

# THE COURIER



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*The longest running middle school newspaper in the United States!*

## Shaun Derik: Don't Give Up Germanwings Flight Crashes in France



Nikolas O'Hanlon

On Tuesday March 3, 2015 a motivational speaker and performing artist named Shaun Derik came to our school to talk about life and how not to give up.

He introduced himself and played "Order," a game similar to Simon Says. He told a funny story of when he threw a surprise party for his 5 year old nephew. Shaun had bought a dog as a present. When all the guests said "Surprise!" the nephew got really scared and accidentally kicked the dog, which went flying. The dog was fine, though. He also told a story that earlier in his life, he was humiliated because he could not learn as fast as the other students. In order to feel better, Shaun went into a music room and started to play some songs he knew. Then the music teacher came in and asked him if he learned to play from a tutor

or taught himself. Shaun said he had taught himself and the music teacher said, "You can play by ear." Shaun felt proud and it encouraged him in music and in school.

A quote from Shaun Derik is, "Success doesn't come on accident, and it comes on purpose." He did the "stay on beat" activity, where one group does a beat and other groups do other beats, as he directs. He talked about friends you can count on. He sang a song with some volunteers and had a dance competition with other volunteers. He also told a short sad story of his friend Jamal who died drunk driving.

Shaun had a positive effect on the students and we all felt encouraged to do our best and not give up. I thought the presentation was well done and funny because Shaun Derik had a very good disposition with a little bit of comedy.

## Gunmen Massacre 147 Students at Kenyan University

Shannon Rogers

Four to ten militants burst into a university in East Kenya, killing nearly 150 students there. Gunfire started around 5am on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 and many students ran for their lives as masked attackers surrounded the school. These militants went to different dorms throughout the school and separated the Christian and Muslim students. They then killed and took many Christian students hostage. 147 people in total were killed. These attackers were supposedly connected to the terrorist group Al-Shabab, a group allied with Al-Qaeda, which is responsible for killing hundreds of Kenyans

through different attacks. This before-dawn attack lasted most of the day, and was devastating to the country of Kenya. Many students were injured or killed and the horrible stories they told of trying to escape this attack were terrifying. The courses at this college are suspended until further notice, and they are possibly not going to restart. Many news teams are looking at and filming the outside of the college; there are bullet holes and blood stains everywhere which make this such a sad crime scene. This attack on Garissa University is a devastating ending to the young lives of the hard working and bright students who had their entire life ahead of them.



*French forces search the wreckage of the crash.  
Photo courtesy of mashable.com*

Aine Nicholson

A German airbus (Germanwings) plane crashed in the French Alps on March 24, 2015. At first, no one knew for sure why the plane crashed. The area where the plane crashed is mainly used for hiking, skiing, and rafting, so it is difficult for search teams to get up there because of the conditions that are used for those activities. Unfortunately, 150 people died as a result of the crash. This tragic act was committed by the co-pilot Andreas Lubitz. People say that he had a mental disability, and wanted to commit suicide. Others say he was a terrorist. Search teams have only found some debris from the

plane, but have not found the plane itself. There were students and a teacher on the plane due to an exchange program. There were also two babies on this plane. The plane took off at Barcelona and was supposed to land in Düsseldorf, but about 44 minutes into the flight, the plane started to descend. At 10:53, the control towers lost all contact with the plane. As of press time, it remains unclear exactly why Lubitz crashed the plane. Reports indicate that he had been previously treated for suicidal tendencies. The staff of the Courier sends its condolences to the families and friends of all those affected by the crash.



**What's happening to the water in California? Story on page 7.**

## IN THE NEWS...

# Hillary Clinton Caught in Email Scandal

Shannon Rogers

Hillary Clinton, the United States' Secretary of State, was caught using a private email account to discuss government issues. Clinton was told, like all other State Department employees, to use her government email accounts for anything regarding official business. However, she used a private email with a private server to send and receive about 60,000 emails because she felt it was easier. She thought at the time, it would have made more sense to use one email, for work and personal communications, instead of two separate ones. Looking back on it she regrets using the two email accounts, and she has now turned in

55,000 pages worth of emails to the State Department to be reviewed. Hillary Clinton got to pick and choose the emails that she handed over to the government which made many US citizens angry. They felt Hillary Clinton thought she was above the law when using her private email. It made people even angrier that she did not hand everything over, even if it had to do with wedding plans and yoga routines. She has stated that this email account did not send any classified information, but it did send emails related to government issues. In the end, the use of a private email and server by Hillary Clinton is a major security issue in the United States.

# Man Shot Down By Officer Creates Public Uproar

Danny DeGenaro

On Saturday, April 4, a man by the name of Walter Scott, from North Charleston, South Carolina, was stopped for a broken taillight. After attempting to run away to avoid a conflict, Officer Michael Slager fired his Taser in an attempt to stop Mr. Scott. Mr. Scott continued to run and Mr. Slager drew his handgun and fired eight rounds at Mr. Scott. A man by the name of Feidin Santana took a video of the shooting with his phone, creating clear evidence of the shooting. It is also seen that Mr. Slager retrieves an item, most likely a Taser, from the site of the original issue and drops it by Mr. Scott. Some people think he was trying to make it appear as though Mr. Scott had stolen it. In the report of the incident, it is stated that Mr. Scott received CPR,

although this does not happen in the video. Though Mr. Scott is seen clearly running away, Mr. Slager claims to have "felt threatened."

