



Northern Light



Award-Winning Author Veera Hiranandani Visits NMS

By Madisyn Chan and Amelia Chang

Ms. Veera Hiranandani, the author of the Newbery Award winning novel *The Night Diary*, came to North Middle School on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 to speak to the students of North Middle about the books that were recently read and analyzed in North Middle’s English classes. She spoke about the writing experiences, processes, and her inspiration for her realistic fiction novels *The Whole Story of a Half Girl*, *How to Find What You’re Not Looking For*, and *The Night Diary*. Journalists Madisyn Chan and Amelia Chang interviewed Ms. Veera Hiranandani

MC: Hobbies are activities that are done in one’s leisure time for pleasure. Besides writing, what are some of your hobbies?

“I, do, really love cooking, and you’ll see in my presentation, and in my stories that food represents my cultural background. In addition, I used to draw and paint a lot when I was younger, but sadly, I don’t have as much time to do that anymore.”

MC: Everyone has a childhood book that made you feel at ease when you were younger, and even maybe up to now! What is your favorite (childhood) book that you’ve read? In addition to that, has that book inspired you and your writing in any way?

“My favorite childhood book is *Charlotte’s Web*. I remember reading that book and felt sad at the end. I felt sad and thought, I never liked spiders. How did the writer make me feel such powerful things? This is what started my love of writing and reading.”

MC: We’ve spoken about what your favorite book that you’ve READ is, but what is your favorite novel that you’ve written so far?

“I love them all for different reasons. I believe that if you don’t love your stories deeply, it’s hard to keep writing it, and do all that work.”



MC: You’ve written many novels, but specifically, in your novel, *The Night Diary*, which character do you relate to the most, and why?

“I think Nisha is the most like me, but they all have some parts that relate to me. For example, parts of me in Amil and even Papa and Dadi. I’m also a parent, so some of the things Papa was worried about, I worry about; they’re all combinations of me.”

MC: Out of all the novels you have written, which one of your books took you the longest to write, and why? Did you ever want to stop midway through writing a novel?

“I would say my first novel because I had to revise it many, many times. I took breaks because I wasn’t sure if I wanted it to be published. So yes, there were lots of stops and starts.”

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MC: What was the most difficult book for you to write and why?

“The book that was the most difficult for me to write was *The Night Diary*, because it took so much research to write and I have never written something like that before. It was hard.”

MC: If you had one message, no matter how powerful, to say about your books and life, what would you say?

“There is a lot of division going on and I hope my books can help open people.”

AC: I find that in pieces of writing that I write myself, I am often writing to fulfill some kind of need, or purpose— whether it’s to vent my thoughts and feelings, or to share something that I care for and support. What was the main purpose for your books, and were parts of your books also for yourself, as well as sending a message to others?

“Absolutely. I feel that is so much of what I’m trying to do. First, I am writing for myself. Often, I have some kind of question about either an experience that I went through, or other people went through, and I want to try and figure it out with the story that I’m writing, and as I’m writing the story, then I’ll start to see themes that I want to address for the reader.”

AC: When you first started out as a writer, what message did you aspire to send to your audience? What was it? Did the message(s) you wished to send change over time, and if so, in what ways?

“I think there’s always a theme about a character feeling a little different, a little outside of things, and wanting to figure out how to connect and how to accept themselves fully. So, that’s always there because that was very much my experience growing up, and I’m writing it for anybody who feels that way for any reason.

“I don’t feel like that message has changed so much. Rather, you’re just learning things. I’ve been writing for many years now and I hope my skills have improved and my writing has gotten more sophisticated, but I feel that message is still the same.”

AC: You probably get this one a lot, but, who or what inspired you to become a writer? I read that you originally studied marketing and worked for a law firm— did you decide that was not what you wanted to do? You also mentioned in your biography that you wouldn’t have become a writer if you hadn’t been forced to look at the world a little differently.

“I have always loved writing, but I didn’t know as a kid that I could do that as a job. It wasn’t something that was told to me, it was just a hobby. I took creative writing classes in college, and I was like, ‘Oh, I can take classes for this.’ Then, I got a master’s degree in fiction writing, and I was able to focus for two years on creative writing and write a whole novel, then I worked on publishing for a while. So, it kind of evolved over time, and I tried to get my first book published.”



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School News

AC: Do you believe that it's in human nature to want to find others, even if they are characters in books, that they can relate to? Do you also find this true for yourself?

