of reefs. Despite the variations in both types of coral, both receive nutrition and their color from the same source (for the most part). Coral is not just born with a certain pigmentation, but they receive it as they take in algae called zooxanthellae (zo-zan-thel-ee). Zooxanthellae is the puppeteer of a coral's life as it determines whether the coral stays alive. Entering coral through coral polyps (tiny organisms that are essentially part of the coral's "body," taking up every millimeter of space), zooxanthellae infiltrates coral in the most beneficial way possible, leading to a mutual relationship. The zooxanthellae provide coral with food and nutrients so that the process of photosynthesis could occur. In return, the coral supplies the algae with shelter to photosynthesize. As said before, the zooxanthellae gifts coral with unique colors, too. There is chlorophyll within the algae, so when light hits coral at a certain intensity and

wavelength, the color of the coral changes.

Another vital thing to keep in mind is that a coral reef has three main components. There is a solid surface in which coral attaches itself to in order to create a habitat for marine animals, coral polyps (which were defined further above), and the marine animals themselves. At first glance, we may think that the coral reefs are only aiding the animals. Marine animals play their own part in ensuring that the reefs remain healthy and functional, therefore a prominent part of a reef's well-being. Wildlife nibbles on the excess algae that resides on coral. This is to keep the algae population under control.

Excluding animals, coral reefs require awfully specific components in their atmosphere to prosper. Above all, there must be clean water. Over the years, we have seen an alarming rise in pollutants that infest bodies of water, such as the oceans. Pollutants lead to murky/cloudy water, which could result in sedimentation. Due to these factors, zooxanthellae cannot receive sunlight. When coral caked in sediment blocks sunlight's access to the polyps, zooxanthellae cannot photosynthesize nor produce food for the coral. This is clearly an issue for the health of the reefs, so it is critical for water to stay pure. Not only is the water's state important, but its temperature as well. Coral depends on the warm embrace of tropical waters. Water temperatures should range between 68°F and 90°F, it depends on what the coral prefers. A sudden change in water temperature

could cause a reef's conditions to plummet, as the new temperature is unexpected and not what the coral is used to. So, the bottom line is that even though there are multiple components that contribute to how coral stays alive, a slight change in a reef's typical conditions could be very disastrous for their future.

What is the issue?

For thousands of years, coral reefs have enveloped coastal shores, allowing their radiant colors to stand out in crystal clear waters. Alas, the streak for wielding blinding colors has broken. The shades of these reefs have been sucked away, leaving white and brown colors to take their place. But why?

When water temperature rises—even just a little bit—coral begins to stress out. Yes, coral can have anxiety, too. As the organism stresses out, it releases the one thing that keeps it alive: zooxanthellae. Without zooxanthellae, there is no food and no photosynthesis present, thus the color in the coral drains out. This process is called bleaching, due to the bleach-like color that remains once the zooxanthellae is forced out of its habitat. Bleaching does not only proceed because of temperature change. Low tides, pollution, and too much sunlight can also contribute to coral bleaching.



This phenomenon has been taking place in more reefs as our planet's circumstances have shifted. According to the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Association, about 75% of

coral reefs have gone through heat stress that increased the chances of bleaching between 2014-2017. In just three years, more than half of coral's population was at risk of dying. If that is difficult to picture, just think about how every person equals approximately 74 corals in just the Pacific Ocean. Yet, even if coral does survive the risk of bleaching, they can become more susceptible to disease since they are in a weaker state.

Aside from warming temperatures, there are a plethora of other threats that affect coral reefs. There are two categories: global threats and direct threats. Global threats are related to how nature affects the coral and direct threats are how we physically manage to threaten coral. Some examples of global threats are sea level alteration and ocean acidification. When sea level lowers and corals find themselves in deeper water, sunlight is not as accessible. Changes in sea levels also cause shorelines to slowly chip away, exposing reefs to pollutants and more sediment than necessary. Speaking of pollutants, about 48% of fossil fuel emissions are absorbed by our ocean, such as CO₂ (carbon dioxide, aka, heat-trapping greenhouse gas). When carbon dioxide is brought into the ocean's waters, the corals weaken along with the abilities to grow skeletons and form foundations for other coral. As said before, a coral's weaker state allows it to become vulnerable to diseases and allows storms to easily snap its brittle parts off. On the other hand, our own direct threats can also lead to the destruction of reefs. Common direct dangers range from unsustainable fishing to habitat destruction. A topic that is rarely touched up on in our communities is overfishing. More than 55% of global coral reefs are influenced by the act of excessive fishing. Without fish, there is an algae overpopulation. Algae can smother coral to the point where sunlight cannot get through the coral polyps, and once more, there would be no photosynthesis. Although 27% of the world's coral reefs are protected from overfishing and the public, only 6%

are well-managed. Snorkeling and scuba diving is a hot tourist attraction for those wishing to go to warmer, tropical areas. However, not everyone is very considerate of these gentle organisms. Coral is often touched and stood on, which is much more harmful than what is perceived at first glance. In all, bleaching is not the only characteristic that negatively impacts coral as there are numerous other menaces involved.

