

Headlight



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

2015-2016 Issue

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What's the Deal with MHS Class Elections?

Kathleen Alexandrou, Junior
Reporter

This Wednesday, May 25th, was Marblehead High School's class elections, an annual event that, for the majority of the school, provides a nice break from the tedium of education. The class elections are organized and run by Student Government. Each class votes in a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary to serve a yearlong term. The freshman elections take place in September, but for every other class the elections are sometime between the end of May and the beginning of June. Anyone can run for a class officer position, whether or not they are in student government. People run for a multitude of reasons as well; some do it for college applications, some do it on a whim, and some do it because they are bursting with school spirit and passion for their class.

Class elections are something that most high schoolers only think about on one day: the day of their class elections. There are a select few who actually run for a class officer position, and even fewer who run for and *win* a class officer position. For the ten to fifteen that run for a position, the week leading up to election day can be incredibly stressful. I can't speak for everyone who has run before, but I believe that running for a class officer position is one of the most terrifying experiences someone can put herself through, though if you do it right it is unbelievably rewarding. If you're brave enough and feel like it could be something you would enjoy, I absolutely encourage you to run for office— you will learn so much about yourself and your class.

So, what does running for a class officer position entail? For starters, there's the speech. All candidates are required to compose and present a campaign speech explaining why they are the best candidate for their chosen position. As we are explicitly forbidden from putting up posters or advertising on social media, the speech is the most important aspect of our campaigns. I ran for vice president freshman year and lost, then ran again sophomore year and won. The only real difference between the two years is the amount of effort I put into the speech. Freshman year I spent minimal time on my speech, writing it the weekend before and editing it maybe once or twice. Sophomore year I began my speech as soon as I decided I was going to run for office. I edited it myself as much as I could, then passed it off to as many people as were willing to read it, from the senior class president, to the editors of this paper (Headlight), to the cast of a show I was working on. There was a big difference in the quality of my work, and I believe that is why I won. Writing a good speech is difficult – you have to hold the attention of your audience while also throwing information at them that they probably don't want to hear. Speech writing is not a core class (or a class at all) at MHS, so as you can imagine it's difficult for students to figure out how to write one, especially on top of everything else going on in their lives. Somehow, amazingly, every candidate manages to come up with a decently coherent mass of words. That's a slight understatement: I've never heard a bad speech given by a candidate. Unnecessarily long, yes; slightly awkward, also yes; but never bad, and I think that's quite impressive.

Once the speech is complete, there's a period of waiting. This is when I always doubt myself the most, and rethink the fact that in a few days I will be reading my speech to a room full of teenagers and trusting them to listen to said speech and (hopefully) vote for me – an immensely frightening experience. Very few high schoolers are comfortable speaking in front of a crowd, and even fewer are okay with that crowd being full of teenagers who are most likely judging their every move. Personally, I don't get all that stressed out about speaking in front of my class, the part I get really worried about is the voting process. By putting yourself out there and asking your peers to vote for you, you invite respect. However, you also invite ridicule, and you present your fellow students with the opportunity to share their opinion of you with a very black-and-white check of the box. It's nerve-wracking, to say the least. Nonetheless, whether you win or lose, you will be able to say that you have tried.

Class elections are infamously harsh. Anyone literate can run for office, as long as they get appropriate signatures from teachers and parents. Only four students come out victorious, and the rest of the candidates are often forgotten. Having the guts to stand up in front of a couple hundred people and allow them to judge whether or not you are the right fit to run their class is admirable. Even if you never run for office, please remember that those who do are remarkably brave, and listen carefully to their speeches.

Women in Construction: Defying Stereotypes - Part One

Emma Szalewicz, Sophomore
Reporter

Holly Andersen has a job that most people would classify as a typical “man’s job.” I am inspired by her and all that she does. Holly is the Project Manager for the Planning Office at Bennington College in Bennington, Vermont. She is the mother of two girls, Josie (seven) and Celia (four). Her weekend/winter jobs include being an examiner for the American Association of Snowboard Instructors and for the Professional Ski Instructors of America Adaptive Education Staff. In the following interview, she described her job.

"I have many jobs. I am a mother of two young children. I have a four year old and a seven year old. I work for the American Association of Snowboard Instructors and I am an examiner, so I give exams to snowboard instructors in The Eastern Division between Maine and Florida. I am on the Professional Ski Instructors of America Adaptive Education Staff, so I give certifications and educational clinics to instructors who teach adaptive skiing and snowboarding. I help people learn how to guide blind people or people missing limbs. I volunteer at the Adaptive Sports Foundation. I also teach water skiing to disabled people, and I volunteer in the winter for The Adaptive Sports Foundation and I teach adaptive skiing and snowboarding to Wounded Warriors, generally from the Iraq war, but pretty much to anyone who served and has been disabled as a result. Then I am a staff trainer at Mount Snow in Dover, Vermont, where I help train and provide educational assistance for snowboard instructors. And then I work at Bennington College. I am the Project Manager for the Planning Office and I run the Capital Construction on campus, which includes underground steam lines, water mains, mechanical systems, renovations to existing buildings and roofs, and construction of new buildings. I was the Project Manager for the Center of the Advancement of Public Action (CAPA) on campus for the college and had a lot of fun with that.

I started school thinking I wanted to be an environmental engineer. Then I learned that engineers just sit at a desk all day, which was not for me. I spent a summer working with my uncle as an electrician's apprentice and I was hooked on construction. Now I have a degree in construction management and wood products engineering."