“Absolutely— I believe that it's so important to find that connection, and also to feel seen. Whether you're being seen by a friend or a teacher who really gets you and understands you, or if it's a character in a book, and you realize, ‘Oh, that person is like me in different ways and they're going through different experiences, but I can still connect with them.’ I also think it's very important to have a diversity of experiences out there.

“When I was younger, nobody had the background that I had. I certainly related to a lot of the characters that I read about, but I had never read about someone with an Indian or Jewish background, and definitely not both, either. Now we see more and more different experiences and different identities, and I'm so glad that more kids can not only relate through what the characters are going through, but can really relate through their personal backgrounds and experiences, which is really important.”

AC: I read a few of your author's notes and I noticed a lot about how many of your books incorporate your own life experiences, with not “fitting in” as a child, and growing up with your parents from two different cultures. Do you see yourself in each of the characters from *How to Find What You're Not Looking For*? Who do you relate to the most?

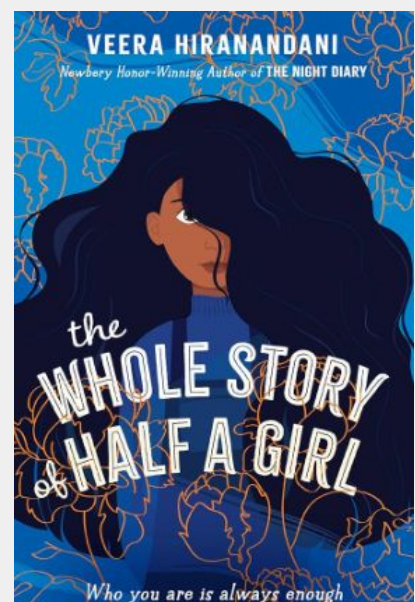
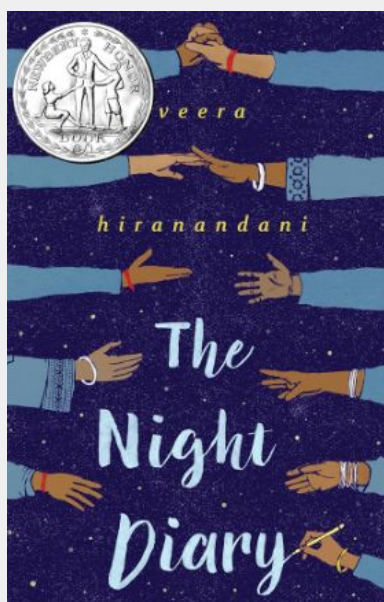
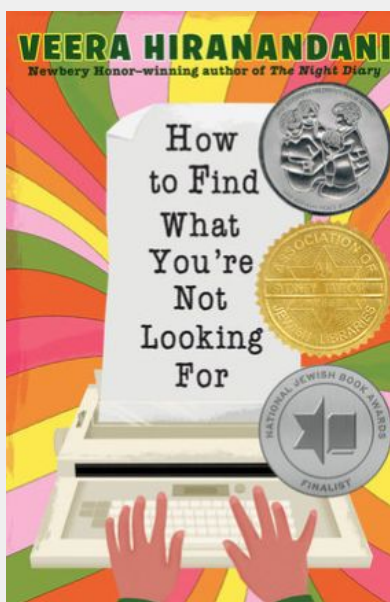
“I relate to all these characters in different ways with different characters. They are all combinations of parts of me, other people I know, and people I've read about. Ariel (from *How to Find What You're Not Looking For*), interestingly, is probably the least like me compared to all of my characters, and she reminds me sometimes of stories I've heard about my mother, reminds me of my younger sister, and I was combining some of their personalities with some of my own.

“So, she is more of a mix of things, while I feel like Nisha (from *The Night Diary*) is a lot more of a different version of me, and I feel like my first book (*The Whole Story of a Half Girl*) is very autobiographical, so that character is very much like me.

“It's fun because in my *Phoebe G. Green* chapter book series, Phoebe is nothing like me. She is sort of like how I wish I could be.”

AC: What do you think writers have to do in order to be successful and captivate the audience aside from excellent writing techniques? What makes a good story?

“I certainly think a good story is created through some kind of emotion and truth. The more you can understand your own experiences, the more real they become. Then, when you create characters, even if they are doing different things than you are, if you are getting to that truth with what it's like to have a problem with a friend, or what it's like to feel lonely, or go through something really hard, and you understand that in yourself, you can put that in your characters, and then your characters will feel all the more realistic.”



School News

Frost Valley 2024

By Dylan Chen and Eric Lu

From February 7th to February 9th, 2024, the 6th graders of North Middle embarked on the trip of their lives, and went to Frost Valley YMCA in Claryville, NY.