Impacts on animals and us

Surely, coral bleaching cannot be too impactful on everything except the corals...right? The death of corals can have a substantial effect on all of us. Look at it as though coral is the first domino in line with other dominos behind it. Once coral falls, the things behind it are knocked down too, and that would only be the beginning. It is known that countless numbers of marine animals count on the life of coral reefs for reasons like survival, shelter, and spawning grounds. Even "Finding Nemo" touches up on how it is like for fish to live alongside coral. It would be extremely difficult for animals to adapt to unfamiliar territory to hide in if coral were to collapse. Food would also become scarce, as many species eat the algae that burrows onto the coral. Over time, scientists would find that the population of all kinds of oceanic species plunged and fell to a strikingly small number. This would lead to an enormous imbalance in the food chain. As for us, coral reefs play a significant role in keeping our lives stable. When storms, hurricanes, and tsunamis occur, coral is responsible for absorbing the force of the violent waves that come crashing to our shores. From this form of protection, nearby communities stay safe. Although the defense of the coral reefs is not fully responsible for the security of homes, they still serve their duty in protecting us to their best ability. If the coral reefs are weak because of the immense bleaching, they have no chance of standing against the waves that could be accountable for major

destruction. The demise of coral would also be the downfall of many more careers and jobs. Reef tourism and coral research would no longer exist, as there would be nothing to see except barren ocean sands.

How can we help?

In most articles that feature environmental problems we face in our world, ways we can help the cause are usually repeated like addressing climate change/global warming or living sustainably. Although those actions should certainly be performed, it could be difficult to change habits. Baby steps should be taken first, and bit by bit, one can climb up to being a strong advocator for their cause. One of the easiest ways to help coral reefs is by supporting and donating to organizations that have missions to save coral. The Coral Restoration Foundation has been working to restore coral reefs since 2007. Since then, 130,000 endangered corals have been returned to Florida's reefs on behalf of this nonprofit organization. The coral is raised in a nursery, later to be re-homed on specific sites. While the members of Coral Restoration Foundation wish to nourish coral back to health, they also work to educate others on coral reefs and offer internship opportunities. There are dive programs, volunteer opportunities, and events that could be attended by all kinds of people. You can also collaborate with researchers in order to search for ways to improve the methods used to better care for corals. Of course, this is not the only organization that works to help coral permanently thrive. There are so many other groupings of people that strive to keep our corals healthy, and support from the public is something all of them could use.

We cannot snap our fingers and expect coral reefs to return to their previous state of glory, so it will be some time until we see ravishing colors permeate the oceans again. As said before, the power an individual wields is an astounding thing. A positive action can be the birth

of a groundbreaking movement. Once the population begins to recognize the cost of letting the coral reefs die, it will be no time before BBC Earth can film a documentary about our oceans without featuring a small, devastating clip on milk-colored coral.

This planet was entrusted upon us for a reason.

Let's take care of it.



Are humans happy? Or not? Francis Fokoue

Introduction

From the time of primitive cavemen to the sophisticated modern humans, much has changed. Ideas have been created, adopted, and applied. There has been a myriad of advances in various areas. However, what is happening to the most important state of mind, our happiness?

The Great Gallup Poll

The organization itself was established and named after a man named George Gallup in 1935. This is a poll conducted by Gallup to measure the amount of happiness in regions and countries using a simple system of asking people to rank how happy they are in and with their lives. With their scale a rating of anything less than four is suffering, between five and six is struggling, and between seven and ten is thriving. They have a panel of 100,000 randomly selected people in the U.S who consistently answer polls whenever needed. Each year there is an international happiness day in which there is a world happiness report conducted with the Gallup poll as its main data source amongst many.

