

THE COURIER

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The longest running middle school newspaper in the United States!

AMERICA FACES GROWING TERROR THREAT

By Aine Nicholson

On December 2nd, a couple opened fire at a holiday party at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino. Together, they killed 14 and injured 21 people. Most of these people were county employees. The couple, Tashfeen Malik and Syed Rizwan Farook, was killed in a gun battle with the police. A friend of Farook's, Enrique Marquez, bought the couple the two guns which were used in the attack. Farook and Malik began plotting a terror attack before they were engaged and before Malik moved to the U.S. last year. Investigators are trying to figure out whether or not they had links to foreign terror organizations. The Inland Regional Center won't be reopening until sometime next year due to the massacre. The terrorist attacks are getting out of hand. This hasn't been the first attack and it most certainly won't be the last.

President Barack Obama made a statement on this terrible massacre. He made many points, claiming that there isn't much information to give and how terrible the attacks were. Mr.

Obama stated "Our nation has been at war with terrorists since al Qaeda killed nearly 3,000 Americans on 9/11. In the process, we've hardened our defenses -- from airports to financial centers, to other critical infrastructure. Intelligence and law enforcement agencies have disrupted countless plots here and overseas, and worked around the clock to keep us safe."

Radical Islamic terrorist activity has been a major problem not only the United States, but all over the world. The first major terrorist attack was when Al-Qaeda placed a bomb in the basement of the world trade center on February 26, 1993. Then, one of the biggest known terrorist attacks in history, the destruction of the world trade center happened on September 11, 2001. 2,977 people were killed on that tragic day. Also, the Paris attacks on the evening of the 13th of November caused about 130 deaths. These malicious acts need to stop for the sake of our people. Terrorism is harmful to everyone around the world and it needs to stop.

H2OH NO!



Flint residents protest the contaminated water

By Isabelle Levine

Flint, Michigan has a problem with its water: it's full of lead. In 2014, the state decided to switch its water source from Lake Huron to the Flint River. The people started complaining immediately about the taste, color, and odor. It tasted sweet and was a disgusting brown color. Researchers took samples and discovered that it had elevated levels of lead. They switched back to Lake Huron but the lead was still present. Recently, Michigan governor Rick Snyder and President Barack Obama declared a state of emergency. President Obama contributed federal money to improve the situation. "To you, the people of Flint, I want to say tonight, as I have before, I am sorry, and I will fix it," Snyder said. Based on an analysis of Census data, every child in Flint under the age of six - 8,657 in total - have most likely been exposed to lead.

The people of Flint have been protesting to get their clean water back, saying that the lead is going to affect their children's brain development. It

has been proven that lead does actually affect IQ, attention span, and behavior. It also causes pregnant women to have miscarriages and premature births. Some residents have been told by their doctors that they have lead poisoning. One example is Rabecka Cordell and her young son, who were told they had it. "It's ridiculous," she says. At least 10 people have died from lead poisoning as a result of this incident. To fix this mess the pipes must be replaced, which will cost about \$1.5 billion.

Cher and Icelandic Glacial have donated over 180,000 bottles of water to the people of Flint. These celebrities and big companies have really made a difference for the citizens. By donating, they may have saved a few lives. At press time, the media reported that even using a filter on the faucet wasn't enough to make the drinking water safe for the people of Flint. This event has been very unfortunate and hopefully will be resolved soon. The residents of Flint deserve clean water after this terrible incident that might affect them for the rest of their lives.

VICTIMS REMEMBERED

THE 14 VICTIMS KILLED DURING WEDNESDAY'S SHOOTING IN SAN BERNARDINO

SHANNON JOHNSON, 45	HARRY BOWMAN, 46	TIN NGUYEN, 31
BENNETTA BET-BADAL, 46	YVETTE VELASCO, 27	JUAN ESPINOZA, 50
AURORA GODOY, 26	SIERRA CLAYBORN, 27	DAMIAN MEINS, 58
ISAAC AMANIOS, 60	ROBERT ADAMS, 40	MICHAEL WETZEL, 37
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Headlines Roundup

Get your news in bite-sized pieces!

-Hillary Clinton wins Iowa Caucus for Democrats

-Ted Cruz wins Iowa Caucus for Republicans

-Zika virus outbreak is growing

-Punxsutawney Phil announces that Spring is coming;

Northeast hit with more snow!

-Super Bowl 50: Denver Broncos vs. Carolina Panthers

- Broncos Win!

-U.S. Forces granted authority to pursue ISIS in

Afghanistan

-Beyonce releases new video and announces world

tour

Saudi Arabian Women Vote for the First Time



By Arianna Mselle

On December 14th 2015 women in Saudi Arabia got the right to vote. Along with this huge accomplishment, women now have the right to run in elections for any position that they wish. Over 938 women have registered as candidates and 130,000 have already voted. Before this event, the former king of Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah (now deceased), ordered that 20% of the governmental consultative council be composed of women. Unfortunately, he never got a chance to put it into action. Women all over Saudi Arabia are rejoicing. Social media platforms such as Twitter were filled with tweets from women all over Saudi Arabia expressing their absolute joy at

finally being able to vote; followed by the hashtag "saudiwomenvote". Many compared it to August 18, 1920, when the 19th amendment passed, giving women in America the right to vote.

While they have the right to vote, women in Saudi Arabia still cannot drive, divorce, attend school or a university, travel, go anywhere without a male chaperone, interact with men they don't know, compete in sports, try on clothes when shopping, enter a cemetery, or even buy a Barbie doll. Many are saying that this isn't enough (with good reason of course) and are hoping for a bigger change to the lives of Saudi Arabian women. Hopefully they'll get this change, but some aren't so sure. What do you think?