On February 7th, the students had to get to the Parkwood parking lot by 8:15, and the buses left at 8:30. On the bus, they got to watch a movie on the screens that were scattered around it. The bus ride was about 3 hours long. The buses arrived at Frost Valley at around 11:30.

Immediately following that, students were rounded up to the bunks and then went to the dining hall to eat lunch. The lunch was like school lunch. The first lunch was pizza. After each meal, Frost Valley Staff told each student to help clean up their table and send the waste and garbage to the waste station. The waste station was an unpleasant experience, since everybody was practically running to the waste station at the same time. The small waste station therefore overcrowded and thus the staff had to only send one person at a time. Immediately following lunch, each student was sent to their bunks to put away their belongings. Then, everybody had to report to the orchard (not really an orchard at all) for activities.

Here are a few of the activities they did:

- Candle making (good)
- Shelter building (decent?)
- Tour of The Castle (see picture)
- Playing hide-and-seek in The Castle (THIS IS THE BEST)
- Orienteering (fun, but not that good)
- Catapulting (problem solving)
- Bird show (🦉🦉)
- Square dancing (some people don't like dancing)
- Free periods (includes rock climbing, natural room, arts & crafts, and more!!!)

At night there was square dancing. Some people decided to “retire” (basically going to the side to avoid getting into the action). After square dancing was over, the teachers kindly handed out fig bars to everybody, and all of the kids returned to their respective bunks. The kids could do whatever they wanted (taking a shower is a good idea that some kids did) until 10 p.m, then that was lights out. Even after lights out, some kids were playing card games and didn’t go to sleep.

Day 2

On the second day, the students woke up at 7:30 for another day of activities. The second day was very much similar to the first.

One of the highlights was the tour of the Frost Valley Castle [DISCLAIMER: NOT AN ACTUAL CASTLE]. It is a place where people can see the history and stuff of Frost Valley, and also some staff live there. Students got a tour of the second, third, and fourth floors. If they were lucky, they even got to play hide-and-seek in the Castle. The visit to the top room was the most appealing, because there were bugs everywhere and everyone was screaming.

Day 3

On the third and final day, all of the teachers woke up the students at 7AM. Some woke up earlier like 5 a.m. to play games like Uno. Each student was required to bring down their luggage to the lobby of each lodge. In certain lodges, kids were required to load their baggage onto trucks to be transported to the bus area. After breakfast, kids were required to go back to the orchard for a few final activities. Lunch followed and a big group of photographers came to take a picture of all of the students standing in front of a NMS banner. Then came the last slog, the bus ride home. The bus ride home was much like the bus ride to Frost Valley. The parents eagerly picked up their kids, and that was the end of the Frost Valley adventure for them.



School News

NMS Musical: The Wizard of Oz!

By Sophia McLaughlin and Noah Nerayoff

On March 20th & 21st, 2024 the NMS theater company performed the “Wizard of Oz.” The students have been working on this since December 4th of 2023 when auditions were held. The cast list had two casts: the Wednesday and Thursday cast. Almost every lead / supporting role was casted twice. There were rehearsals every day; blocking, singing, and choreographing the musical. The students worked very hard until March 4th, when tech weeks began. During tech weeks, every student shows up to rehearsal until 6:00, Sunday-Thursday. They would run through either the whole show or one act of the show. The rehearsals were long, and as the days of the show got closer, it was more and more stressful. Even when getting home, students were running lines and practicing songs and dances. On Sunday, March 17th the cast and crew had their first dress rehearsal. The students rehearsed from 10:00 - 5:00, performing the show in its entirety in costume, along with microphones.

After months of vigorous rehearsals and work, the days of the show were finally here. The show started at 7:00, but some students had to come as early as 5:00. The students got in costume and applied makeup, varying from light makeup to a full face. Makeup teams were also there to help with more difficult makeup looks, like the scarecrow, tinman, lion, and wicked witch. Students then put on their microphone packs and hid them in their clothing. They taped the microphones to their faces and put on their costumes. On Wednesday night everyone was very anxious, waiting before the show started and they went onstage.

The cast went on stage, and performed the best they could, doing amazing. Perfectly singing, dancing, acting, and making the show of a lifetime. However, the cast would be unable to create such an amazing performance without the help of the stage crew. The stage crew was moving set pieces, handling props, playing sound effects, and there were certain people dedicated to muting and unmuting mics, and moving and controlling the stage lights. An orchestra was also hired, filled with many instruments including violins, pianos, guitars, trombones, and more. So much work went into learning, rehearsing, and perfecting the show, and the result was amazing.