Mr. Santana said in an interview, that Mr. Scott never attempted to take the Taser. After Mr. Scott falls, he does not respond to Mr. Slager's instructions to put his hands behind his back. Another officer then appears and seems to examine Mr. Scott, who was pronounced deceased at the scene.

Mr. Slager is currently being held without bail and is facing a sentence of 30 years to life in prison, with a possibility of the death penalty for first degree murder. The North Charleston Police Department has ordered 150 body cameras, enough for every officer to wear one. Mr. Scott's funeral took place on Saturday, April 11, 2015.

# Headlines Roundup

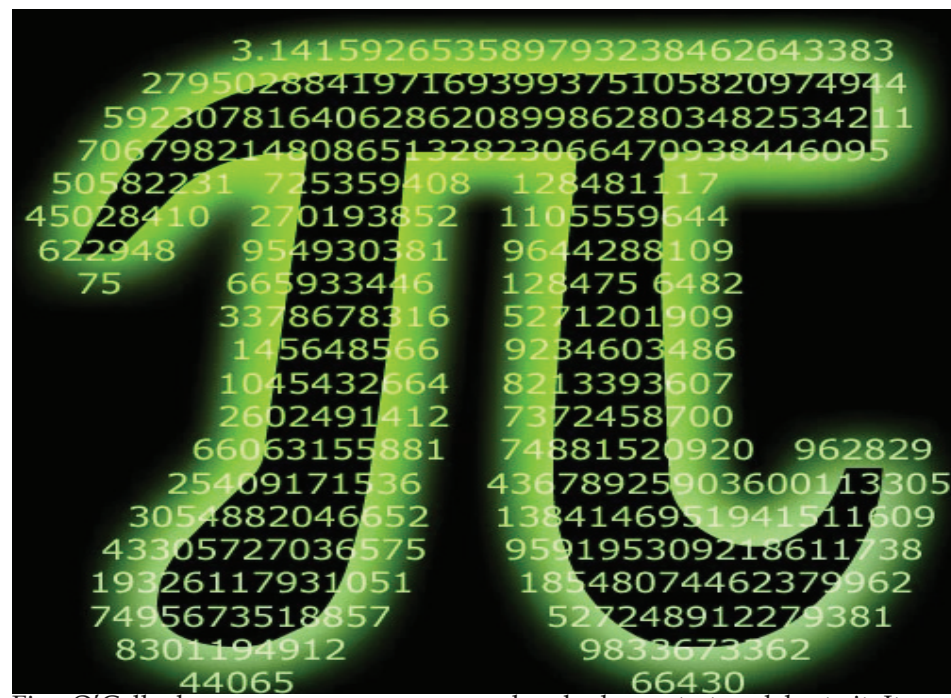
### US and World News

- *Hilary Clinton announces her candidacy for the U.S. presidential race*
- *Obama urges Democrats to back new trade bill and "support more American jobs"*
- *UN vows to act against perpetrators of Syria chemical attacks*
- *Uber claims new taxi sharing service saves 120 tonnes of CO2 a month*
- *House votes to repeal the estate tax on multi-million dollar homes*

### Entertainment News

- *ESPN suspends reporter for outburst caught on video*
- *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed releases new trailer*
- *South Korean activist sends copies of "The Interview" DVD into North Korea*

# Pi, Not Pie



Finn O'Callaghan

3.14159265359, etc. This number represents the symbol almost all of us can recognize:  $\pi$  (pi). Pi is the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. Pi shows up in math everywhere. It also happens to be a dessert most people like, but it's not that kind of pie. Pi is a number that goes on forever. As I speak, professional mathematicians are trying to find more digits to the endless decimal. People use pi all the time in math class. You've probably used it recently as it is. Pi even has its own day. National Pi Day (or just Pi Day) is celebrated by lots of people (mostly math teachers). In fact, Pi Day was this past March 14<sup>th</sup>. But I bet you didn't know how historic it was.

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Pi Day was celebrated by math lovers everywhere—even throughout our school! My math

class had a party to celebrate it. It was then that I learned something pretty cool about the next day (Pi Day was on a Saturday so we celebrated the day before). The digits people most commonly recognize in pi are 3.1415. This past Pi Day was 3/14/15. Both match up exactly! In fact, at 9:26 and 53 seconds, am or pm, even more digits of pi were lined up.

This is the closest we will get to these digits in 100 years! Most of us will be gone by then, so even if you don't like math, be grateful you got to live through history.

Some people knew the day was coming. Others went the whole day without even thinking of 3.1415...So next year on March 14<sup>th</sup>, remember Pi Day, and how this year you lived through a day that made math history. (Special Thanks to Mrs. O'Sullivan, team 7B's math teacher!)