Protester Dragged out of Trump Rally

By Finn O'Callaghan

On Monday Dec. 14th 2015, several people disrupted Donald Trump's rally in Las Vegas. All responses ended in the same way; security removing them from the premises of the rally. This may not sound like a big deal, even if you do support Trump. But in removing these people with force the security members were denying their right of free speech, as stated in the first amendment to the Constitution. One protester whose name has not been released was able to address this matter as he was being dragged away by security. "What about free speech?" said the protester several times as loudly as possible.

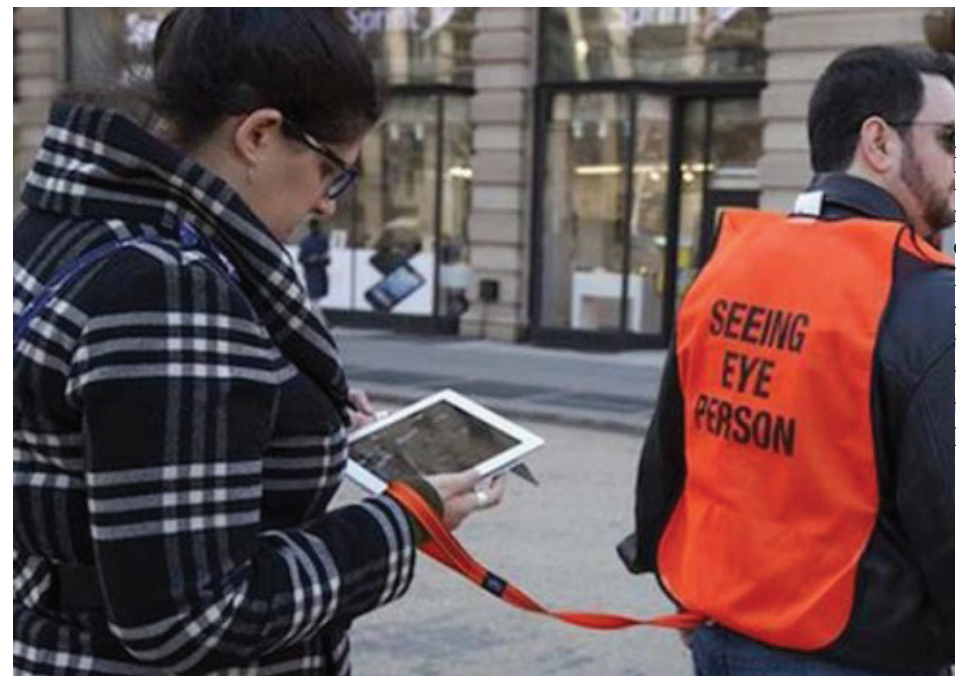
The rally members were split. This had happened before, but this protester wasn't going willingly. Most people merely watched and didn't think much of it, except when he was gone. They then cheered for his absence. However, many other people near the protester were pleading that the security stop and at least let him get up before attempting to drag him away. That's right; when security located him, they grabbed him by the arms and clothing and calmly tried to remove him. When the protester refused to leave, they struggled to pull him out of the room, eventually knocking him down. When he tried to get up, they continued to

pull.

This also brings up the idea of free speech. If the people guarding Trump aren't afraid to use force to remove people from the room just because they felt that someone's beliefs were wrong, then is Donald Trump really the best candidate? Not to mention Trump's ideas to exclude Muslims from America, and whether you think this is a good idea or not, the exclusion of a religion in the United States also goes against the 1st Amendment of the bill of rights, which states that there will be no establishment of any religion in the U.S., and that there shall be no prohibition of the free practice of any religion. While the exclusion of Muslims may help the terrorist problem, it is not flawless and will hurt the lives of many people. Banning Muslims from entering America will have serious effects on Muslims who have no intention of doing any harm. According to studies, only 21% of Muslims are radicals or have the intention of imposing harm on others.

Whatever your opinion is on Donald Trump, know that even though his slogan may be "Make America Great Again," ask yourself this: why isn't America great right now and how will Trump really make it better?

Texting & Walking: A Growing Epidemic



By Bethsie Brice

With technology taking over the world, there has been a new problem rising, texting and walking. Everyday someone is walking into a pole, person or hole. A study has shown that when people were texting and walking, about 61 percent of the time the people veered off course and overshot their target by 13 percent more than when they were not distracted. One woman fell 20 feet into a sinkhole because she was texting and walking and not paying any attention to her surroundings. Another person fell down onto some train tracks. When you text and walk your blind spot is everywhere. This lack of spatial awareness is what causes many accidents. A study was done on 30 people to see how a person would react to an obstacle course

with and without the use of a phone. The results showed that people completed the course in about 19 seconds without using any phone. People who walked and texted their way through the obstacle course had an average completion time of 25 seconds. It has indeed been proven that walking and texting does slow a person down. It could be a lot more difficult to text and walk in real life than to complete an obstacle course. Lawmakers in Arkansas and New York are trying to make a law to ban texting while crossing the street. There is a way to prevent this. You could go to the nearest wall and text there if you can't wait. You could also put your phone away, lift up your head, and go to wherever you are going with no distractions. This way we can prevent a lot of unnecessary injuries.



Protester Jibril Hough is removed from Trump's rally

Editorials

Attitude Adjustment Needed

For a long time, and especially recently, some people have seen all Muslims as a threat. This personally makes me very frustrated and mad because there is a big difference between Muslims and Radicals. Radicals are people who think violence is the way to get everyone to convert to Islam. In the Islam religious book the Qur'an, there is absolutely no mention of violence. This shows that it's not all Mus-

lims who advocate violence; it's just the ones who interpret the Qur'an in a totally wrong way.