Primary Factors

Many things stack on top of each other contributing to the current state of our lives and happiness. Over the years of



2010 - 2018, a trend of lower ratings of happiness with the strongest decreases in Latin America, Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. In America, suicide rates have increased by approximately 30 percent from the year 2000 till now. Globally around 800,000 thousand people die to suicide each year. The use of technology and its accessibility has continued to soar throughout the years and is still growing. However, with it are some unexpected consequences. The average American teen spends anywhere between 5-9 hours on social media alone each day. That is 31-56 percent of their day. With such a large chunk of their day being eaten up by social media which will typically occur after school, many teens don't have time for other things in life such as hanging out with friends going outside, playing sports, and just being involved with others. In addition to this, they will also have work from school they need to complete. When these two are combined, hours of school followed by hours alone on social media, and later having to cram and finish workday in and day out it amounts to large quantities of stress on these young individuals making them less happy with their lives. With the older population, 9.5 million people in the U.S suffer from drug addiction. This can speak for itself. Furthermore, humanity is plagued with devastating issues such as hunger which has been declining for a decade and has begun to climb. It is now at approximately 10 percent of the world that suffers from extreme lack of

food which amounts to 811 million people in this world hunger-stricken. Homelessness also continues to rage on across the globe with over 154 million people struggling with it. Across the United States, only 45 percent of workers feel happy with their jobs. This leaves another 55 percent of American workers having to wake up each morning to do something they dislike which has a heavy toll on their contentment.

And now... Covid-19

It is common knowledge that when humans are unable to socialize with one another that they become more disheartened and upset. Clearly when a deadly global pandemic hit the world and for a lengthy period people had to isolate themselves in their homes, not going out for much except food and other necessities. On top of that students had to study from home which although seemed great at first caused lots of issues apart from staring at a screen for hours each day. Some of these problems are, lack of socialization, feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, and unmotivated. These feelings also translate to adults having to work from home as well. Many adults had to take care of their kids on top of already being stressed. This is not even to mention those who were pained with having to see family members or friends suffer from the virus, possibly even those who were infected by it. The height of the pandemic negatively affected the mental health of many who to this day can still be reeling from its effects.

RANKS (Happiest countries 2021)

1. Finland
2. Denmark
3. Switzerland
4. Iceland
5. The Netherlands
6. Norway
7. Sweden

What makes them happy?

As Finland ranks first in happiness it would make the most sense to examine their people and country first. To take a look at why they are on top. In Finland many of their people have a strong connection with the outdoors, even making it outside in their winter months. When you are outside enjoying and appreciating it, feelings of stress, anger, and sadness tend to decrease. In addition, it also helps your physical well-being as it was found to be able to reduce blood pressure, heart rate, and even muscle tension. A nice breath of fresh air. All these countries share some common characteristics which may be the key to happier people. A stable government without many rules and regulations, High life expectancies, good schooling, as well as a large chunk of the population donating and giving to others and charities. An economist from Colombia University, Jeffrey Sachs, says – “Many people feel secure in those countries, so trust is high.” One of the most important things contributing toward the development of and happiness of nations is their education systems. Again, Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are amongst the best in the world for education. Furthermore, another thing that makes so many people in these countries enjoy their lives is a healthy work-life balance. These are a just few reasons out of many that play a part in what makes these nations prosperous.

Conclusion

Ultimately, there are many people in this world who are content with themselves, their lives, or just happy to be happy. Humans have created ways to begin to grasp our state of happiness, but of course, there is still work to do with these systems. In many places tons of people are unhappy. However, there are also many places where many people are happy. So, I ask you, are humans happy? Are we getting happier? Or not?



To China! – The Paralympics 2022

Cristina Damato



Everybody has heard of and follows the Olympics, but few people know much about the Paralympics – a separate competition for people with disabilities that affect sports performance. In this event, athletes compete under one or more of ten categories, called sport classes: impaired muscle power, impaired passive range of movement, limb deficiency, leg length difference, short stature, hypertonia (increased muscle tension), ataxia (uncontrolled muscle movement), athetosis (continual slow involuntary movements), vision impairment, and intellectual impairment. These sport classes ensure that, for instance - an athlete with low visual acuity isn't competing against an athlete in a wheelchair.

Some of the sports in the Paralympics are a little different from the sports in the traditional Olympic Games. The six Paralympic winter sports are alpine skiing, para ice hockey, biathlon, cross-country skiing, snowboard, and wheelchair curling. In alpine skiing, there are three different events: a vision impaired event, a standing event, and a sitting event. Some athletes competing in the vision impaired event are completely blind, and use only the voice of a guide to get them down the mountain safely! In the sitting event, athletes are seated on a custom-built structure attached to a single ski – to navigate the complexities of the course, they must shift their weight and use outriggers, poles with “feet” on the ends. This year, the heavy gold medal favorite for the seated event was Japan's Momoka Muraoka, who set out to defend her gold medal from the Games in Pyeongchang four years ago. As expected, she took gold in three races and silver in a fourth. Other athletes who raced phenomenally were Norway's Jesper Pederson, who walked away with

a whopping four gold medals, France's Arthur Bauchet, and Italy's Giacomo Bertagnolli.