# Ringling Brothers Circus to Retire Elephants



Isabelle Levine

As you may have heard, the Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus are taking their elephants out of their shows. This circus has been running for about 145 years and has always had elephants in their acts. Recently, the public has been complaining about how the animals are being abused. This idea was brought up when a behind the scenes video with footage of baby elephants being beaten, was released in 2013. The trainers use weapons like whips, chains, and bull hooks to discipline the animals. Not only are they being harmed physically,

but mentally. These poor creatures are becoming depressed and aggressive from not being able to follow their natural instincts. Over the past two decades, 30 elephants have died from being a part of the Ringling Company. They have had to pay about \$270,000 in fines for such bad treatment. Many people are very happy to know that for the most case, these animals will now be safe. The 13 Asian elephants that are on tour right now will be put in a conservation center by 2018. They are keeping all other animals like tigers, lions, horses, dogs and camels in their shows.

# Trading Money For Morals

Photo courtesy of h20privatization.blogspot.com.



There are currently many movements in America that want to relinquish or severely limit the federal government. If our government was really invading our personal lives, these movements would be understandable. However, though it is not perfect, the government is incredibly important in keeping our country in order.

Firstly, the government provides lots of services to the general public. These include roads, hospitals, jails, schools, the police force, the military, and social programs. Other than social programs, most would agree that all of the above are necessary to create a functioning society. Social programs are sometimes cut or stopped based on performance and cost. There have been times that all of these services have malfunctioned, but they are extremely important. Making an example of the

police force, there have been plenty of cases of police brutality. While police brutality is certainly not justified, police intervention does stop crime daily.

Secondly, government regulations keep order. If everything everyone did was perfect, we would need no government. However, the fact of the matter is that there are illegal activities going on constantly. Think about how business would be done with no regulations. Take a company like BP, the oil company that spilled oil into the Gulf of Mexico and barely cared. From this fact, you can see that BP is not a good-hearted company. With no regulations, maybe BP would begin to dominate other companies and drive them out of business. They could then have a monopoly on oil. BP would now be the only source of gasoline. They could easily charge twenty dollars for a gal-

lon of gas. If you were, say, incredibly rich, you would be fine, right? Nope. If you work for a company, maybe that company decides to pay you one cent per week. Since the government is gone, there are no minimum wage laws. If you own your business, another business will take over yours soon enough. In fact, with no enforcement on crime, who's to stop criminals from taking over Microsoft and bankrupting none other than Bill Gates, the richest man on earth?

Many supporters of the anti-government movements, which include anarchists, libertarians, and even some republicans, say that everything could easily be solved by privatizing everything and letting the free market handle the country. If only that were true. The truth about corporations is that while some are genuinely concerned

about their consumers and are good-hearted, many are greedy and will go to extremes for more profit. That being said, take a look at the police force under these circumstances. Two rival "police companies" might start a fight over getting a case solved. A police company could charge two thousand dollars to find a stolen car, and then they might not even find it. The rate of police brutality would be even higher because the policemen would be able to do whatever they want with little risk of losing their job. A jail company could pay a police company to bring in more inmates, regardless of their innocence.

There are many private industries in America that constantly malfunction, with negative impacts on citizens. CommonDreams.org states that forty-two percent of sick Americans did not go to doctors because the insurance cost too much. It is likely that the condition of many of these people worsened without medical care. InThePublicInterest.org says that a company called United Water managed Gary, Indiana's water. By cancelling their contract with United Water, the city expects to cut costs from \$16 million to \$8 million. When a corporation runs a service as opposed to the government running it, it can cost far more. In this case, a corporation costs twice as much.

More often than not, many anti-government supporters are just angry about high taxes. The government may be taking from you so that you don't have as much money as you want, but with any decent job, you can easily keep enough of your money to live comfortably as the majority of Americans do. Is it so important that people have a little more money but have no helpful police or military? In truth, governments are much simpler to deal with and are far more reliable than a corporation and though the government is not perfect and not all corporations are bad, it is extremely important to have a strong government to keep order and keep the country safe.



## THE COURIER

White Plains Middle School

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DREAMWORKS THEATRICALS

# SHREK

## The MUSICAL

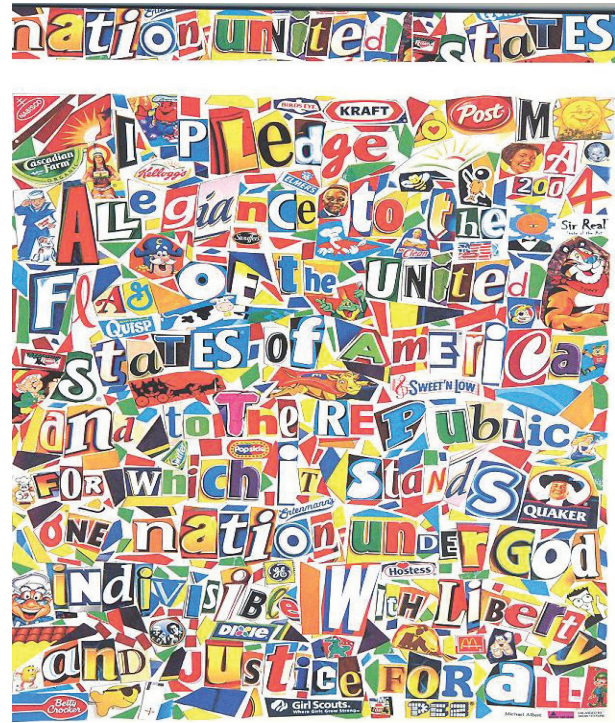


# Highlands Happenings

**HIGHLANDS INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY EXPO**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2015**  
 6:00-8:00 p.m.  
 WHITE PLAINS MIDDLE SCHOOL HIGHLANDS CAMPUS  
 Please join our students and teachers who will facilitate mini demo and hands-on workshops  
 We will have refreshments and a raffle!