Donald Trump has talked about banning Muslims from coming into the country. This discrimination is terrible. It not only hurts the victims, but also could give the impression that all Americans are this way. Once people talk about something like this, it will send a racist and hostile message. I

think this could end disastrously by sparking anger in the Muslim community and possibly causing a war.

But what do Muslims think about all of this? Some teenagers from the New York area talked about how in school they were called terrorists. It was very hard for them; they felt like everyone was against them. Some felt forced to stop wearing proper garments or stop telling people their reli-

gion and background. Most Muslims don't agree with the Radicals. "We hate them," said Hikmat al-Gaoud, who fled from Al-Anbar. He admits that most of them hate how the terrorists and the Islamic State are affecting their lives. I wish all of this would end. Radicals need to realize what they are doing is wrong and Americans need to realize that discrimination is politically incorrect.

Unhealthy Health Foods

The explosion of people dieting has stretched across America, but it has some people questioning what they can and cannot eat. With the plethora of advertising from companies, many cannot even comprehend the idea that certain dishes are either healthy or not healthy.

One health food that isn't exactly so healthy is bananas. Quite a few are unaware of the fact that bananas are 29% radioactive. So just remember, one morning you might just wake up glowing. Buzz Feed scientists did a study, and they state this fact is 100% scientifically proven.

Another "Health Food" is the well-known cherry. Yes, it is true that the red fruit fights cancer, but there is also a serious con that comes with eating it. Have you ever tried swallowing a cherry pit with your friends when younger? Well, if you have, the following will make you scream. Cherry pits contain a highly dangerous substance by the name of Cyanide. Don't worry,

it is only dangerous when cracked open, but you never know if that moment will take place in your stomach! Many scientists as well did research on the interesting fruit. Scientists even got real people to share what they know. According to user comments on one website, Lee says "In fact, if you eat enough cherry pits you could die." And Darkblood says "I am in the hospital right now, my breathing is getting worse and worse from eating cherries all day."

One fact about food is sure to make you screech, and this one is about apples! As they say, an apple a day keeps the doctor away; or brings you straight to them. Apple seeds as well contain the life threatening chemical Cyanide. Plant that in your stomach! Scientists have been shocked, but the consumers are outright enraged.

Whole wheat is so healthy, right? It turns out that "whole wheat" isn't even whole wheat at all! The truth is that it is created out of a mixture of

your common grains and a very fine powder called gluten that makes your blood sugar sky rocket. Experts at authoritynutrition.com did tests proving that there is much more gluten in whole wheat than normal white bread. Whole-wheat is also much harder to digest which can add on weight.

The truth about low carb diets has been recently shocking experts. If you take a decent look at the box and read "food ingredients", there are no actual foods in them; just highly processed chemicals. Yes there are chemicals in the so called "foods", but maybe you are the real experiment. A website that specifically provides information about following low carb diets states "Often, the weight returned, and as it did, problems such as high cholesterol and blood pressure returned." You can find more facts at <http://www.rd.com/health/diet-weight-loss/why-low-carb-diets-arent-the-answer/> Here comes salad to the rescue! Or maybe to kill you, one of the two. Yes,

most salads are indeed healthy for you, but those tasty dressings can seriously hurt you. These salad dressings consist of Trans fats, vegetable oils, and much more. Next time you have some "Thousand Island", look at the ingredients. It is guaranteed that you will run into a few chunks of evidence that will make you blow chunks!

What do you think of when you hear the words "sports" and "drinks" together? Do you think of strength? Do you think of cardio? Electrolytes (salts and sugar) happen to be helpful for athletes, but many people don't need these extra chemicals in their bodies. Unfortunately, people are still drinking these drinks without exercising, giving them unneeded salt and sugar. In the end, be cautious about what you eat. Honestly, companies just want money and will lie to you through their commercials just to make a buck.



THE COURIER

White Plains Middle School

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The Courier needs you! We have many open positions! If you aren't interested in an editorial position, we would be happy to accept your writing! See Ms. Miller if you would like to contribute!

Highlands I

Cards for Jonathan



Several of Mrs. Gilman's students in art had Mrs. Varghese last year and when they found out her son was ill they wanted to help. Mrs. Gilman wrote a grant and thanks to the SO, PTA and Friends of Education she was able to hire a printmaker who came in and worked with the 8th grade art classes to create greeting cards. Each student researched, sketched and designed an animal, carved it into a linoleum block and produced several prints. Then they attached them to blank cards, added envelopes and bundled them into packages for sale. They called the project Cards for Jonathan. The students sold every set of Cards for Jonathan and collected over four hundred dollars. The students were shocked and thrilled that people would actually pay money for their artwork. Congratulations to Mrs. Gilman and her students for their excellent work on behalf of Jonathan!

Select Choir and Band Students Spread Holiday Cheer



On Monday Dec. 21st, our WPMS students spread some Holiday Cheer around the community of White Plains during their annual Caroling Tour. The Highlands Select Choir and Jazz Band performed three beautiful concerts at Ed House, NY Presbyterian Hospital, and the Galleria Mall. WPMS sophomore Ben Covello also accompanied the choir. Under the direction of Michele Davila and Tim Veeder, our students let their talents shine and filled many hearts with holiday cheer!

Teacher Talk

By Charlie Wright

This is a survey about what teachers did over the winter break. All the teachers' names were put into a hat, and these teachers were randomly selected to participate.

What did you do over the holiday break?

Mr. Fugarino - We took the family to NYC to see the Christmas Spectacular, Rockefeller Center Tree, St. Patrick's Cathedral and The Botanical Gardens Train Show.

Mrs. Plati - Lots of sleeping, relaxing and visiting with friends!

Mrs. Conrad - We went to NC to visit family and went to a hockey tournament in Hershey.

