

Headlight



Written by the students of Marblehead High School for our school and community

The 2015-2016 Editor Issue

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Snow Day: Italian Exchange Student Style

Kyra Veprek, Junior
Reporter

One of the most exciting parts of the 2015-2016 school year of Marblehead High School has been the expansion of the foreign exchange student program. This year, Marblehead families collectively host upwards of 20 students from every corner of the world, including Brazil, Indonesia, and Germany. Becoming friends with these world travelers is exciting to say the least; their stories of home and eagerness to learn about America makes one feel part of an entirely separate world. The greatest part of spending time with the Exchangers is watching them assimilate to American culture. Today, I sat down with Marco Radaelli of Milan, Italy and Giulio Angius of Palermo, Italy to discuss their very first snow day ever.

Kyra: Prior to coming to America, did you guys even know a snow day existed?

Marco: Of course, we have snow days too.

Giulio: Not really.

Marco: Well, he lives in Sicily, of course there's no snow there.

Kyra: Well, how did you celebrate your first American snow day?

Marco: It was actually really nice to have the day off from academics. We don't have any sort of midterms in Italy so the stress of midterms week was something I was unaccustomed to. I came to Marblehead High School because of the great academics and spend most of my time studying, so having the snow day was a nice way to just relax and recover from the week.

Giulio: I think snow days are my favorite part of American schools so far. My time in America has been all about new experiences and spending the day with my friends watching movies was great. I love celebrating every new experience I have in America and my first snow day was another great one for the books.

Kyra: Was there anything negative about your snow day that you would've changed? (Marco laughs at the ridiculousness of my question.)

Marco: Not really. I mean, it's a snow day. I think the worst part is probably shoveling snow. In Milan it doesn't really snow enough to need to shovel. Walking in the snow isn't really a problem for me or my friends, we just sort of put up with it. I go skiing in the Alps though and have shoveled snow there a couple times. It's just part of the experience.

Giulio: My only problem with snow days is that they're too short, I would prefer they last a week, at least. I'm a senior so I don't have to make up any of the lost time. I leave for Senior Project in the spring, so I'm really enjoying my snow days.

Kyra: And just to be cliché, how has your American experience been so far?

Marco: I'm honestly enjoying this entire experience more than I anticipated. I came to America expecting to focus on school and learn about American culture. It's become a lot more than that to me though. I have made some of the greatest friends and I really need to thank them for making my American experience the best I could imagine.

Giulio: It has been great! I am incredibly happy I made the decision to stay for a full year. In the beginning, I made a few mistakes and let this experience intimidate me. But now everything is great. I never want to leave.

Although neither boy shared my same excitement about their first American snow day (and both think I'm a little ridiculous), speaking to them helped me realize my ignorance as a world citizen. Not only did I not know it snowed in Milan, but I wasn't aware of the variation of climate and culture throughout the country of Italy. Many of my exchange friends made the decision to come to America for the experience — to learn about a new culture through new American friends; however, few of them realized how their presence opens up a small town to a big world.

Republican Debate

Amber Born, Junior
Reporter

By the time you're reading this, the New Hampshire primary has happened. Maybe someone else will have dropped out of the presidential race (Carson, Christie, and/or Fiorina will be the first to go, I think). But I'm writing this on Sunday, February 7, 2016. There was a Republican debate last night on ABC. The debate was crucial for the Republicans because it happened two days before the New Hampshire primary, which is the first primary in the 2016 election season. Debates aren't important for every candidate; Donald Trump didn't even show up at the last one and he's still the Republican frontrunner in New Hampshire. But for others, like John Kasich, a debate can present an important opportunity to remind the viewers who you are. The day before the debate, a Quinnipiac poll put Trump at 31%, Cruz at 22%, Rubio at 19%, Carson at 6%, and everybody else so low that they weren't worth mentioning. Two days later, in the aftermath of the debate, CBS News put Trump at 30%, with Kasich, Rubio, Bush, and Cruz virtually tied for second. It is interesting to note that Carly Fiorina wasn't even invited to this debate and she polled 5% to Ben Carson's 4%. I think Carson lost support because when the candidates were being introduced at the beginning of the debate, his name was called and he was supposed to go onstage, but he just stood in the wings as the other candidates went by. He says now that it was because he didn't hear his cue, but it might have been because he knew it would be the last interesting thing to happen in his campaign.

There are lots of fairly obvious reasons not to like Trump and Cruz, partially because the Republican party itself doesn't like either one of them and partially because Trump says lots of terrible things and everybody who knows Cruz says lots of terrible things about him. But Rubio's problems are not so apparent, so his fellow debaters (mostly Christie) alerted the viewers of Rubio's issues. Christie pointed out that Rubio is a first-term senator, much like Obama (and Cruz, but that wasn't mentioned), that Rubio misses lots of votes in the Senate because he's busy campaigning, and that Rubio uses a "memorized 25 second speech" over and over again. Rubio responded to the allegations of repetitions by repeating himself three times.

Long story short, Christie and Carson were the statistical losers of this debate. Onstage, Christie verbally beat Rubio to a pulp at every opportunity, but didn't manage to impact either of their standings in the polls. I think the real winner of the debate was John Kasich. At the beginning of the debate, the moderators literally forgot to bring him out. Chris Christie had to ask "Can I introduce Kasich?" before moderator David Muir remembered that there were supposed to be seven candidates. And now Kasich is polling in second place. That's the kind of underdog story that Americans love, even though underdogs aren't typically governors worth millions of dollars.