The week after, a cast and crew party was held. Everyone had cake, and celebrated 4 months of hard work. The 8th graders also gave out paper plate awards to sixth and seventh graders, recognizing their importance to the show. Each 8th grader had two people, and each plate said something like: “funniest cast member”, “most likely to be a singer” or “most hardworking cast member”. Overall, this year's musical was a great way for people to connect, explore their passions, and work together to achieve a common goal.

Dancing Classrooms

By Noah Nerayoff

On Wednesday, March 13th the 8th graders at NMS held a culminating event to showcase their work in the dancing classrooms. The 8th graders prepared for about 10 weeks in their gym classes, learning many songs and dances, including the meringue, rumba, waltz, foxtrot, and swing. They practiced every other day in their gym classes, preparing for the culminating event. They also had assignments to research dances, learn about respect, learn about dances of their own heritage, and make art describing dancing classrooms and writing about how the piece relates to them.

Many 8th graders felt awkward to dance with their classmates, but were ultimately excited to participate in this event. The day of their culminating event, the 8th graders got a rehearsal from 2nd to 4th period, going through the routine. Each class had one speaker, who would talk about a dance the class would be performing, and two demos who performed the dances before the rest of the class. Two classes would go at a time, forming two circles in the gym. Out of the dances they learned, the 8th graders performed two. They had from 6:15 to 7:15 to prepare, then performed at 7:15.

They entered in pairs of two, forming the circles in the gym. The “luckys”– or boys– would dance with a “royal,” or girl. When they had completed the first dance, the luckys would move over to the next royal, and perform the same dance once more. Then, they would move over one person and perform their second selected dance, and repeat. They then would exit in pairs of two, having successfully finished their culminating event.

School News

Who Are the Masked Readers?

By Eliana Nejat

The Masked Readers have been revealed!

But before we get into that, what is Read Across America Day? On Read Across America Day, we celebrate the power of literacy to expand our minds and our understanding of the world around us. It celebrates our parents, educators, authors, librarians, and mentors who encourage children to read, and we appreciate the literature that dares them to think big.

This year, NMS led up to Read Across America Day with Masked Readers! Our school had so many great actors to hide their identity. Here's who was who:

The Masked Readers...

Mr. Del Ferraro: Chippy the Squirrel

Mrs. Raffo: Booky the Panda

Dr. Kuhner: Sheila the Koala

Ms. Bliss: Figaro the Cat

Ms. Zwick: Sally the Squid

Dr. Cozine: Abraham the Alpaca

Ms. Szuster: Me llamo Pepa Cucumber

Mrs. Gunning: Wattle T. Snood the Turkey

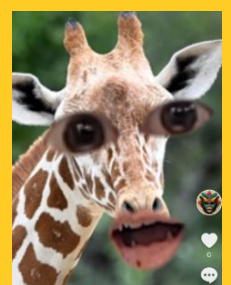
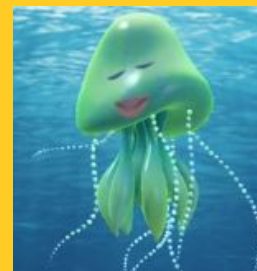
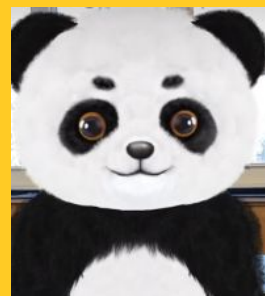
Dr. Bossert: Young Phipps the Giraffe

Mrs. Rice: Sealy the Seal

Ms. Disney: Dazzle the Duck

Mr. Pedersen: Mrs. Claus

Can't wait for next year!



“By Leaps and Bounds” Community Forum

By Jett Gao

On Thursday, February 29, 2024, the Great Neck Public Schools held a community forum in the North High School gym. It began at 7pm. The name of the event was “By Leaps and Bounds: Great Neck's Leadership in Educating against Antisemitism and All Forms of Hate.” The community forum was about Holocaust education and anti-hate initiatives. On site, there was a gallery and many different types of ways to show students’ hard work and social research results around the theme, including the responsive classroom, where many students answered questions about their perception of history and students shared their ideas and views.

When visitors entered the event, they could walk around the abundant exhibit tables. There were 24 different exhibit tables, each representing a different department, organization, or theme. Each table displayed how the organizations and schools promote acceptance and fight hate. Some were made by high school students and showed their works. The types of displays had no limit. Students made videos, art works, and written paragraphs.