Mrs. O'Leary - I began the break with a surprise 21st birthday party for my son, my best Christmas present ever! The rest of the break was *super* busy with family and friends visiting from as far away as Australia!

Mr. King - I spent the holiday break at home in Connecticut with my family.

Did you get together with family? If yes, who?

Mr. Fugarino - We had dinner with grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins, nieces and nephews.

Mrs. Plati - My family and I got together with aunts, uncles and grandparents

Mrs. Conrad - Yes, my brother and his wife and 3 kids

Mrs. O'Leary - We got together with so many different groups of family and friends that I needed a vacation after the break ;)

Mr. King - Yes, I spent Christmas Day with my Wife, our Son and Daughter, their Aunts, Uncles and Grandmother.

Did you do anything school related?

Mr. Fugarino - No school related activities.

Mrs. Plati - I graded papers and wrote lesson plans.

Mrs. Conrad - Nope

Mrs. O'Leary - School work is like laundry - it never ends! So, yes, toward the end of the break, I worked on my back-to-school plans.

Mr. King - There were no school related events over the holidays though I did grade some papers.

What was your favorite part of winter break?

Mr. Fugarino - Coaching my son and

his hockey friends was the best part of the winter break.

Mrs. Plati - Spending family time with my husband and son.

Mrs. Conrad - Spending time with my family

Mrs. O'Leary - My favorite part of the break was New Year's Eve. Mrs. Smith and I rang in 2016 at the NYRR's Midnight Run, a 4-miler in Central Park. A fifteen minute fireworks display began at midnight as the runners took off. It was a true party in the park!

Mr. King - Relaxing and re-energizing at home. Also, it was my daughter's first Christmas and my son is just starting to get what it is all about so Christmas Day was really nice. The down side is that he expected the gifts to continue after Christmas. It took some time to explain that Santa doesn't come every weekend.

What did you eat as a holiday dinner?

Mr. Fugarino - We ate 7 varieties of fish on Christmas Eve followed by lasagne and lamb on Christmas Day.

Mrs. Plati - We ate tamales for Christmas Eve (my family tradition) and lasagna for Christmas (my husband's family tradition).

Mrs. Conrad - Christmas Eve we had Italian food and Christmas Day we enjoyed turkey.

Mrs. O'Leary - Holiday dinners included turkey, salmon, mashed potatoes, lasagna, veggies galore, and of course, lots of desserts. Way too much!

Mr. King - Seven Fish Dinner and Steak

What was the best gift you received?

Mr. Fugarino - The best gift that I received for Christmas was a comfortable pair of slippers.

Mrs. Plati - The best gift I received was a special pan to make paella in. I'm trying to perfect this dish!

Mrs. Conrad - My favorite gift is a pair of earrings that my son picked out for me. I love them.

Mrs. O'Leary - I got *lots* of new running gear including a jacket, multiple layers, and pants. Yay for me! My new gear will help me meet my 2016 goal of logging 1,000 miles.

Mr. King - An adult coloring book. It seems crazy at first but it's actually very relaxing.

Happenings

Highlands Students Pay it Forward



Teams 7C and 8D are so proud of their students. On November 25th we had "PAY IT FORWARD" team activities that included decorating milk-cartons and take-out soup containers to use to collect spare change (pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters) throughout the following 3 weeks. We collected and counted these funds in order to send a donation to the Ronald McDonald House of NYC. The 2 teams combined to collect a grand total of \$2600!

Bowling Fun

By Anna Kristina O'Hanlon

The bowling trip was fun in my opinion. I liked it because we were able to choose our own group and able to play in the arcade. I liked that we had freedom of what we were able to do. It was a fun experience and it was fun to have a couple of hours out of the school building during school hours. It was also nice to be able to talk and laugh with our friends and not get in trouble for it.

Marina Rosenthal said, "It was a fun experience that we had be-

fore the break. I liked that we had freedom of what we could do also we could have groups with our friends."

Caroline Pochat said, "It was fun and I liked when we were able to do what we got to do."

Jessica Zdanoff said, "It was a good trip to have before a nice long break. I liked how we got to do what we wanted. We could choose who we wanted in our bowling groups and we could go to the arcade and get drinks at the bar."



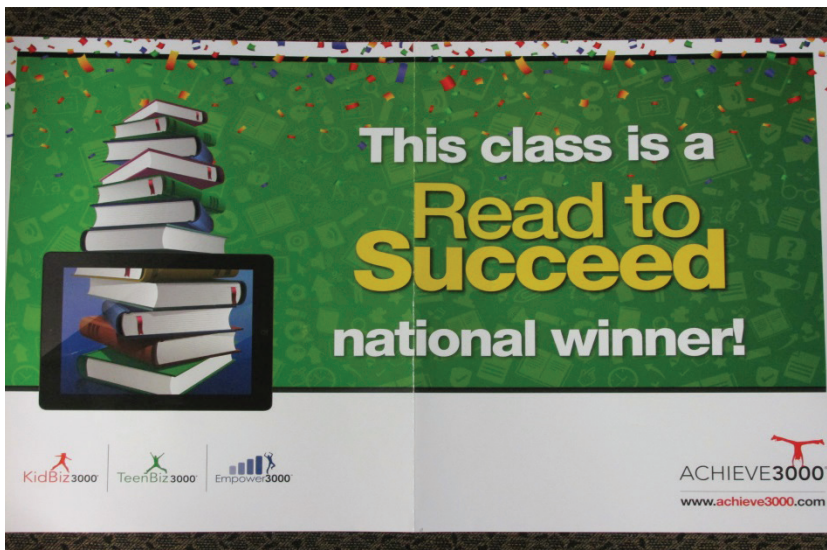
Winter Concerts

Congratulations to our music teachers: Ruth Siegler, Jenn Irlen, Tim Veeder, Michele Davila, Amy Luck and Jennifer Pyne! Their students performed wonderfully and were polite and courteous audience members. A number of parents commented that they were extremely impressed with the performance and could not believe the difference in only one year. Congratulations on a successful performance!

