

How Do You Measure a Year?

- Alex Kerai

259,200 minutes. 259,200 minutes, how do you measure a school year? In sport games, in test grades, in assemblies, in clubs, in proms, in hours of sleep lost, in cups of coffee consumed?

Can you believe that school is going to be over next week? It doesn't seem like it at all. Even with the extraordinary amount of snow days that accumulated in a mere two months, it still doesn't seem like school will be over next week. However, just to be clear, I am in no way suggesting that school should continue! I am perfectly happy with summer coming next week. Another thing I cannot believe is how empty the halls seem now. The senior presence is largely absent from the halls and classrooms of Marblehead High School and it doesn't feel the same without them.

Now think back to September of 2012. The halls were brimming with new freshmen and the seniors were still here. It seems so far away now, just as June did back then. And when you think back to September, did you think you would be attending the college you replied "yes" to in May? Did you think we would have won an award for Sweeney Todd? Did you think the lacrosse teams would be top in the state? Would you have thought Dr. Maas would have resigned? Would you have imagined the SHS principal would have joined the dark side? And after 180 days and nine months of grueling non-stop school work, we have reached the end of the journey and all those questions have been answered. It's crazy to think all that can be accomplished in a mere 180 days.

First came the football season. It brought the spirit back to MHS and the winning record of the Magicians was indeed something to cheer for! For every home game that the team played, the stands were packed with students, teachers, and townspeople who wanted to see the Magicians dispose of their latest opponent and continue their streak. And they did! Be it with perfectly timed plays that had them leading the other team from the get-go, or with incredible last-minute trick plays that won the game with mere seconds to go. The whole school rallied behind the Magicians later that month with the Pep Rally and then the Thanksgiving game. But before that came the most intense flag football game of the year with the Marblehead senior girls facing off against Swampscott's senior girls in the annual Powderpuff game. The Marblehead senior girls won this year and the excitement on the football field is impossible to convey through words. In my 180 days, I saw, and managed to do, everything. I was at every home football game playing with the band and cheering/screaming along with everyone else. I couldn't believe my eyes when the Magicians pulled off their incredible trick play against Danvers. I then played at the Pep Rally with the band and as part of the percussion section we did our own annual pep rally performance (this year arranged mainly by DJ McLean). It was probably one of the highlights of my year being able to play this incredible arrangement and watch the audience get pumped up for the game the next day. After fall football came the winter musical, Sweeney Todd. Hours of rehearsal ensued to create one of the best musicals I have ever seen. Having done the lighting for the show and being able to see the progression of the show from it's low-tech Friday afternoon rehearsal to the final extravaganza was great because I was able to see all the time and effort that students and teachers put in to make the show the best it can be. When the performances came,

the reaction from the audience told the cast and crews that it was all worth it. After Sweeney ended there was about a month long break for me before I joined the writing staff for MHS's next show, the Drama Festival production of *Candide*. We wrote the show ourselves and performed it as part of the Massachusetts Drama Festival competition. We hosted the first round of the festival at the Veterans School theatre and moved on to the semifinal round the next week. It was, as it always is, an extraordinary experience during which we all got to see the various shows from other schools performed by students who loved theatre as much as we did. Immediately following the final curtain call came the warm weather and the start of spring sailing. The season was very good and we ended up placing third in the state championships a few weeks ago. We all had the opportunity of sailing with almost everyone on the team and getting used to each person's various styles and tactics. By the end of the season we had become a cohesive group of sailors who knew how we all sailed, and could sail with any person on the team, no problem. I also continued to do write-up's for the Marblehead Reporter on the sailing team's continued success. There was also the final concert of the year during which the band, orchestra, chorus and acappella groups performed. It was not only the final concert of the year, but also the final concert of the MHS's Band Director Ken Warren's 30 year career. It was one of many goodbyes that were said in the days leading up to graduation.

I went to graduation last Sunday and witnessed the bittersweet moment when all the seniors turned their tassels to the left and graduated from high school. After four years, 570 days, 1,026,800 minutes these 207 students graduated. In a moment of looking back on all of the good times that the class had had together, senior essayist Max Levine asked all of his fellow classmates not to forget each other. "Do not forget the people sitting beside you, to your left and your right; take a good look and remember. They are your friends, they are your peers. They are the ones who got you through Marblehead High School without having a mental breakdown in the middle of class." His words reminded everyone of their common goal for the past four years. The Class of 2013 tried to do their best in their various endeavours, and however different each of them may have been, they all tried to do the best for themselves and the class. Although they all were graduating and going their separate ways after the last caps had been thrown and the chairs cleared away, Mr. Levine urged his classmates not to forget each other, as he knew he never would. "I hope you choose not to [forget those around you] because I know I will not forget you or where we all began and the things we learned." At an earlier point in the year, when asked what quote he might use to summarize his time and what he hopes his message will be to the MHS community, Mr. Levine recalled the words of former principal Ken Weinstein; words that I feel would not be out of place at the graduation ceremony last Sunday: "Take care of each other." Those words, coupled with Mr. Levine's memories and hopes for his classmates, made the ceremony more of a time for reflection and remembrance and hopes to stay together than moving forward to a new chapter in life.

At graduation last Sunday I was reminded of how little time I have left at MHS. Graduation seems so far away, but in reality it's not. Only 518,400 minutes left. But when I think back on the past 180 days, I realize that I still have much more to accomplish, and luckily an ample amount of time to do it.