Some of the groups at the tables were “High Schools Facing History,” “No Place for Hate,” high school and middle school history and ELA departments, elementary school video montages, elementary library media center, and GNCA, HMTC, NAACP, SHAI and ADL.

The attendees included faculty from all of our elementary, middle and high schools, and government officials. In the event. Dr. Bossert, the Superintendent of Schools in Great Neck, welcomed the attendees and introduced the event that evening. People were encouraged to collect puzzle pieces from different stations, and they were also encouraged to write a reflection of their experience on a paper leaf. Later people hung out on a paper “tree” on one wall of the gym to summarize their experience at this important event.

Winter Concert 2024

By Amelia Chang

On February 14, 2024 (Valentine’s Day), many musicians and singers came together to create an ethereal performance. The many musicians and singers all congregate to form music that enchanted the audience and made NMS proud, but this all couldn’t happen without the support of many others. Organizing these Winter and Spring Concerts year after year are Mr. Trinkwald, the band and orchestra director, Mr. Denise, the band director, and Ms. Murdocco, the chorus director. Without them, these concerts would not have been possible.

During this year’s winter concert, the sixth grade orchestra played *Rustic Dance*, by Mark Williams, *Bees Are Boppin’*, by Thom Sharp, and *Falconer*, by Doug Spata. The sixth grade chorus sang “We Can Dream,” by PinkZebra, “Haida,” arranged by Henry Leck (piano accompaniment by Thomas Gerber), and “Stay Tuned,” arranged by Mark Brymer. The sixth grade concert band played the songs *Thunder Rock*, by Donald Josuweit, *The Sound and the Fury*, by Robert W. Smith, and *The Enchanted Wizard*, by John O’Reilly. In addition, they also played “We Will Rock You”— words and music by Brian May, and arranged by Michael Sweeney.

The seventh and eighth grade orchestra played three songs: *Chinese Folk Fantasy*, by James Curnow, *Intensity*, by Sean O’Laughlin, and *Classic Sinfonia*, by Elliot Del Borgo. The chorus sang the songs: “Fly Away Home,” by PinkZebra, “Tres Canciones de los Elementos,” by Victor C. Johnson, and “The Phantom of the Opera (Title Song),” by Andrew Lloyd Weber. Lastly, the seventh and eighth grade band played the songs *Power*, arranged by Larry Clark, *Mission Impossible*, arranged by Paul Lavender, and *Antagonist*, by Larry Clark.

The whole of NMS played wonderfully, and though the process was quite frantic and busy, everyone managed to play very well, and the audience seemed pleased and proud. With all the concert band, orchestra, and chorus members dressed in white, black, pink, and red, the classical concert was a lovely touch to the already special day.

NMS Participates in NYS Math League Competition

By Charlie Yu

Many students from NMS recently participated in the New York State Math League Competition on February 27 in the Library after school. Students from all grades attended and solved many challenging problems. The competition consists of 35 multiple choice questions, with each specific grade level receiving a different test varying in difficulty. Students had 30 minutes to complete the questions with all different types of topics in the competition. As someone who took the competition, I think that the first few questions were simple and straightforward and were able to be answered quickly. As the competition progressed however, the questions started to get harder and took more time and effort to answer. When asked, many students revealed that they had to start guessing towards the end.

Brandon Li, the 8th grade champion, states, "I think that the most important part of the competition is pacing yourself and making sure you have time to answer most of the questions." Clearly, one of the main tactics students use is to make sure they answer most if not all questions to guarantee that they have a chance of getting questions right. Dr. Boyt adds, "The hardest part about the Math League competition is that we have to build three teams, not just one. The competition is broken up by grade, so there is a sixth grade competition, a seventh grade competition, and an 8th grade competition. Ms. Sposito and her 6th grade Olympiad team, combined with our math team, gave us more than enough competitors in each grade, and it paid off!"

In 6th grade, the champion was Victor Yang with a perfect score of 35. In 7th grade, the champion was Aaron Xu with a perfect score of 35. In 8th grade, the champion was Brandon Li with a score of 34. The 6th grade team finished 1st in Long Island and 4th in New York State; the 7th grade team finished 2nd in Long Island and 2nd in New York State; and the 8th grade team finished 2nd in Long Island and 8th in New York State.