Programming club visits Sony Wonder



Is something interesting happening in your classroom or club? let us know about it! Contact Ms. Miller to have your events featured.



Ms. Barrera's Period 3 Spanish Language Arts class has won the Achieve 3000 Read to Succeed contest. This class completed the most Achieve 3000 lessons in the school. Congratulations to Ms. Barrera and her students!

Star Wars: The Force Awakens

By Finn O'Callaghan

The universe is being taken over by the First Order and is in the clutches of a new dark lord Kylo Ren. The First Order is waiting to gain a crucial part to an ensured victory over the resistance; the map to Luke Skywalker. The map has been split apart, though, so finding the intact map will prove to be difficult.

Stormtrooper FN2187 is a defective clone. His defect is that he doesn't believe that the First Order should reign. Not wanting to kill in the name of Kylo Ren, FN2187 escapes the First Order base with one of the prisoners on board. The prisoner lost his droid, BB8, on Jakku where the First Order attacked. This droid is more than special, because it contains a piece of the map that leads to Luke Skywalker. Unfortunately, during torture the prisoner spilled information as to where BB8 was. After crash-landing on Jakku to receive the droid, FN2187, now dubbed Finn (the prisoner thought that FN2187 was too long), walks several miles to find the nearest sign of society. He eventually finds a small garbage town after walking for hours.

Rey is a salvager who trades in parts of a crash-landed ship from the Old Empire for food rations. One day while heading toward the ship, Rey comes across BB8, not realizing that there was a piece of the map held within it. Later that day at the trading station, Rey trades in more ship parts. By this time BB8 has a bounty on him set

by the First Order; Kylo Ren was not about to let this droid escape him. Here Finn meets Rey and poses as a leader of the resistance. He gains her trust and says that he needs a ship to get to the rebel base. Little did Rey know, Finn just needed somewhere to disappear from the First Order and their grasp. Soon enough Stormtroopers are on Rey's tail, and she tries to fight back. The two attempt to escape, now working together. And this is where the story begins.

The Force Awakens has everything a classic Star Wars movie does. It also contains new Cantina music co-written by Lin-Manuel Miranda (star of one of the most praised musicals of 2015, Hamilton). I believe that if you have enjoyed the other Star Wars films, then you will also love The Force Awakens. This movie brings out the best in Star Wars for a whole new generation. This was the most anticipated movie of 2015, and has already broken a few box-office records. If you have not seen or do not know the basis of Star Wars, I suggest looking in on that before watching the movie. If you enjoy movies such as previous Star Wars movies or action films like The Hunger Games, then I highly suggest watching this movie. If you are more into movies like 21 Jump Street or Dumb and Dumber, this movie might not be your favorite. That's not to say you won't like it, but it is more of an action movie than a comedy. This movie is highly rated for a reason, so if you haven't already, I recommend seeing it.

Spotlight on Student Writing: Mi Viaje a los Estados Unidos

Anónima

Mi viaje de Guatemala a los Estados Unidos fue un poco cansado y triste, bueno no tan triste porque me vine junto con mi mamá y mi hermanita. Y también me vine triste de mi casa porque deje a mis abuelos, tíos, primos, amigos, y a mi perrito. El trayecto fue cansado porque camine mucho, tome muchos autobuses y no dormí mucho. Pero también fue un poco divertido porque vi muchos lugares y cosas nuevas como estatuas, parques, ríos, y otras más. El viaje me tomo 28 días, casi un mes, para venir aquí a White Plains.

Mis expectativas primero fue ver a mi familia, pero en especial a mi papá. Esperaba encontrar escuelas, edificios, y empresas muy grandes. Mis primeros meses que he estado aquí han sido un poco tristes porque no tengo muchos amigos y amigas. También fue difícil porque se habla un idioma diferente, el inglés. Lo que más me ha gustado es la escuela y lo que no me ha gustado son algunas reglas de la escuela y que no hay mucha libertad.

My Voyage to the United States

By Anonymous

My trip from Guatemala to the United States was a bit tiring and sad, well not so sad because I came with my mom and my sister. And also I was sad to leave my house because I miss my grandparents, uncles, cousins, friends, and my dog. The journey was tiring because we walked a lot, took lots of buses and did not sleep much. But it was also a little fun because I saw many places and new things like statues, parks, rivers, and more. The journey took me 28 days, nearly a month, to come here to White Plains.

My first expectation was to see my family, but especially my dad. I expected to find schools, buildings, and large businesses. My first few months I've been here have been a little sad because I don't have many friends. It was also difficult because a different language, English, is spoken. What I like most is school and what I don't like are some rules of the school and that there is not much freedom.

Minecraft

By Jake Schoengold

According to the Minecraft website and Minecraft wiki, Minecraft was originally created by Markus Persson, who you might know as Notch. On November 19th, 2011, Jens Bergensten, who you might know as Jeb, took over creative control so Markus could concentrate on new things. Markus Persson quit his job as an established games developer and as a result, Minecraft was born. Markus' original idea wasn't as fully featured as the Minecraft you play today. This was a game about placing and breaking blocks in a 3D world. Gameplay involves players interacting with the game world by placing and breaking various types of blocks in a three-dimensional environment. In this environment, players can build creative structures, creations, and artwork on multiplayer servers and single player worlds. Minecraft is available to all players for €19.95 (US\$26.95, £17.32). When purchased, single player and multiplayer game modes can be played using the downloadable stand-alone launcher. The official demo is free, but has a time limit. Minecraft development started around May 10, 2009, and pre-orders for the full game started being accepted on June 13, 2009. Minecraft's official release date was November 18, 2011. On September 20, 2014, Minecraft for the computer became the best-selling PC game of all time. On February 11, 2013, Minecraft: Pi Edition was released for the Raspberry Pi. It is based on the Pocket Edition and is available for free at Mojang's dedicated blog. The Pi Edition is intended as an educational tool for novice programmers and users are encouraged to open and change the game's code. On June 26, 2014, the Xbox 360 & PlayStation 3 editions' sales surpassed the number of sales for the PC edition of Minecraft. The Minecraft series has sold more than 54 million copies world-wide and become the third best-selling video game