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**EXPO DE LA INSTRUCCIÓN DE MEDIOS TECNOLÓGICOS EN HIGHLANDS**  
**MIÉRCOLES, 29 DE ABRIL DEL 2015**  
 6:00-8:00 p.m.  
 ESCUELA INTERMEDIA HIGHLANDS  
 Por favor acompañen a nuestros estudiantes y profesores quienes harán una mini demostración y talleres manuales  
 ¡Tendremos refrescos y una rifa!



Turn your cereal boxes into art! Artist Michael Albert will be visiting Highlands School this May to work with our students. We are in need of cereal boxes, granola boxes, any colorful boxes with lettering to turn into a wonderful school art project. The finished project will be turned into an art display for the media center and posters that will be available for sale. Collection boxes are set up in the main office, the media center and Ms. Gilman's room.

## Le Grand Concours

On Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> a dedicated group of French students in Ms. Miller's and Ms. Wagner's classes showed their enthusiasm to their French studies and challenged themselves by participating in the National French Contest. Every year the American Association of Teachers of French sponsors the contest which is an hour-long 70-question multiple choice test to challenge students' skills in listening, vocabulary and reading. After the contest students shared their opinions while snacking on cupcakes

saying it was a very fair challenge, not too easy and not too difficult. Furthermore, they liked the fact that the activities grew more challenging as the test went on. Students will get their ranking results in late April and if they qualify for national or Westchester chapter ranking they are eligible to get a prize at the award ceremony. Ms. Miller and Ms. Wagner are very proud of these dedicated and growth-minded students. Félicitations!



On Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, Highlands' students participated in Hoops for Heart. They raised over \$3400. We have some extremely generous and caring students in this building! Donations go to the American Heart Association towards research to assist in heart disease prevention, medication, and surgical advancements.

We had over 100 8<sup>th</sup> grade participants and over 100 7<sup>th</sup> grade participants. This year we had the most participants that we've had in the past 10 years. The PTA donated waters and heart healthy foods like pretzels, fruit snacks, apples and granola bars. Students were able to participate in basketball activities (knockout/games) hang out listen/dance to music, jump rope or hula hoop.



## Talents Galore

Nikolas O'Hanlon

The Highlands Talent Show took place on March 6<sup>th</sup> in the auditorium at Highlands Middle School. The MC's for the Talent Show were Pilar Ceron and Jacob Furry, who introduced each act. During the show students clapped enthusiastically to a beat or waved their hands in the air during several of the performances. Overall the crowd really enjoyed the show.

There were a total of 15 acts. Most of them involved singing or playing an instrument, and also included a Shrek teaser directed by three faculty members. The first two acts were sung by

the Select Choir--these were "Royals" and "Journey Medley", and were conducted by Mrs. Davila. The rest of the acts were performed by many highly talented Highlands students.

I loved it when the crowd clapped to the beat. After each performance the audience clapped loudly. The Talent Show was a truly outstanding group of performances which were awesome, fun, and interesting. A special shout out to Ms. Sette, Ms. Maffei for organizing the show and to Mrs. Davila Mrs. Irlen, Mr. Veeder, Dr. Montgomery, and the administration for contributing to the Talent Show and allowing the Talent Show to happen.

**Is something interesting happening in your classroom or on your team? Let us know!**

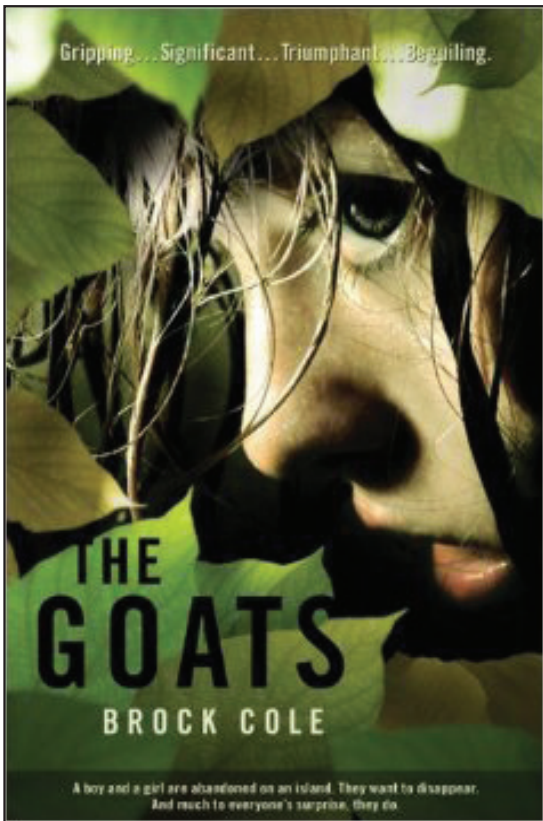


Ms. Goudreau and the students from the Programming Club, S.O., and Science Club travelled to the Sonywonder Technology Lab on March 11th. Students were able to explore the interactive and hands-on exhibits. A good time was had by all!