Some additional exciting news from the Math Team was the NMS team won 2nd Place at the NYS Mathcounts competition! The team consisted of 6th grader Victor Yang, 7th graders Aaron Xu, Brian Liu, and Lucas Ye, and myself (8th grader Charlie Yu). This is the highest placement that any Great Neck team, North or South, has placed in this competition! On top of this, Dr. Byot will be coaching the New York Team for the National Mathcounts Competition! Congratulations to him and the team! You can also look at their achievement on the front page of the GNPS website!

As the year winds down, we can say that the 2023-2024 Math Team is one of if not the strongest and most decorated team in district history, placing well in all competitions including the NYS Math League! Ultimately, at North Middle, we can proudly say that NMS is doing better than SMS!

Advice from Miss Know-It-All

Dear Miss Know It All,

I've been stressed lately because of studying and homework. I find myself with a lot of work to do at the end of the week because I'm not managing my assignments well. Also, I've been trying different studying methods but I usually end up trying to cram notes into my head. Can you help?

— Lahn Keun

Dear Lahn,

Being worried about schoolwork and revision is very common amongst people our age. I believe that prioritizing assignments, studying, projects, etc will help a lot. Seeking out better studying habits will also improve your performance in school.

From personal experience, if you have a project or homework due later in the week, I do not recommend doing it all the first day it's assigned, especially if there are sooner deadlines you have to reach. But then again, don't wait until the last minute to complete work. In essence, it's this balance between work of different urgency that tends to be a struggle for many to grasp.

Also, you can investigate new and more efficient ways to study. Instead of staring at your notes and trying to imprint them into your brain, maybe use different, organized techniques. Each time your class starts a new unit, make a document and write down each new concept. Then, when studying, jot down the general ideas of each concept with specifics when needed. After, review your old notes and see which parts you missed or still aren't sure about. I find this especially useful in classes like science. Also, jotting down your mistakes (from tests or homeworks) and identifying your weakest areas of a subject can help you see what needs the most review. A third technique is to teach someone else the topic you are working on. By putting information in your own words, your brain is more likely to retain this knowledge because it is more familiar.

If this doesn't help, maybe try adjusting some of the distractions that could be preventing you from focusing on your schoolwork. Your studying environment is very crucial to your ability to focus. Your family, friends, and phone can distract you so make sure that you find a quiet place where you can concentrate. I hope this helps!

— Miss Know It All



Dear Miss Know It All,

Get ready, there's a lot to unpack. There is this girl that I've known since elementary school and we were pretty close. But ever since the start of middle school, she has just been snotty and acts like she's the center of everything and I want to stop her from hurting anyone. Personally, I've been trying to distance myself from her but she keeps on trying to pull me into her little social bubble. I don't want to upset her but I'm not sure what I should do. Should I intervene? Do you have any ideas?

— Colyn Delts

Dear Colyn,

The first thing you should do is talk to this girl and find out why she's acting like she is. Most likely, she is being mean because she's hurt or something went wrong in her life. Sit down with her and have a little chat to see if there is anything you can do to help her. But of course, don't go into it with a confrontational mindset because that will probably elicit a negative reaction from her. Try and talk to her as a friend, using gentle words and a sympathetic attitude. Best case scenario is that you resolve the conflict by yourself. If that doesn't work, consult a trusted adult. By telling someone else about the situation, you'll feel a lot less worried about it and most likely the adult will be able to handle it. However, make sure that during the whole process you remain polite and respectful. I hope this helped you!

— Miss Know It All

Entertainment Pages

Reviews, Fashion, Trends & MORE

Movie Review: *Wish*

By Lila P Halpert

A common trend that I've noticed in recent years is that the best movies often receive terrible reviews. One of the most recent examples of this is *Wish*, the Disney film marketed as a celebration of the company's centennial anniversary. Its animation style is unlike any from previous Disney movies, almost as a blend of both the studio's signature two-dimensional and three-dimensional techniques. *Wish* also includes playful nods to other characters and stories in the Disney canon, such as Mary Poppins, the Seven Dwarves, and Pinocchio. The movie also centers around one of the themes to which Disney has continuously returned over the past one hundred years: the power of a single wish.

Wish is the story of a seventeen-year-old named Asha (voiced by Ariana DeBose of *Hamilton* and *West Side Story* fame), a dreamer who lives in the Mediterranean kingdom of Rosas. On each citizen's eighteenth birthday, everyone gives their wish to their sorcerer king, Magnifico (Chris Pine), in the hopes that it will one day be granted. However, Asha soon discovers that Magnifico is not as good-willed as he would lead his citizens to believe, and that he only grants the wishes *he* deems to be safe while imprisoning the rest. Distraught and frustrated in the wake of this news, Asha makes her own wish to the night sky, summoning a (very adorable) star from above. Now, Asha and Star must embark on a perilous adventure to free the wishes from Magnifico's grasp.