of all time. On September 15, 2014, Mojang AB and all of its assets (including Minecraft) were purchased by Microsoft for \$2.5 billion. On July 29, 2015, Minecraft was released for the universal Windows 10 platform as an adaptation of the Pocket Edition. The demo mode is a demo version of Minecraft for users who have not purchased the game yet and would like to try it out first, designed to replace the functionality of the outdated PC Gamer Minecraft demo. Demo can be played by both paid players and players that are just try out the game.

Minecraft was created by developers but you can make your own mini games in it. Minecraft graphics relate to Legos. Minecraft has mini game servers like mineplex, hypixel, and minetime. Some people like the servers because they find it stimulating to play with multiple people from around the world. Some people find it to be a fun educational game. In single player mode, players have to gather natural resources (such as wood and stone) found in the environment in order to craft certain blocks and items. Depending on the difficulty, monsters spawn in darker areas in a certain radius of the character, requiring the player to build a shelter at night. The mode also features a health bar which is depleted by attacks from monsters, falls, drowning, falling into lava, suffocation, starvation, and other events. Players also have a hunger bar, which must be periodically refilled by eating food in-game, except in "Peaceful" difficulty, in which the hunger bar does not drain. If the hunger bar is depleted, automatic healing will stop and eventually health will deplete. Health replenishes when players have a nearly full hunger bar, and also regenerates regardless of fullness if players play on the easiest difficulty. If you go on realms you can make and play a server with your friends. For these reasons Minecraft is one of the best games.

Animals in Danger!



Pandas are just one type of endangered species

By Genesis M. Roseau

How would you feel if your favorite animal was endangered? Would you want to help save it from being endangered? Well, I think we should all help those animals from being extinct. There are about 16,928 species endangered for many reasons. An article from endangeredearth.com states, "16,928 animals are listed as threatened with extinction. As a result, the number of threatened species is definitely much higher than the current estimate. Threatened species are

those listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable." This means that animals are being killed for reasons that are ludicrous. How can we prevent endangerment for these animals? We can prevent animal endangerment and preserve our precious animals by stopping hunters from killing them, reducing threats to wildlife, protecting and restoring habitats. To cut a long story short, people should come together and stop this at once. Otherwise these creatures of the earth will continue to die and end up being extinct forever.

Share your writing with us! See Ms. Miller to contribute!

The World Of Drawing

By Marley Westlund

If you don't do this regularly you've probably attempted this while being bored during that class you hate. Drawing. From that bad stick figure you made in 1st grade to that amazing eye you now are able to draw.

Some people can draw with skills that seemed to be the way they had since they picked up a pencil and a paper. But, the reality is becoming good artist requires a lot of practice, time, and patience. By a lot of practice I don't mean you just draw a little on some post-it note once in a while, you have to put effort into it. An example of this is getting a sketchbook and drawing daily or weekly. It really does help.

A sketchbook is a book with

empty pages that occasionally comes with pencils designed for drawing. Sketchbooks are an artist's diary. From the roughest drawings with beautiful, imperfect lines to strong outlines, each sketchbook has lots of diversity. Sketchbooks are seemingly becoming less popular with technology replacing the function of sketchbooks. However, if you use a sketchbook regularly you will become better at drawing!

One way to connect to other artists - besides meeting them in your everyday life - is through social media. Instagram and Deviantart are great ways to see other artists' work. Unlike Instagram, Deviantart is purely art, which is great for artists. There is a wonderful world of drawing out there, waiting for you to discover it!

New Year's Eve

By Marley Westlund

"Five, four, three, two, one, Happy New Year's!" the whole room cheered. Kate let out the confetti and the whole room applauded as the confetti fell to the ground. Megan felt the blank slate of a new year, it was the chance to start over and forget the past. Every single thing from big to small could be forgotten. Around Megan there were about 20 people in the house and all of them were in a large living room. Megan smiled at what was in front of her, all of her friends and acquaintances were with her having a nice time. She took a sip from her bottle of coke and glanced over to the television screen. 'HAPPY

NEW YEAR' the caption said on the television. In the background of the celebrities from the Carson Daly show there was color of all types and just like Kate's celebration confetti. Also, the fireworks and advertisements on the buildings in Times Square made the television appear illuminated. Megan looked over at Zoe, a girl who she had been friends with for about a year. Zoe was watching the television and looked over once she noticed she was being looked at. She gave a small smile to Megan and said "Hi". "Hi," Megan smiled back. Even though it was small, that little social interaction had just begun the promise of a positive year for her.

Life Hacks

By Marina Rosenthal

If you don't already know, life hacks are tips and tricks to assist you in your everyday life. These tips can make your life easier, and save you tons of money and time.

Life hack #1: Take the spring from the inside of an old pen and wrap it around your charger cord. This will protect it from snapping and bending.

Life hack #2: When packing, roll your clothes up instead of folding. It'll take up less space that way.