In para ice hockey (also known as sled hockey), instead of skates, athletes play on sleds with two hockey skates on the bottom. In addition, they have two sticks with metal picks on the end to propel themselves. Sled hockey originated in a rehabilitation center in Sweden in 1960, where a group of players wanted to continue playing hockey despite their disabilities. It was officially introduced as an Olympic sport in 1994 and the US won their first medal (gold) in 2002. This year, the US men took home gold for the fourth consecutive Games, with 5 points to Canada's 0.

Para snowboard is a sport with a surprisingly long history. People living in remote villages in the Kaçkar Mountains in Turkey have been riding on boards resembling snowboards for 400 years! These boards are called lazboards and make traveling through deep snow easier. In Beijing, France's Maxime Montaggioni, who had to sit out of the last Olympics due to a knee injury, took gold in men's banked slalom. In the women's competition, USA's Brenna Huckaby took the gold, with Nianjia Hu and Tiantian Li, both from China, taking silver and bronze. Huckaby reflected, “I still can't believe I won because those girls are freaking fast.”

These three sports as well as the others had exciting competition this year. NBC estimates that about 165,000 people watched on TV only, which is up 62% from four years ago in Pyeongchang! As awareness for athletes with disabilities grows, so too does the number of sports included in the Games. In 1976, there were only two winter paralympic sports, alpine and cross country skiing! In the future, there will surely be new sports with new athletes who will take the definition of incredible to an entirely new level. And who knows, maybe someday it will be you standing on that podium.



Emus V.S. Australians

By: Lucy Wright

After World War 1, several discharged military veterans were given land in Western Australia by the Australian government, to take up farming. They ran into several struggles during the Great Depression, one of those being the arrival of 20,000 emus. These emus were running amok and tearing up farmer's fields in Western Australia. Since these farmers were veterans, they knew of the efficiency and effectiveness of machine guns and other military equipment. So, they called upon the military.



In October of 1932, military involvement began. The farmers requested support from the Australian military, and asked the Minister of Defense, Gorge Pierce for machine guns to put an end to the emus. On November 2nd, Major G. P. W. Meredith lead two men into Campion armed with two Lewis guns, (a machine gun) and 10,000 rounds of ammunition. They sighted around 50 emus and began to open fire. The emus had split into small groups and began running around, which made them a hard target for the men. Their efforts failed and the machine guns proved to be ineffective due to the range and movement of the birds. Although some emus were killed later that day, their attack was considered a failure. Their next attack took place on November 4, where they located closer to the emus to use the full efficiency of the Lewis guns. There were nearly 1000 emus spotted, but only twelve emus were killed since both guns were jammed, and the rest of the birds got away. The men had one last attempt not to embarrass themselves. They headed further south where the emus were reported to be tamer. During this attack the men had mounted one of the machine guns on top of a truck, which proved to be ineffective. The men could not gain on the birds and since the truck was moving, they did not have good accuracy.

After that horrible attempt of getting rid of the emus, the military was embarrassed, receiving hate and humiliation from the press. Humiliated, Gorge Pearce put off the operation. But even after the military support, emus still were attacking farmers' crops and hindering the agriculture in Western Australia. Four days after the military withdrew, the farmers asked if they could send the troops back in. When Gorge Pearce accepted their request, the second attempt of the emu war had "officially" began.

On November 12th, the Minister of Defense, Gorge Pearce began the renewal of the operation. However, this time Meredith and his men knew how to defeat the emus, and had new "tactics." This time the soldiers were more successful and were reported to be killing 300 emus a week. Though they were successful, the press became uninterested. By December 10th, Meredith declared that about 1000 emus were killed and 10,000 rounds of ammunition were used. This means 10 rounds were used for each emu killed.

So, in the end, the emus won. This is very humiliating for the Australians, considering that they lost a war against a bunch of emus (flightless birds, discount ostriches). It turns out the emu problem could have just been solved by making better more durable fences, which is even more humiliating. This war has taught us as a civilization that emus are just simply more powerful than humans and could easily take over the world. But, since emus are humble and forgiving creatures (unlike humans), they chose the peaceful way of the bird. So in conclusion, Australia lost a 2-month long war against a bunch flightless hairy birds.



MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT

Album Review

By: Nicholas Bucaj

Since their formation in 1993, California outfit Korn, (Stylized as KoЯn), has been the figurehead for the nü metal sub genre. Their eponymous debut studio album, KoЯn, became no. 72 on the Billboard 200 charts, and led to the explosion of the genre in the late 90's and early 00's. Now, 28 years after their initial release, Korn continues to innovate their sound on 2022's Requiem.