# REVIEWS! REVIEWS! REVIEWS!

Bethsie Brice

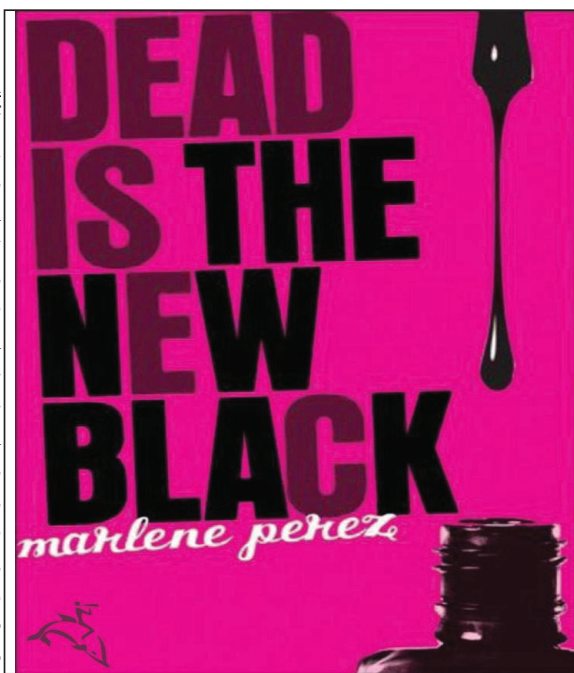
The Goats by Brock Cole is a unique book. The main characters are Howie, Maddy (Laura's mom), and Laura. The minor characters are Margo, Tiwanda, Calvin, Pardoe, Sarah Gallagher, and Sheriff Prosser. The book was originally written for young adults. It starts with two kids, a boy and a girl. They are at Tall Pine summer camp. They are left alone on an island called "Goat Island". At the camp they have a tradition of leaving a girl and a boy on an island over night to make them into "new people". It was only supposed to be a prank, but the boy and the girl had a different understanding. They were the goats. The girl, Laura, and the boy, Howie, decided to run away together. They wanted to go somewhere where the people from the camp wouldn't find them. They were not alone. They had help along the way. They met Tiwanda, Calvin, and Pardoe at a summer camp. Laura didn't think that her mother really cared about her, but Laura's mother was doing everything that she could to find her. This book is a survival and humorous book. The theme of the story is to not let people bring you down and you can do anything if you try. The book has a very optimistic tone all throughout. Laura and Howie had always stuck together no matter the circumstances. They always found a way to overcome obsta-



cles without losing hope. I would recommend this book to people who are going through a hard time or bullying because the two kids were bullied and tormented, but they were still able to make it to the end. I think this book is very inspiring because this book is like no other book I've read. In the end of the book it says "hold on," said Laura "hold on." Laura and Howie are about to go their separate ways but Laura doesn't want Howie to go. At first they are just two kids who want to run away and soon form a great bond and don't want to separate.

Aine Nicholson

Dead is the New Black by Marlene Perez is a series of books that are mysterious and fun. Daisy Giordano, 16, lives in Nightshade, California with her two older sisters, Poppy and Rose, and her mom. Daisy's dad has been missing since she was 12. He went missing when he was doing a research project and never returned. Nightshade is an odd, little town where you never know what's going to happen next. Daisy's mom and two sisters all have psychic abilities like telekinesis and telepathy. The Giordano family is infamous for their psychic abilities, except for Daisy who feels like an outcast because she is the "norm" in a gifted family. Daisy is just... normal. One day, Daisy gets very skeptical about Samantha Devereux, the most popular girl in school, when she comes back on the first day of school with a new... style? She's wearing all black and wears an ankh necklace, and her backpack is just a coffin on wheels! Then all of a sudden, cheerleaders keep getting sick left and right. Daisy decides to learn more about this to help her mom, who works for the police department, and is on the case about this as well. She has her old friend, Ryan Mendez, to help her, who might become more than just a friend. There are many suspects: Samantha, the gym coach, and



nurse Phillips. Now it's up to Daisy to figure out who the soul-sucking vampire is. Daisy goes on these crazy, fun adventures and along the way she learns more about herself and the person she is, with a few twists. I love this book because it is full of mysterious surprises and it is unique. I recommend you read this book if you like mystery, humor, romance, action, or fantasy. If you like paranormal creatures, this book is for you. This book has a little bit of something for everyone.

Nikolas O'Hanlon

This article is a review of the movie Selma. The movie tells the story of how the great civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr, used marches and other peaceful tactics to gain civil rights for African-Americans. However, they earned these rights only after a lot of suffering.

The storyline of Selma begins with a tragic church bombing where four African-American girls were killed and many others were injured because of their race. We also see that Annie Lee Cooper, an African-American US citizen, is prevented from registering to be able to vote because she is black. Then Martin Luther King goes to Sel-

ma where he raises the initiative to get civil rights for blacks. He does this by giving sermons and speeches. He gets people to march from Selma to Montgomery (the state capital of Alabama). There were three marches. In the first march the police used fire hoses, police dogs, and tear gas to stop the march. In the second march Martin Luther King stopped at the middle of the Edmund Pettus Bridge and turned back after a short prayer. In the third march nearly 2000 people marched with Martin Luther King from Selma to Montgomery. You will have to see the movie to find out what happens in the end.