Junior Prom

Jack Krivit, Junior
Reporter

This year's Junior Prom was not my first. I had been fortunate to be asked by some different friends over the past two years, and although I had fun, being around kids who weren't in my grade made me feel a bit out of place. Last Friday was the Junior class prom. *My* Junior class prom. And since I had missed the Sophomore Semi-Formal Dance the year before, I was excited to finally be able to go to a dance with my own grade. I knew that it would be awkward, but also exciting and fun. And to my satisfaction, it was a perfect combination of all three.

Everyone looked amazing at the Red Carpet; people at my school who I had seen wearing sweats and t-shirts earlier that day were decked out in their best clothing. And with the six o'clock sun shining down on us, every sequin and speck of glitter was aglow.

I'm not going to recount the entire night, because as interesting as it might have been for me, someone else in my grade may have experienced it completely differently. But there is one thing I'm sure every junior who was there can agree on: it was a night we will always remember.

There were people from every different friend group dancing together and singing along to the same songs. And since the dance floor was so cramped, you were bound to dance next to or right in front of someone you wouldn't have expected.

At my Junior Prom, I realized how large my grade actually is. Maybe it's because I wasn't at Sophomore Semi, but this single night made me realize that even though we've already been together for almost three years, there are still so many kids who I don't know, and if I'm feeling this way, then there are other kids who are, too.

Every school has cliques and archetypal friend groups, and of course Marblehead High School is no exception, but Friday night on the dance floor, we forgot about what made us different. We stopped caring about popularity and danced because we wanted to. We were focused on how much fun it was to be together.

After-Prom

Jacob Keller, Junior
Reporter

As a high school junior, this past Friday was time for me to step up to the plate and go to my first prom. But everyone knows that the fun doesn't end there, there's always something going on after prom. "After-prom" is notorious for bad decision-making; something about the hype and energy from the prom builds up and carries over to late night parties and powwows. This definitely applied to me, though my experience was a little different than some of my peers.

Of course I wasn't going to do anything in a suit I didn't own. After waiting for my brother's bus to arrive, we headed home to jump into sweatpants and old shirts. When we arrived to the after-prom host's home, I noticed everyone seemed to don the same sweatpants combo. It was interesting to see the transformation from hours of hairstyling and make-up and pricey dresses to casual and comfy wear. We settled in and did what everyone should be doing when awake at midnight after prom: eating pizza. Lots of pizza. After satisfying our hunger, we played a card game, then took a walk to the nearby dock. The atmosphere was surreal. Although it was nighttime, the sky wasn't black and birds chirped constantly. My amazement with the ambience was probably aided by sleep deprivation. The place was calm and the water shimmered beautifully.

After spending some time there relaxing, most of the group returned back to the host's house. Hoping that we wouldn't wake up the neighbors, I and a few others decided to walk around the neighborhood. Apparently one of us had watched a few too many horror movies and became antsy walking around in the dark, so she had to turn back. Surprisingly, it was not this person who thought one of our group members was kidnapped when we lost track of her. After we returned to the home we found the “kidnapee” and the rest of the group sound asleep. I'm not sure whose decision it was to stay awake from that point, but we did not join the sleepers. We headed over to the kitchen to snack and chat. By doing so we managed to wake up 90% of the people sleeping and ultimately make them join us.

We decided that we'd go back out and take a walk at 3:30 in the morning. It took some time to get each groggy high schooler ready, but we finally got out around 4:00. One of us wanted to watch the sunrise, so we were off to Devereux! It took quite some time to get there, and we ended up taking stops in the middle of the road. Why? I guess our mentality was, “well...why not?” By the time we arrived to Devereux the sun had started to turn the sky orange. Slowly and steadily the atmosphere brightened until the sun poked out. Hundreds of pictures later, we were finally ready to call it quits. Somehow we were able to make it back to the house and eventually wake up the rest of the sleepers. But the night, or should I say morning, wasn't over yet; we wanted to get breakfast. So we made our way to the Driftwood and, heads half on the table, ate our meals. The waitress was confused - there were nine kids in pajamas at her restaurant at 6:30 in the morning - but she didn't question anything. I walked home, crashed on the couch, and didn't wake up until 2:00 p.m.; sleep scheduled officially ruined. What I can't believe is that some people had to go to work while I was asleep. Ouch!

Women in Construction, continued:

"My typical day is like this. Wake up at 5:30. Pack lunches, pick up, get cleaned up and ready for work, wake kids up, feed them, dress them, brush hair, teeth, get Josie dressed and ready with snack, homework, and teacher folder, get her on the bus, pack Celia in the car with lunch and change of clothes and drop off at BECC (pre-school) and wash her hands. Leave there and go to a septic system install, roof repair, meet an engineer at a streamline, talk to an architect about egress, deal with unhappy occupants of buildings, meet a code official, meet with boss, go in a basement, up on a roof, climb in a truck with a contractor and go look at something broken, have a sustainability meeting, meet with faculty, and then sit at my computer for five minutes. Then go pick up Celia while she is screaming that she does not want to leave, pick Josie up at tennis or at sitter's. Go home, get mail, unpack lunches, launder dirty clothes, feed cats, get dinner ready, feed kids, Rob comes home, feed him, clean up mess, read with Josie, sometimes go to a board meeting or a conference call. About 7:30 watch a show with the kids and then take them upstairs and get them in bed, read books, then go downstairs and pay bills. You know, relax."

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