Quotes of the Week:

"A little nonsense now and then is treasured by the wisest men."
- Roald Dahl

"The thing about trains...it doesn't matter where they're going, what matters is deciding to get on."
- The Polar Express

Album of the Year: Kendrick Lamar

Maeve Reilly, Junior
Reporter

Now that the Super Bowl is over, it's time to focus on the next big event of the month: the most important night in music of the year, the 58th Annual Grammy Awards. In December, the complete list of nominees was released and since then, the outcomes of awards have been speculated and debated over and over again. Lots of buzz has surrounded what is arguably the most esteemed Grammy of all, the award for Album of the Year. There are five artists from various genres in the running, Alabama Shakes for *Sound and Color*, Chris Stapleton for *Traveller*, Kendrick Lamar for *To Pimp a Butterfly*, Taylor Swift for *1989*, and The Weeknd for *Beauty Behind the Madness*. Although all five artists should feel very proud of their all-around incredible work, this year, rap artist Kendrick Lamar deserves to take home the title for Album of the Year.

Sound and Color, the soul/jazz album by Alabama Shakes, contains 12 songs loaded with intense emotion, percussion, and groove. More than anything, the standout vocals of female lead singer, Brittany Howard brings the wow-factor to the group's sound. Last year, Chris Stapleton, a fairly new artist, released the 14-track country album *Traveller* that quickly became popular and even held the title of Billboard's #1 album for a period of time. The strengths of the album include Stapleton's impressive and soulful voice as well as the fact that the songs are far more melodic than the majority of mainstream twangy-country music. However, the placement of many moderately slow songs in a row causes the album to drag a bit when listened to as a whole. On the pop side of things, everyone and their mother has heard Taylor Swift's iconic *1989*—and probably more than once. Swift's lyrical gift, as well as her skill for creating addictive melodies, makes *1989* an absolute pop masterpiece. In the R&B world, The Weeknd dominated 2015. *Beauty Behind the Madness* showcases his flawlessly stunning tenor voice as well as his goose-bump-worthy runs and riffs. Not only does the album feature other acclaimed artists such as Ed Sheeran and Lana Del Rey, but also it includes huge hits like "Can't Feel My Face" and "The Hills."

Despite the glow of these four albums, Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp a Butterfly* shines even brighter. The 17-track rap album includes a wide variety of rhythms and beats to compliment Lamar's lyrically driven work, drawing on both jazz and hip-hop influence. The African American artist uses his music to share his personal experiences with black pride and black shame and to take a stand against the racial injustice in America today. His powerful words in tracks such as "Alright" have become anthems of inspiration for the Black Lives Matter movement and for people everywhere struggling with the effects of racism. Even though there are five impressive and rightfully nominated albums in the running for the award, *To Pimp a Butterfly* is fresh, powerful, and relevant and will, hopefully, on February 15th, become 2015's Album of the Year.

Stress as Seen in the Lives of MHS Students

Kathleen Alexandrou, Sophomore
Reporter

According to Merriam-Webster, the definition of stress is "a state resulting from a stress; especially: one of bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to alter an existent equilibrium." High school students define stress a little differently. One student described stress as akin to anaphylaxis (which is a very serious, possibly life-threatening allergic reaction). Another described stress as having an overwhelming amount of obligations. No matter which definition resonates more with you personally, I can tell you from experience that both are accurate descriptions of how stress is present in the lives of students.

Everyone has been stressed out at some point in their lives. Right now, take a minute to remember the last time you were seriously worried about something. Now multiply the intensity of that feeling by fifteen, and imagine feeling like that for four years. That is the norm for a high schooler in this day and age: a feeling of acute stress all the time. It's not a continuous line of high stress all the way through high school; there are high points and low points. In January, May and June for example, our stress levels spike due to exams. The same thing happens when we have a huge test coming up. Or three. Or five. I have friends who, on multiple occasions, have gone home and cried because they were so worried about school. You tell me, does this sound like it should be a regular occurrence in the life of a teenager?

High school students — particularly honors level ones — generally lack free time. Before we even factor in hours for homework and sleep, many students at MHS are student athletes, or they're involved in theatre, or they devote their time to a club of some sort, or they have a job — possibly even all of these things. These extracurriculars, which are just as necessary for getting into a dream college as having good grades, take up many hours of our time, both before and after school. Many students I know don't get home until five in the afternoon, if not later. A lot more are able to go home for a few hours right after school, but have obligations starting later on that go until seven or eight o'clock at night. Even with schedules as crazy as these, if assigned a manageable load of schoolwork — two or three hours, perhaps — attaining that much-needed nine hours of sleep would be possible. Instead, we go home after very long days and sit down to four or more hours of work every night. I don't know anyone who goes to bed before 11:00 PM on a regular basis.

So, you might ask, what does all this mean? Should students give up extracurriculars and focus solely on schoolwork? Should they learn to live off five or six hours of sleep a night? Neither would be a good plan; a student's extracurriculars are the second thing colleges look at, and not sleeping enough isn't healthy. Reducing the amount of homework is the only other solution. It isn't as if less homework would hurt our education — in fact, according to the Washington Post, the subject in which homework helps test scores the most is in math; in other subjects it's superfluous. The Washington Post also stated, "[based off their studies,] there was no relationship whatsoever between time spent on homework and course grade, and no substantive difference in grades between students who complete homework and those who do not." Not only is there a weak correlation between higher test averages and more homework, it has also been proven that spending more time on homework does not affect your grade; therefore, homework is unnecessary. If students were not assigned any nightly homework, with the exception of studying for tests, we would be able to get the appropriate amount of sleep for our age without running out of time to relax, thus reducing our stress levels.

Sign ups for the annual **Jefferson Forum**

Dodge ball Tournament start on Tuesday,

March 1st during all three lunches. The

Tournament will take place on **Thursday,**

March 17th from 3pm-5pm. Teams must have 6

people! The cost is \$7 per player and the

proceeds will go to the Boys and Girls Club of

Greater Salem.

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