For some context, Korn's 2019 lp, The Nothing, was released during a moment of turbulence in the band's career. Many of their members were fighting some personal demons, and their singer, Jonathan Davis, had suffered the losses of both his wife and mother the year prior. Due to this culmination of tragic events, The Nothing was a heavy, dark, and lyrically brutal album, the apogee of all the California outfit's troubles from the previous year.

In stark contrast, Requiem feels much more like an airing of the emotional wounds from the previous album cycle, encapsulated by the first single, "Start the Healing," released about 4 months before the rest of the album. It seems as though that on Requiem, the band was looking back at the emotional trauma from the previous few years, and working together to cope with their trauma through entering the studio and making music. Many of the tracks contain clean vocals from Davis, sung rather than growled, in heavy contrast to The Nothing.

Other common themes of this release include melodic choruses, minimal clean guitars during the verses, heavy, distorted riffs during the intro, and more aggressive vocals during the bridge of the song. A definite positive of this album is the mixing. Everything is clear in the mix, including the bass, which can often be buried under the guitars at drop tunings.

The drums sound explosive, and the vocals cut through the mix cleanly. The tone on the guitars is exceptional, with a healthy blend of low-end, mid, and high frequencies. Another one of this album's merits is the instrumentation. Everything, from the guitar riffs, to the basslines, to the drum parts, and the vocal delivery is all spectacular. Fieldy's bass has a unique rumble, which is always present and audible, adding another layer of harmony under Jonathan's vocals. This is especially the case for the verses, which usually take on a slower-paced, more tranquil sound. Munky and Head's riffs are always intense, and fit with Korn's distinctive style, with a 7-string Ibanez being the guitar of choice for both axemen. Ray Luzier's drumming always has an exceptional, fluid groove, not being reliant on blast beats and flashy fills on the toms. Jonathan Davis' versatility and sheer power as a singer really shines through on this album, swapping between clean and distorted vocals on a whim. His performance on this lp would be commendable for a singer half his age, but being able to hit these notes consistently at the age of 51 is certainly laudable.

Before giving my final rating of the album, I would like to go through each individual track, in the order listed on the album:



i. "Forgotten"- Simply put, this song is a great album opener, that really sets the tone for the rest of the album. The intro riff starts out barely audible, but becomes explosive and bone-crushingly heavy once the rest of the band enters. The clean guitars and vocals work nicely during the verses, and the pre-chorus has a strong buildup into the chorus.

The vocals in the chorus mellow out just a tad, and the guitars switch from the main riff to a more straightforward power chord progression. The riff switches up, and a superb drum fill from Luzier pulls us right into the bridge. Jonathan's vocal delivery changes from a melodic croon to a staccato bellowing, with short, separated, shouted vocal notes. The vocal intensity increases, until there is a repeat of the intro, with the quieted main riff. The track wastes no time diving back into the pre-chorus and chorus, and the song ends soon after the final refrain.

ii. "Let The Dark Do The Rest"- Haunting synths and effect-infused clean guitars start this track off, before amp feedback builds up until the entire band comes in. This risking feedback sounds not too dissimilar to a chainsaw revving, or the whammy bar intro to Mötley Crüe's "Kickstart My Heart," and is a great way to transition from clean guitar to a distorted tone. The main riff is fantastic, with these short, dissonant stabs that mesh perfectly with the keyboard, which remains until the verse starts. The verses are well sung, with multi-tracked vocals adding a layer of harmony to the lyrics. The verse riff is simple, with the same dissonant accents as the intro riff. The chorus is extremely melodic and catchy, with what sounds like a choir in the background. The choir does what can only be described as "oohing," and it better defines the chords changes of the guitars. The atmospheric keyboard comes in again after the chorus (I can't tell if this part is a bridge or a post-chorus), and so does the main riff. One notable difference between this part and the intro is Jonathan Davis going to a more guttural vocal delivery, putting heavy lyrical emphasis on the word "sick" as part of the line

“you make me sick.” Something else to note about this review is that I did not study the lyrics to find a deeper meaning, as music is completely subjective, and I feel that lyrics within music are better when it is left up to the listener to decide the song’s meaning. (There are exceptions to my opinion, i.e., a song that is trying to tell a specific story, like Pearl Jam’s “Jeremy.”)