My favorite part was when people of all backgrounds marched together. My least favorite part was when the church got bombed. I thought the movie was awesome because there was so much action. I also thought the movie was sad and heroic because people died for an important goal. I wish there was more detail on Martin Luther King Jr's life. My favorite character is Martin Luther King Jr because he was a pacifist. My least favorite characters were the Alabama government officials. I wish the movie was longer because it was very interesting.

Genesis M. Roseau

In the year of 1793, Philadelphia is facing a problem; the yellow fever. People are already leaving Philadelphia because they don't want to get the fever. Matilda "Mattie" Cook is planning on expanding the coffeehouse to make it the finest business in Philadelphia. Suddenly, Mattie's mother gets the fever, and Eliza, the coffeehouse cook, is helping Mattie's mother to feel better. Mattie and her grandfather are sent to the Ludington's farm, but they never make it there because the farmer who was driving them thought that Mattie's grandfather had the fever because he was coughing so much. The farmer dumped them in the middle of nowhere and took all of Mattie's and her grandfather's belongings with him. Mattie has to take care of her grandfather because he was too sick to care for Mattie. Surprisingly, Mattie gets the fever and her grandfather carries her to Bush Hill. Thankfully, Mattie gets better and Grandfather is being treated for his cough and is soon ready to leave. From a rating of 1-10, I would give this book

a 10 out of 10 because the book has a lot of irony that I didn't expect to see in a historical fiction book.

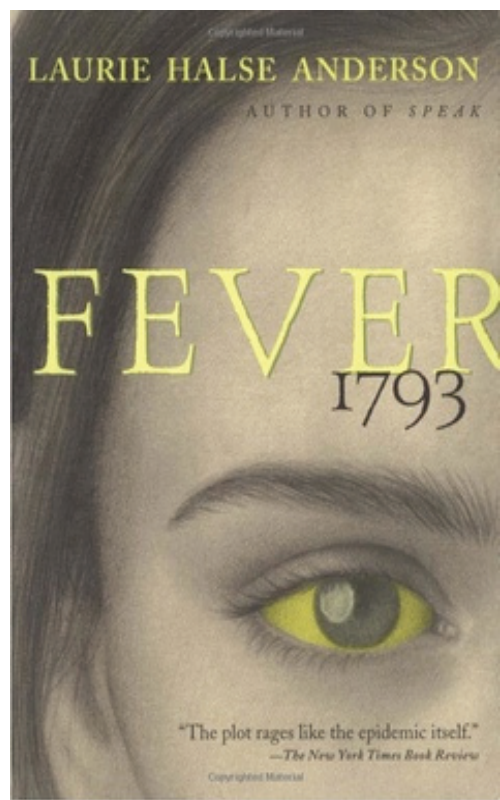
### Main Characters

Mattie Cook: Mattie is a 14 year old girl who is an ambitious and adventurous girl who is trying to survive the fever and deal with the city's emptiness because of the fever.

Mattie's Mother: Mattie's mother is a hard-working person who is trying to care for Matilda and the coffeehouse at the same time but that doesn't work out because she suddenly falls ill.

Mattie's Grandfather: Mattie's grandfather was a soldier under General Washington in the fifth regiment. He has to take care of Mattie since her mother fell ill and Eliza has to care for her mother as well as her brother and his kids.

Eliza: Eliza is the coffeehouse cook for Mattie and her mother. She is helping out with her brother and his kids and Mattie's mother to help them stay alive.



**Write a review for The Courier! See Ms. Miller in Room 141.**

# REVIEWS! REVIEWS! REVIEWS!



Nikolas O'Hanlon

The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out Of Water is an animated movie made by Nickelodeon and Paramount. SpongeBob is a sponge who lives under the sea along with many under sea creatures and an undersea squirrel. This movie was directed by Paul Tibbitt and written by Jonathan Aibel and Glenn Berger. The voice actors are Clancy Brown as Mr. Krabs, Tom Kenny as SpongeBob, Bill Fagerbakke as Patrick, Rodger Bumpass as Squidward, Carolyn Lawrence as Sandy, and Mr. Lawrence as Plankton. The

plot is that Burger Beard the pirate steals the Krabby Patty formula. The Krabby Patty is a unique hamburger and the formula is kept in a safe. So, SpongeBob and his undersea gang (Squidward the squid, Mr. Krabs the crab, Patrick the starfish, Plankton, and Sandy the squirrel) have to rescue the formula.

My opinion is that the movie was great because it was in 3-D and had an awesome story line. It was funny and suspenseful. My favorite character was Mr. Krabs because he turned into a robot by writing on magic paper which was hilarious.