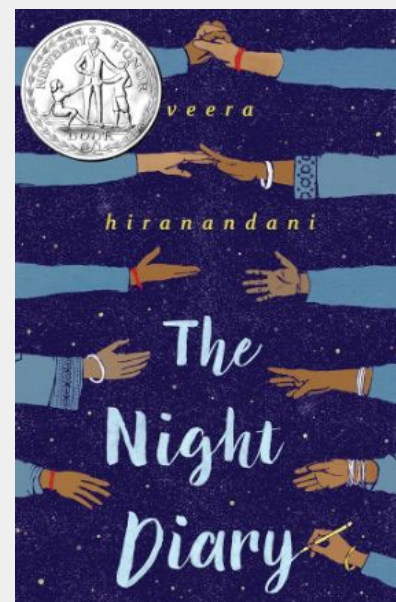
In addition to lovable characters and beautiful settings, *Wish* also features a unique soundtrack written by Grammy-nominated songwriter Julia Michaels. Highlights include Asha's dramatic ballad "This Wish" along with its moving reprise, the intense "Knowing What I Know Now," and King Magnifico's catchy "This is the Thanks I Get?!", just to name a few. It continues Disney's century-long legacy of creating memorable and exciting tunes.

In short, *Wish* is a beautiful celebration of Disney's one hundredth anniversary. It has an intriguing story, exciting characters, and wonderful music, and pays tribute to the studio's storytelling and animation history. When you watch this film, you'll discover all the magic that truly occurs when you wish upon a star.

The Night Diary Book Review

By Melody Xiao

Prior to the annual author visit, the seventh graders were assigned to read *The Night Diary* by Veera Hiranandani. The main character, Nisha, is a twelve year old girl, living in the small town called Mirpur Khas in India. Nisha was born into a wealthy Hindu family. Compared to her rowdy twin Amil, Nisha has difficulty expressing her feelings verbally, and recognizing her true identity. When the Partition of India takes action, Nisha and her family have to leave her beloved Muslim cook and friend behind and travel to New India. During her experience, Nisha writes a series of diary entries to her late Muslim mother (that she never met), who passed away during childbirth. In the course of her journey to New India, Nisha encounters many experiences that causes her to realize things that she never thought of before. This book is a must read, and teaches readers about identity and hope.



Entertainment Pages

Reviews, Fashion, Trends & MORE (cont'd)

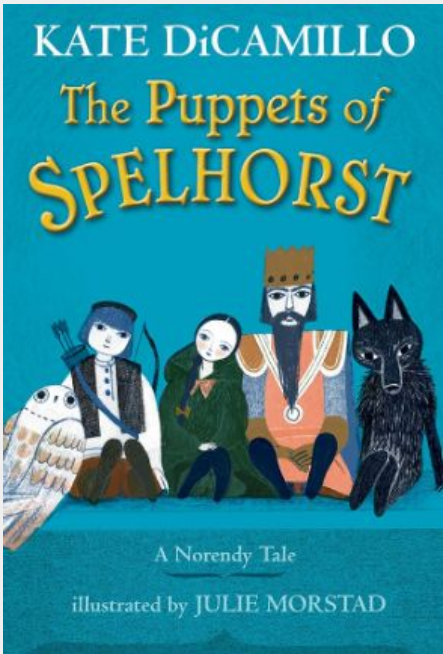
Book Review: *The Puppets of Spelhorst*

by Lila P Halpert

There are some books that simply have a certain magic to them — an ineffable feeling that can only be found once in a blue moon. *The Puppets of Spelhorst*, the latest novel by celebrated author Kate DiCamillo, captures that sensation. It invokes the nostalgic feel of a bedtime story, following five puppets in their journey from a toy shop window to the home of two sisters and beyond. *Puppets* is a whimsical and exciting tale, creating real characters and an engaging plot in just a brisk 160 pages.

The eponymous puppets — a girl who dreams of wonder, a boy who longs for adventure, a king who yearns for a kingdom, a wolf who loves her teeth, and an owl who knows all — learn they are all in a story when they are bought by a mysterious old man named Spelhorst at the start of the book. But Spelhorst dies of a broken heart the following day, causing the puppets to be thrust into new, unfamiliar worlds: a traveling salesman’s wagon, a mantle for display, the woods. The puppets are separated and undergo hardships, yet find their way back to each other; after all, they are all in a story together. They just have to find what, exactly, it is.