Anyway, this section ends with a strange synth and guitar fill, and then continues to the second verse. The song slows down, with a different riff and drum groove, and a simple, but effective tom fill guides us along into the bridge vocals. The riff, which from what I can hear consists of nothing but power chords and trills, continues through the bridge vocals, and so do the melodic, double-tracked vocals from the verse. The final syllable of the bridge vocals are held for a while, then the song fades to silence, before the drum kicks back into high gear, and pulls us into the final chorus. The “you make me sick” part comes back in the final vocal lines, with one vocal line singing the chorus, and another singing the other part to accentuate the main chorus. The song ends dramatically, with big chords and short, screamed vocals.

iii. “Start The Healing” - It makes complete sense that the lead single for this album is also one of the lp’s strongest tracks. This song was released somewhere around four weeks before the rest of the album, and picking an exceptional song like this as people’s first glimpse of the Requiem was a great decision on Korn’s part to generate intrigue and hype for the album. The song fades in at a brisk pace, increasing in intensity until the drum break out into a groove, and the verse starts immediately. The verse riff is basic, but it works fine with the vocals, and the bass is audible throughout. The song wastes no time, proceeding right into the first chorus. The chorus starts with the guitars playing power chords, ascending and then descending in pitch, moving along with the vocal dynamics of Davis’ singing. The guitars then revert to a riff similar to the verse riff, and the vocal move to a raspy growl. There also seems to be another vocal layer in this part of the chorus, probably pitch-shifted down an octave to add to the layers of harmony prevalent in this chorus. The second verse starts directly after the first chorus wraps up, and it is pretty much identical to the first verse musically. The second chorus is also



identical to the first, but this time it ends with a clean guitar to transition to the bridge. The drums, bass, and vocals all mellow out for a small clean guitar part, then the twin axe powerhouse of Head and Munky unleash two chords, which sound absolutely humongous in the mix, while also being accentuated by the low, rumbling bass, and crash cymbals from behind the drum kit. The bridge continues, with the guitars playing the second part of the chorus riff, and the vocals gradually increasing in intensity, reminiscent of Rage Against The Machine’s “Killing In The Name.” The vocals get louder and more unhinged sounding, with reverb and echo effects adding to the rising tension, until Davis delivers the final line of the bridge, “It’s never gonna quit!” thunderously, sounding like a rabid animal. Then the final chorus begins, exactly like the choruses before it, and the song ends right after it finishes.

iv. “Lost In The Grandeur” - The fourth track on Requiem starts off with a bang, with a pounding snare drum leading us into the main riff. The main riff is interesting, utilizing the strumming of dead notes on guitar to make for a scratching noise, similar to the sound of a turntable spinning a record. The riff continues until the verse vocals enter exactly at the thirty second mark. Jonathan’s singing during the verse is good as always, but it’s the instrumentation during the verse that really stands out to me. Typically, the verse riff of a song

is a stripped down version of the main riff, allowing for some background noise between lyrics to keep the rhythm. The verse riff on “Lost In The Grandeur,” however, is almost as good as the already strong main riff, and is completely different from the main riff. The iconic string clacking of Fieldy’s low, pulsating bass helps fill in the gaps between chords and lyrics. The exceptionally mixed kick drum also adds to the tribal feel of the bass line. A snare fill from Luzier slowly speeds up, and breaks into a groove for the first chorus. The guitars move to a more basic power chord progression, and some synthesizers come in. The bass is doing something more interesting than just power chords, but I can’t find any exact notations of what Fieldy is playing throughout the chorus, and it is possible that he is just playing the root notes of the power chord, albeit with a different rhythm. Davis delivers powerful vocal melodies during the chorus, maintaining the strength of his voice without needing to drop to a more guttural tone. The chorus ends and the main riff starts up again for a while before the next verse starts. The second verse and chorus remain identical to the first until the end of the second chorus, when the bridge begins. This song has a very atmospheric bridge, with little instrumentation. Jonathan moves down in his vocal register to a light whisper, while laughter echoes in

the background. Light hits of bells and hi-hats from the drum kit mesh together with the echoed laughter, and a fantastic bass line holds down the fort for the rhythm section. The vocals gradually get softer, and the laughing fades out, replaced by a bombastic reentry from the guitars, with both playing the main riff. Davis drops down to a low, throaty growl, that sounds downright unhinged, like a caged beast, biding it’s time until the moment is right to unleash it’s anger. And Jonathan sure does release his anger, as his moves farther into his upper register, letting out what is practically controlled screaming. This vulgar, theatrical bridge ends, and the song moves into the final chorus, and then finishes.