Nikolas O'Hanlon

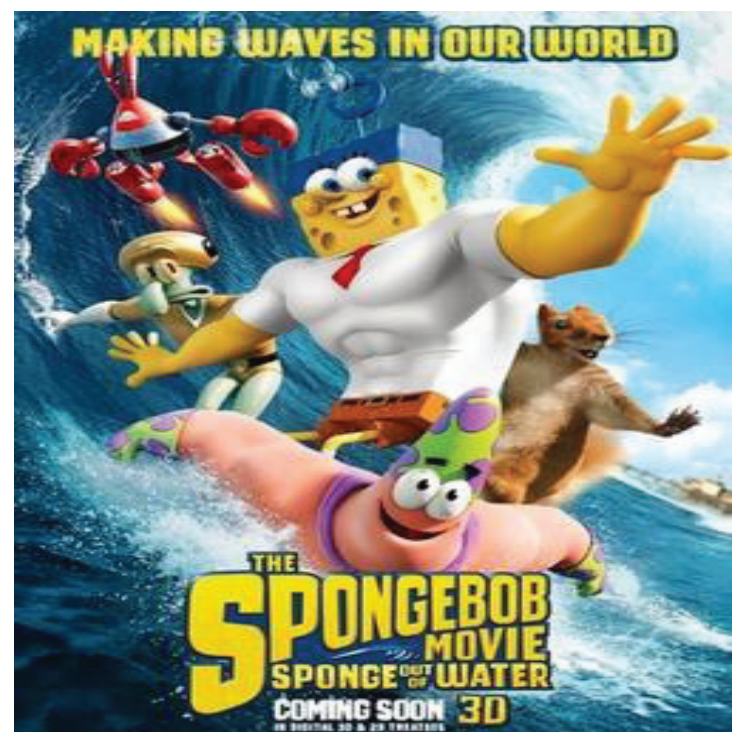
This review is about Omega Ruby and Alpha Sapphire which are two great Pokémon games, which were released on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, 2014.

Pokémon is a collection of video games, card games, and other toys featuring certain Japanese cartoon characters. Pokémon means "pocket monsters," and, in the video game, you catch Pokémon with objects called pokéballs. The purpose of the game is to beat the Elite Four and the Champion. The Elite Four are the best and toughest Pokémon trainers in the game. A Pokémon trainer is a player who battles, evolves, and becomes friends with his/her Pokémon. When a Pokémon evolves they get stronger.

Omega Ruby and Alpha Sapphire are Pokémon games based on all of the past Pokémon games. Omega

Ruby and Alpha Sapphire each have 48 Mega Evolutions. A Mega Evolution is when you have a Pokémon's final evolution and it changes to a different and more powerful form. It is only temporary for the battle. You can choose between three starter Pokémon creatures-Treecko, Mudkip, or Torchic. Treecko evolves into a creature called Grovyle, and then into a creature called Sceptile. Mudkip evolves into Swampert. Torchic evolves into Combusken and finally into Blaziken. There are many different Pokémon. You must battle the version specific main "legendries" (very powerful Pokémon). In Alpha Sapphire, Kyogre and in Omega Ruby, Groudon are the legendries. You have to battle the version specific main teams and their leaders.

I recommend that young people get the games and play them because they are fun and exciting.



## Features

### No Rain, No Gain

Nikolas O'Hanlon

In January, 2011, the California drought started. It is one of California's worst droughts in history. It was relatively mild at first but then it became more severe each year. This year is the worst of the drought. California has 164,000 square miles of farmland, mountains, and coastline which have been devastated by the drought.

The drought is most severe in the middle of California, (such as the Los Angeles area) but the drought is also bad in many other parts of California. There it is categorized as a D4 drought. (D0 means there is no drought and D4 means that there is a severe drought.) The D4 categorization in middle California means that the drought is exceptionally bad and causes widespread crop/pasture losses; there are shortages of water in reservoirs, streams, and wells creating water emergencies.

The drought is having many bad effects. Lawns, crops, and pastures are dying. Streams, and river flow are declining, and reservoir levels are fall-

ing. California has become so desperate that they are building desalination plants (factories that turn salt water into fresh water), even though they are very expensive and bad for the environment. The agriculture industry is very big in California, and their crops are dying. Agriculture requires huge amounts of water, so there is a great amount of worry. It is also affecting the tourist industry because with no water, tourists won't come.

People are coping with the drought in many ways. For example, they coat their grass with green dye or they install drought tolerant landscaping rather than grass. Another way people are coping with the drought is by installing hybrid sink-toilets and reusing water. The California Governor is requiring Californians to reduce their water usage by 25%.

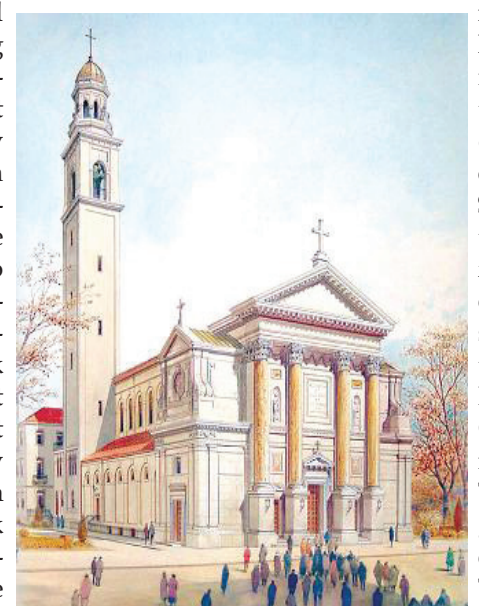
No one knows when the California drought will end. Scientists are worried climate change and global warming are causing the drought. The Californians hope it will end soon.