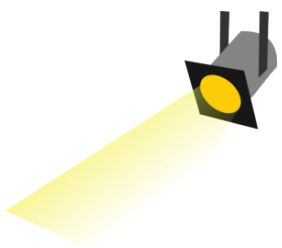
Life hack #3: Fill a water bottle a quarter of the way with water, then turn it sideways and put it in your freezer to freeze. When it's frozen, fill the bottle up with water, so you'll have cold water on the go.

Life hack #4: Cut cakes, cheese, and other soft foods with unscented dental floss.

Life hack #5: Roll up money into an empty ChapStick. It will be perfect for when you're traveling or walking in unsafe areas.



Teacher Spotlight: Mr. Baldasaro



By Hannah Cheitel

Why did you want to become a Teacher?

I wanted to become a teacher because I love learning and didn't have many positive learning experiences growing up. I also want to inspire students to love learning.

What do you like most about teaching?

What I love most about teaching is my interaction with students. I love when students have that "lightbulb" go off in their heads, and they are in my class learning something they have never learned before.

What is one of the funniest moments you can recall in your past teaching years?

It is probably impossible to pin-point one of the funniest moments I have had throughout my teaching career since I've had so many. I love to have fun in my classroom whether it's me or the students. If you ever want a good story just feel free to stop by Room 339.

How do you like Highlands so far?

I absolutely love teaching at Highlands; I consider myself to be very lucky to teach with my great team of teachers, and the students here are amazing.

What is your favorite inspirational quote?

My favorite inspirational quote is by Gilda Radner: "Some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle or end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and

making the best of it without knowing what is going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity."

What do you find challenging about teaching?

Something I find challenging about teaching is trying to communicate how important good habits are. I want every student to succeed and be able to do what they want to do with their lives, and I don't like seeing students give up.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I love to read, cook, play with my dog, and travel in my spare time.

What is one tip you would like your students to remember?

I would like my students to never, ever give up and never, ever say they are finished when writing. That is bad language kids!

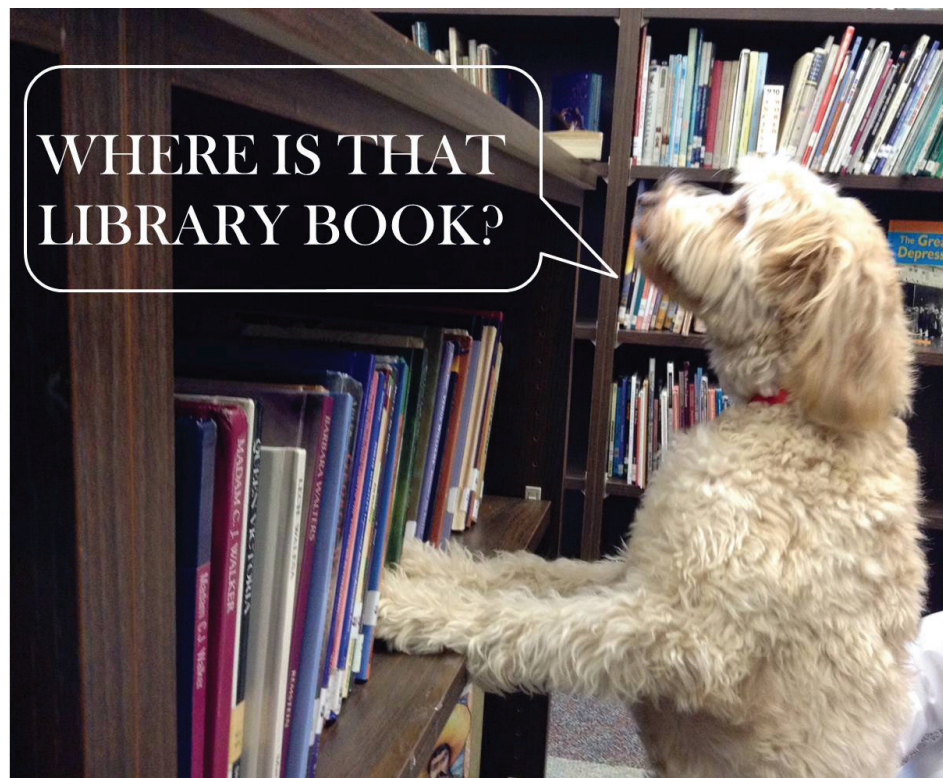
Tell us about your background before coming to Highlands.

A little bit about my background is that I used to be an attorney, and I lived in California for a part of my life. I have been a teacher for four amazing years, and this is my second year teaching at Highlands.

What would you be doing in life if you hadn't become a teacher?

This is an interesting question since I have already switched careers. If I hadn't become a teacher I would most likely have wanted to be an astronaut. I absolutely love space and would have worked for NASA and gone up to space in a space shuttle if I had the chance.

Poppy Says: "Return that overdue book before it's too late!"



Ask Tigress



Built For Blame

Hey Tigress, ***** here and I have a big problem. There is this person spreading rumors about me saying I spread rumors about her, which I didn't, and I feel like everyone I know is suddenly against me, please help!

Dear Built For Blame,

You are not alone, in fact I felt the same way! (Mongoose had a jerk faze) but I told my friends that they weren't true and went straight to an administrator, which is exactly what you should do. Just remember, rumors rhymes with tumors, so don't try to get revenge!

Holiday Hamster

Dear Tigress, I am having some trouble with an issue that I really need your help with. The holidays are coming up and I have a really annoying family. They are always loud and crazy and stuff their faces before I can get any of the food. What do I do?

Dear Holiday Hamster,

We have all been there, my brother Tiger could be one pain in the tail, but I still love him and I still have to deal with him. It is just a part of life, which I am sorry to say, but you just have to deal with it.

Sister Sorrow

My sister is a troublemaker. She never does what she is told and she is a mess. She does things I can't even share in a Middle School Advice column. She sneaks out, and even thought she is a senior and she is supposed to be focusing on college but that is the last thing she is focusing on. She is never home and I never see her. I don't even know who she is.