v. “Disconnect” - “Disconnect” starts off with a melodic riff based on chord changes, that wouldn’t feel too out of place as a chorus riff, but doesn’t make all that much sense as the opening riff. After about twenty seconds of this awkward riff, a strange dissonant guitar fill kicks off the first verse. The guitar part is quite peculiar, and it’s a little hard to tell if it’s a guitar or synthesizer playing this part. The drumming is simple, but fits with the context of the verse, with sparse kick and snare beats, and mostly the cymbals being used. The bass accents the kick drum and snare, but remains audible in the mix. The verse vocals are great as usual. The chorus opts for a fuller instrumental sound, with the guitars playing the flaky opening riff, and Luzier being more forceful behind the kit. The second verse is exactly the same as the first, minus the different lyrics, and a tasteful drum fill pulls us right into the second chorus. The chorus is unchanged, except for the addition of some multilayering with the vocals. The bridge begins after the dissolution of the second chorus, and a new riff is introduced, which sounds inspired by “Stranded,” by the band Gojira. Alongside this new riff is Davis transitioning from his softer vocals to a short, separated yelling. The bridge ends with Jonathan howling out the song’s title, and the final chorus starts. The song ends soon after the chorus.

vi. “Hopeless And Beaten” - Opens up with menacing, huge-sounding chords, that conjure images of an unstoppable force advancing towards you. This startling intro sets the stage for one of my personal favorite tracks off this album. A quiet, chugging riff begins during the verse, perfectly complimenting the whispered verse vocals. Multilayering effects on Jonathan’s voice begin on the final line of verse lyrics, and continue throughout the pre-chorus. The menacing intro riff returns for the monstrous and vulgar pre-chorus, which is one of the

most exhilarating moments of the entire lp. The chorus is an interesting hybrid of heavy and clean vocals, with a keyboard entering to add to the atmosphere. The chorus riff is also quite interesting, and might contain pinch harmonics, although it is hard to tell due to the drop tuning. The second verse starts almost immediately after the first chorus ends, and is pretty much indistinguishable from the previous verse, (except for lyrics, of course). The pre-chorus is incredible once more, and the second chorus is basically interchangeable with the first. The song grinds to a halt after the second chorus, and choir “oohs” enter, alongside the bridge vocals. The singing here is much softer than the chorus and pre-chorus, but louder than the verse vocals. The guitars and bass build up in intensity until the levee breaks, and Jonathan Davis unleashes a guttural performance, sounding like something off of a Cannibal Corpse record. The pre-chorus and chorus play through again, and the outro starts. The outro is an unnerving concoction of riffage, bells and cymbals, and echoed vocals, doused in effects.

vii. “Penance To Sorrow” - The track begins with a weird, dissonant riff, which soon fades out to make way for a brief synth section. The verse contains what sounds like clean guitars, and a simple drum groove. The bass line is also surprisingly audible underneath the vocals, and all the instruments work well to make a melody during the verse. The pre-chorus is short, but it works well enough. The chorus is likely my favorite part of this song, as it is very simple and minimalistic. The guitar part is just power chords moving up and down the fretboard, but the progression perfectly syncs up with the dynamics of the vocals. The bass is unfortunately a little hard to hear underneath the guitars, but the drums help bolster the rhythm section in its place. The standout part of this chorus is the vocals. They’re just so melodic and catchy, it’s hard not to get the assonance stuck in your head after you’ve listened to the album a few times over. The second verse is once again identical to the first, and so is the second pre-chorus. After the second chorus however, the song cuts out for a few seconds, and some amp feedback build up from barely audible into the bridge riff. The dissonant intro riff makes its triumphant return in the bridge, and it mixes well with the rattling bass, and the tribal drums, where Luzier is primarily using the toms. Still

clear in the mix is Jonathan’s vocals, which start out as a pained whisper, but a guitar fill helps it move along into a heavier section of the bridge, with yelled vocal overdubs. The intro riff is played again, at a low volume, and then the final chorus begins. The final chorus is the same as the previous ones, but the refrain is repeated. The song ends with a mix of feedback, static and synths, before fading out.

viii. “My Confession” - Great opening riff, with a weird rhythm to it. The drums sound impeccable, and the groove really works with the guitar. The vocals are practically whispered, with multilayering added at certain points, done in order to accentuate the lyric at the end of each vocal line. Fieldy’s bass part seems to alternate between slapping and playing with his fingers, and it’s a little masked by all of the guitar effects and synth stabs. The pre-chorus sees Davis using his more aggressive vocal tone, but he manages to keep his voice quiet volume wise, whilst escalating the intensity of his singing tonality. The chorus begins fairly straightforward, with the drums putting a heavier emphasis on the toms, and the guitars playing a relatively engaging riff. The bass helps add to the force of the drums, accenting the kick drum and the toms. The chorus vocals are exquisite, and the addition of a choir, (this time aahing instead of oohing) further boosts the already strong melody of the base vocals. After a brisk reprise of the intro riff, the second verse begins, musically identical to the first. The pre-chorus and second chorus are also identical to the previous ones.