### Save our Church

Lily A. Wray

Have you ever had something really important to you? And spending time there or using this thing just seemed normal to you, only to have it taken away from you? Many people wouldn't think of a church as being that important, more like somewhere your parents drag you to spend an hour reading, listening, speaking, and kneeling. But when you think about it, it's more important than just that. If you haven't already heard, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church might be closing, due to lack of funding from the Archdiocese of New York. The church holds a special place in a lot of people's hearts. It was founded in 1902. From the friendly and understanding community to the beautiful decorations that keep little kids mesmerized during mass, the Church is a pleasant place to spend time. It's an Italian Catholic church, but everybody and anybody is allowed to join, including African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, you name it. At the end of morning there is always a snack for the

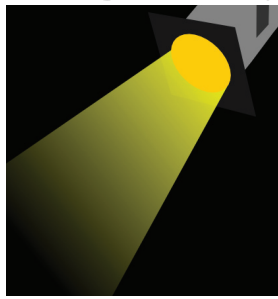
children in the rectory hall. There are always free donuts and orange juice for the children, and for adults, coffee and



rolls. They hold meetings while the children are in class there. Sometimes they have fun, free events such as their Halloween, Christmas, and Thanksgiving events. They encourage families to come and have a good time. On Saturday, March 14, some of the church staff and children marched in the St. Patrick's Day parade to show their support. The church and their supporters are still awaiting an answer to whether or not they can keep the church. Even if the answer is yes, we can keep the church it wouldn't hurt to keep supporting. But for now we could use some help to "save our church".

**Do you like to write? Do you enjoy taking pictures? Contribute to The Courier! See Ms. Miller, room 141, to join!**

# TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: MS. MAFFEI



I couldn't see myself doing anything else, I love teaching and learning more and more each year.

What quote do you think your students should take with them?

"You see things, and you say 'Why?' But I dream things that never were, and say 'Why not?'" - George Bernard Shaw. I want them to know this quote because I want my students to dream big.

What do you think your students should know in order to be successful?

I want my students to know how to be responsible, respectful, determined, organized, and creative.

What is your favorite book, and why?

I couldn't ever answer that question; it depends on the day, minute, second. I love to read!

How do you like it here at Highlands?

I love working at Highlands, once a student here, I enjoy working with colleagues I once had as teachers.

What is your favorite part of being a teacher?

I like getting to know my students, and teaching them life lessons.

by Natalie Pedi

Why did you decide to become a teacher?

I love working with children, and I enjoy teaching them new knowledge and helping them become innovative thinkers and practitioners.

For how long have you been teaching?

I've been teaching for eight years.

Why did you choose to become an ELA teacher?

I chose to become an ELA teacher because reading and writing are the foundation for all learning, knowledge and skills in the real world. I am passionate about the subject and like to see myself as a life-long learner.

Where have you taught at before Highlands?

Norwalk, Connecticut and Greenburg.

If you had another job besides teaching, what would it be?



Congratulations to the girls modified basketball team for an excellent season. They became a team that believed in each other and played well together. The girls ended with 10 wins - 2 losses.

# Spotlight on Michelle Obama

Natalie Pedi

Besides knowing Michelle Obama because of her role as first lady, there are so many more great things she has done. She attended Princeton and Harvard University and became a lawyer in Chicago. Mrs. Obama volunteered at soup kitchens and homeless shelters in her early years of being first lady. She later started to support the organic movement and put organic food in the White House. Michelle was the face of a campaign she named Let's Move! to fight against childhood obesity, and try and get children and their parents to eat healthier foods. She recently made headlines when she got on stage with

the "Dancing with the Stars" All-Stars and performed a dance to celebrate the five year anniversary of the Let's Move Campaign. She also helped raise awareness for the girls kidnapped in Nigeria, LGBT rights, and supporting veterans and their families. She has become a part of our pop culture and is seen as one of the most inspiring and influential women. Mrs. Obama states that she wants these efforts to be her legacy and that she wants people to say that because this person spent time with this, it has changed. All in all, Michelle Obama has always been very caring, and always trying to take a step to make us a better nation as a whole!

G P S P M O B K H T B D Y W J  
 Z R B L R V Q C H Q I N X A N  
 B V O I U I C T W L N R F R D  
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**Go to the Library and check out Mr. Wintersteen's art!**

**WHITE PLAINS PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
 April 9 - May 20  
 Opening Reception April 9  
 5:00 - 7:00 pm

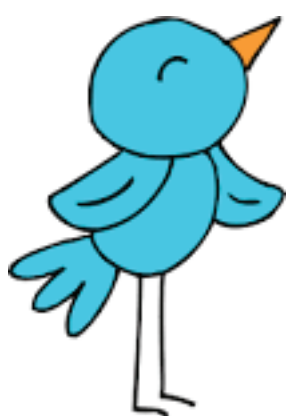
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 ART FACULTY

**SHOW**

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**Michael Sal Chiariello**  
**George B. Davison**  
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**Lorraine Trovato-Cantori**  
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**Brian Wintersteen**



- BLOSSOM
- BUNNY
- COLORFUL
- EASTER
- GROW
- MELTING
- PRIMAVERA
- PRINTEMPS
- RAIN
- SUN
- TULIPS
- WARM