Puppets, the first book in the upcoming Norendy Tales trilogy, is a refreshing and interesting read that will not fail to entertain. It features all the trappings of a fantastic story: intriguing characters, a fascinating plot, and a thought-provoking ending. *The Puppets of Spelhorst* is just as unique and compelling as its singular title would suggest, and should not be missed.



COMIC STRIP by Haley Szeto



High Rise Station Ride - On March 21st

By Catherine Wang

Beside the trellis walkways -
With their adorned grapevines,
And clinging buds that shall bloom this season,
Engraved are symbols from those who too roamed this path;
There lies the immediate signs of a depression -
One cut deep enough to scar stars.

The longer you traverse,
You feel sore in your freshly opened wounds,
As you see into the cracks;
Whereas others observe the past in the night sky,
You are overwhelmed by the weight of it now,
In the present, with the presence of hellbound blooms.

“What did you find? You can tell me, I’ll keep your secret.”

Family, friend, foe,
They all ask,
Resolute in their ability to draw out an answer from you.
But you cannot tell,
For a ward stands, immaculately unaffected by the world’s natural agents.

Just earlier, a decade, no,
A year, a month, a w —
Not a week, but another world,
Engulfing you with sweets and chocolates,
Just happy to continue on with this pattern,
When you are the one who puts a stopper to it,
And drop away your book of memories,
Leaving it - to be lit and warmed by the fireflies.

March Madness 2024

By Derek Gao

This year's March Madness will always be one to remember.

Let's get things started in the first round. As our first upset, Jack Golkhe and 14th seeded Oakland defeated 3rd seeded Kentucky. As I am just naming the big ones, Auburn also went down to Yale, and Wisconsin lost to JMU. To continue the upsets, Clemson went on a tear and beat Baylor in the second round.

Now, in the sweet 16, this is when things got interesting. Not only did Arizona and UNC, the 2nd and 1st seed, respectively, lose to Clemson and Alabama, we also saw Houston fall to a Jared McCain-led Duke. Additionally, Creighton lost to Tennessee, Gonzaga fell to Purdue, NC State continued a miracle run by defeating Marquette, and UConn continued to destroy the opposition.

In the Elite 8, UConn went on a 30-0 run against Illinois to secure their ticket to Phoenix, but NC State did too by defeating Duke. Alabama also beat Clemson in a thriller and Purdue and Tennessee had a heart fought battle with Purdue slightly taking the victory. In Arizona, NC State got defeated by Purdue, and UConn continued their dominance and beat Alabama.

Finally, in the National Championship game, UConn tried to go back to back. Purdue was trying to win their first championship. The entire match, they continued to fight, going back and forth. UConn however, led by Donovan Clingan and Tristen Newton, came out on top defeating Purdue 75-60. UConn, with this victory, is the first team to go back to back since Florida in 2007. As we only get to experience this once a year, the madness, excitement, and thrill always get the sports world going.

Players of the 2024 NBA Season

By Richard Yi

This NBA season has been extremely fun to watch.

Of course we first have to talk about the new NBA rookie, Victor Wembyama. Standing at an impressive 7 foot 4 inches and looking like a slender man, this man is very peculiar. He has big man skills that rival Hakeem and point guard skills that rival Steph Curry (maybe not quite that, but you get the point). He averages 20 points, 10 rebounds, 3 assists, and 3.4 blocks per game! Keep in mind he is still a rookie! It almost looks like he is playing on a mini hoop, throwing the ball off the glass to himself and throwing it down regularly every game. It looked like a man was playing with kids. However, his Spurs still have the worst record in the West, with an unimpressive 7-29 record. The Spurs need a stellar point guard that can help Wemby out since he is bringing the ball up most of the time! As long as Wemby does not injure himself like past big men have, he might end his career being the best center of all time.

Enough about this rookie talk, let's talk about the veterans. LeBron is an incredible 39 years old and is still going strong, averaging 25 points, 7 rebounds, and 8 assists in his 20th year in the NBA. Curry is also averaging 28 points, 5 rebounds and 5 assists per game. Not too shabby either, considering he is 36 years old. Tatum is averaging 27 points, 8 rebounds, and 5 assists. He is doing really well but not good enough to win MVP. Luka is averaging an incredible 34 points, 9 rebounds and 10 assists per game. He might win MVP also. But Nikola Jokic has 26 points, 12 rebounds, and 9 assists. Many people think he is going to win MVP, but I think that Luka is going to win MVP, simply because of his scoring. Anyway, this season has been very exciting, and I hope you enjoyed the article.