A new riff begins, and Luzier performs a series of small drum fills while the Fieldy stands in for the otherwise absent rhythm section. Davis begins a hypnotic vocal performance during the bridge, now with voice effects as well as the choir. The bridge ends slightly abruptly, and the final chorus plays out until the song ends.

ix. “Worst Is On Its Way” - The final track on the standard edition of Requiem is a nice send off to the rest of the album, and is another one of my personal favorites off this record. The song begins with some moody synths, which continue through the intro guitar, but stop once the bass and drums enter into the fold. The guitar riff is really wacky. It begins heavy, but has this weird, flaky part, that makes a noise that reminds me of this one Power Rangers toy sword my cousin used to have. It made this

strange echoing, vibrating sound, and that’s the only way I can really describe this riff, unless you hear it for yourself. The bass and drums add a lot of power to the heavy part of the guitar riff, but pull back for that goofy little Power Rangers sword noise. This riff continues throughout the verse, which has pretty standard vocals when compared to most verses on this lp. Bright synths enter during the chorus, and the rest of the chorus has a fusion style drum groove, that makes the keyboard and guitar parts that much more percussive. The bass remains audible, as a low rumble, underneath Davis’ tribal chant-like singing. The flaky, reverbed guitar part returns for the second verse which is nigh identical to the first. The drum beat gets more frantic after the second chorus, and the singing goes from a soaring vocal lead, to a raspy snarl. Jonathan’s singing ramps up in volume, until his vocals reach a climax, and the second half of the bridge begins.

The guitar and bass riff gets heavier, and Jonathan channels his 90’s era singing, and transitions from singing to scatting. For some context, scatting is usually found in jazz and blues, where the singer basically beatboxes to the melody of the song. In the case of Korn, scatting is usually used as part of a bridge or breakdown, and mostly consists of animalistic gargling from Davis. Scatting appears on some of Korn’s biggest hits, namely “Freak On A Leash” off of 1998’s Follow The Leader. So when the final track Korn’s new album has a scat section, it’s kind of a big deal. Anyways, choir vocalization also appear during this section, adding to the many layers that make up this truly special bridge. After this, a quieted sample of the chorus vocals is played over an acoustic guitar part, before the final chorus starts. The song ends with a really unique riff, and more scatting, and it fades out with bass and amp noise, just like a lot of the classic Korn songs did.

x. “I Can’t Feel” (Japanese Deluxe Edition Bonus Track) - I was debating whether to list this as one of the main tracks, but since it was technically released with the album, just region locked, I decided to put it on. Also it’s my article so I can do whatever. Cry about it. This hidden track starts off with an audio sample from something, before breaking out into a grooving, bluesy riff, with an excellent drum part to go along with it. A synth joins the fray at around 20 seconds, playing what I assume is the melody. Jonathan enters with double tracked vocals, and the

guitars drop back a bit, and the hi-hats fill in the cracks between lines of lyrics. The main riff returns during the pre-chorus, which is short and sweet. Instead of following traditional song structure, the band skips the chorus, and heads straight into the second verse. The second verse is the same as the first in terms of instrumentation. This time the pre-chorus is skipped, with the chorus just being a lyrical extension of the pre-chorus. Synthesizers make their reentry during the second part of the chorus (the part that’s a lyrical expansion of the pre-chorus), adding another layer to the chorus; not exactly the melody, but not dissonant either. Toms become prevalent during the bridge, and they keep the beat steady as Jonathan’s crooning loudens. A snare fill and a note held by Davis bring us back to the main riff, and the chorus comes soon after. The final chorus plays out, and the song ends.

Wow. Ten songs. That was a lot of stuff to write. Now its time for my overall thoughts of this album. I think it’s good. In fact, I think it’s really good. All in all, Requiem is a musical powerhouse, with some of Korn’s best riffs and singing ever to grace one of their albums. There isn’t a single song that I think was mediocre, and at only around 35 minutes long (longer if you include the hidden track), there was no room for filler here. One slight gripe that I have is the verses, which can get a tiny bit repetitive and monotonous after a few similar songs, but having a unique idea introduced every couple songs helps shake things up.

I personally really enjoy this new era of Korn, with the members coping with tragedies that occurred in their life, and personal demons, as it makes for a sentimental and uplifting album, in which you can tell how much heart and went into the creation of this record. Musically, I think that all of the band members are at the top of their game. Munky and Head are still coming up with killer riffs on their 7-string guitars, Fieldy (who recorded and wrote bass on the album, but has taken a hiatus from the band’s live shows to deal with relapses with personal addictions) is still slapping that bass like it’s a mosquito that’s been bothering him, Ray Luzier is still tearing up his drum kit, playing with the energy and precision of someone half his age, and Jonathan Davis sounds just as good as he did in ’94, on Korn’s self-titled debut album.

Final Verdict-9/10