Dear Sister Sorrow,

You obviously care about your sister

and her wellbeing, everything a good sister does. Your sister is a good sister too, just on the wrong track. If your parents do not know about this situation I suggest telling them right away, and if the situation gets too out of control, look up the number for child protection services, when I have bad family issues I call them and they make everything better!

Tortoise Teacher

I don't like getting up in the morning. I tend to press the snooze or even put the alarm clock in another room! Then I barely have any time in the mornings, so I have to rush around. Do you have any advice?

Dear Tortoise Teacher,

Ahhh, the snooze, a monster indeed! I once had a problem similar to yours, and I'm going to get you out. You shouldn't have an alarm clock at all to be honest. Use your cell-phone, assuming you have one, and make it so each day of the week wake up to a new sound, and if you don't go back to bed and do what you need to do, treat yourself. That'll get that monster into the gutter!

Difference Dino

Lots of people, including teachers and friends, say I look similar to another kid here at Highlands. We honestly don't see it. It makes me feel bad because it is so untrue. He is not ugly, we just don't see it. What do I do?

Dear Difference Dino,

I can see your situation, but do not fear, because Tigress is here! Everyone confuses me and my brother Tiger because of our names, so I kind of know where you are coming from. The trick is just to ignore it, and if someone brings it up just simply say "I would rather not speak of this subject." It is something that takes a little while but will help later on. Good luck Dino!



By Louis Goldberg

The first Super Bowl was January 15th, 1967, in Memorial Coliseum, Los Angeles. The Green Bay Packers crushed the Kansas City Chiefs in the first National Football League vs. American Football League Super Bowl game in history. This would change professional football forever. The National Football League and the American Football League were two different United States football leagues that merged in 1966. The combined league's name was kept as the National Football League (NFL), with two different conferences, the national football conference (NFC) and the American Football Conference (AFC). The best team from each conference would play each other in the championship game every year, now known as the Super Bowl.

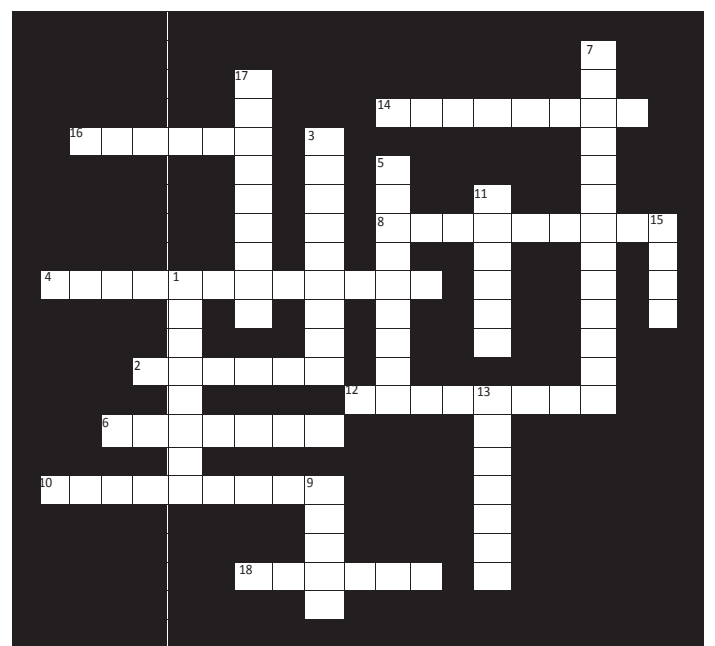
As the years went on, football became a much safer sport, and a much more complicated game. New rules were constantly being added so that the chance of a player's extreme injury was decreased and so that teams would not be able to cheat. The rules prevent players from helmet-to-helmet contact, performance enhancing drug

usage, and betting on games. But, despite all of the changes that were happening to football, one game became more popular every single year. One game became more important every single year. And of course, one game means a championship ring for the champs every single year. And that game is the Super Bowl.

Super Bowl fans have witnessed some of the most important and crazy football plays and upsets that professional sports may ever see. While the Green Bay Packers are in 1ST place for the most NFL championships won, with 13, and the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1st place for the most Super Bowl wins, with 6, all teams continue to play as if their lives depended on it. Every football player works to become one of the greats, to become a Super Bowl champion!

You probably know that the Super Bowl of 2016 will be the 50th Super Bowl of all time. For the Denver Broncos (2016 AFC Champions) and the Carolina Panthers (2016 NFC Champions), this is their chance to win the game that will have seen 50 years of history.

Winter Crossword



ACROSS:

2. Used to decorate yards and trees
4. Drank with marshmallows
6. African holiday celebrated in winter
8. Used for decoration
10. This holiday includes a tree
12. The month with the number of this clue
14. This holiday lasts eight days
16. It's this time of year
18. A decorative circle of pine

DOWN:

1. _____ are celebrated in winter
3. Takes the snow off the streets
5. You'll get it if you stay out for too long
7. Gifts are covered with it
9. At stores for the holidays
11. You may get this if it snows
13. Contains nine candles
15. There was a gigantic ____ storm in January
17. Warm your toes

Valentine's Day Poetry Corner

Video Hearts

Do you every feel as though life is toying with you?
As though life is a game that must be played?
Yeah, I do too.
But that game might be a little less challenging,
If you're my player 2.

You are...

You are my honey, sweet and kind.
You are my sunshine,
You make me happy when skies are grey.
What we have can't be bought with money,
So will you be my valentine today?



Galactic

You. That is all I can say when I see... well, you know.
You are as bright as a star.
After all the hardships and struggles,
You still glow.
Just so you know,
I could see your glow from lightyears away.