

Headlight



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

www.mhsheadlight.weebly.com

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The Flawed Test

Alex Kerai
Webmaster, Junior

“The average (arithmetic mean) of 4 different integers is 75. If the largest integer is 90, what is the least possible value of the smallest integer?” Imagine answering a question like this at 9:00 on a Saturday morning under a time limit with about 25 more questions to answer after it. Would you be able to? After a long week of school, staying up late to finish homework, and then stressing out over the SAT, students should not have to wake up early on a Saturday to take a test that could decide their future. Who thought this up anyway? Who thought it was a good idea to test high school juniors on their academic prowess after twelve years of schooling by asking them to get up early and take a 3.5 hour test which ends up being 4.5 hours with all the breaks and directions being read? Doesn't anyone know that teenagers need to sleep? Future plans hang in the balance of this 7:45 a.m. test! Is this really what it all boils down to? Verbal, writing, and math; three scores which hold the keys to the kingdom for

me; three scores which can make me or break me. That's what happens when you become a junior in high school. You become your score. But is that how it should be?

Two months ago, in early March, the College Board made news because it finally acknowledged that standardized tests have become, according to College Board President and CEO David Coleman, “far too disconnected from the work of our high schools.” Then came the new revised model for the SAT which abolishes the penalty for wrong answers, focuses more on words that students will encounter in life (unlike ‘anathema’ for instance), and “math that matters most.” Coleman also acknowledged that standardized tests are “too stressful for students, too filled with mystery and “tricks” to raise scores and aren't necessarily creating more college-ready students.” It's a step in the right direction with the College Board at least recognizing that the SAT is flawed, but with the new test slated to debut in Spring 2016, is it too late for these changes to make a difference in the college admissions process?

As a student who just took the SAT and spent many months preparing for it, I agree with Coleman and the

College Board's new plan for the SAT, and I hope that it will change the course of standardized testing for good, but I believe it is too late. Thousands of students have already taken the SAT as it is and have had to suffer through four hours of testing that could determine their future. To these students, their entire life hinges on the 103 questions and one essay that make up their score. These standardized tests put too much stress on students who believe that without test scores they will not get into a good college and get a good job. The College Board is still ignoring the problem that standardized tests do not accurately portray a student's academic potential. Having students come to a testing center at 7:45 in the morning is a terrible idea for high school students who need their sleep. Instead of changing the format of the test, the College Board should instead consider shifting the start time to later in the morning (as was proposed for high school start times in the 1990s) and altering the length of the test. I hope to see more changes made to the SAT soon; my only regret is that they were made too late and students today will not be able to benefit from them.

(By the way, the answer to the SAT question above is 33.)

Throwback Thursday

Amber Born
News Coordinator, Freshman

Since Headlight is published on a Thursday and Marblehead High School is currently attempting to be up-to-speed on technology and social media, I thought that I should start Headlight's Throwback Thursday (I apologize if someone else has already started one and I missed it). For those who don't know, Throwback Thursday (or #tbt, I suppose, but I'm hesitant to use a hashtag in print) is used on social media to reference something that happened “a long time ago,” which can pretty much mean anywhere from the Roman Empire to last week. I am going to throwback to somewhere between those two, to the sitcom Arrested Development.

Arrested Development was created by Mitchell Hurwitz and originally ran on Fox from 2003-2006. There are always shows in the position that Arrested Development was in; the single-camera, phenomenally-written sitcom was critically lauded, but received low viewership, which resulted in the show's cancellation after a mere three seasons. Six years later, Arrested Development was revived in a fourth season that aired solely on Netflix and was in a different format than the original. It received mixed reviews. I don't have Netflix, so can't offer any opinions on it. However, I can definitely recommend the first three seasons, which are available on DVD and probably Netflix as well.

While it was unfortunate that Arrested Development was cancelled so early, I think it helped to preserve the show's reputation. The three original seasons contained a total of 53 episodes, and they were all of the same high caliber. Whereas even the greatest long-running sitcoms such as Frasier, M*A*S*H, and Seinfeld had some episodes and even whole seasons which were deemed to be of lower quality than the others, Arrested Development maintained consistently good quality for its entire original run.

So, what exactly is the point of Arrested Development, and why do I love it so much? The opening credits of the show introduce everything nicely: “Now the story of a wealthy family who

lost everything, and the one son who had no choice but to keep them all together. [catchy music] It's Arrested Development.” It's surprisingly serialized for a sitcom (I would recommend watching the episodes more or less in order), so I can't really explain much of the plot without ruining some of the episodes. The characters are extremely flawed and largely unsympathetic, but they're so accidentally funny that it doesn't become annoying.

The real beauty of Arrested Development lies in the writing. The show is very fast-paced, with self-aware jokes, sight gags, and obscure references. The only shows I can think to compare it to in terms of writing and style are 30 Rock and the majority of Community. Arrested Development contains so many jokes on so many different levels that I found it impossible to catch them all on the first viewing. There are jokes that unfold through multiple episodes, bits of foreshadowing to things that won't happen for another season, references to other shows and past careers of actors on the show, and detailed visual throwaway jokes that won't even be noticed unless the viewer makes quick use of the “pause” button.

One of my favorite examples of a multi-layered joke on Arrested Development is the following: in one episode, a character played by Henry Winkler (he portrayed Fonzie on the 1970s classic sitcom Happy Days) is standing on a dock with a small shark on it. When he exits, he jumps over the shark. First of all, “jumping the shark” is an expression used to describe TV shows that pull desperate stunts in the hopes that it will help their ratings. But the genius of the joke lies in the origin of the phrase, which came from an episode of Happy Days wherein Winkler's character jumped over a shark on water skis. Arrested Development does not condescend to its viewers. You're expected to know things that happened on TV twenty-eight years before the show was made, and you're supposed to be paying attention at all times. I just consulted the internet, and apparently Arrested Development has at least two other Happy Days references that I didn't notice despite three viewings. But even if you're not quite focusing that closely on everything, Arrested Development is still a genuinely funny show that's very enjoyable to watch.

Define High School

Linda Fitzpatrick
Reporter, Freshman

Define: High School

High School, noun:
1. a school that typically comprises grades 9 through 12, attended after primary school or middle school.

Yes, we are all aware of what a high school is. We've been there, experienced it, or are experiencing it currently. However, high school is not just a time to learn from grades nine through twelve. It is an insane time period of life and contains massive amounts of confusion. High school is a time to become yourself, to learn far more than a textbook could ever amount to teaching. While a textbook can explain an old civil war, a grammatical sentence, or even a mathematical formu-

la, it cannot supply the correct knowledge to survive the life we will all lead. There is a reason for everything in life, and I think that the reason for attending high school is exactly that, to learn for ourselves about ourselves. It is, of course, an important time to learn about the standard subjects we've grown up studying, yes, but to go beyond that, to search your inner soul and develop the real knowledge you will receive from high school is the rewarding outcome.

We all take away such a different experience. There are those who prefer to slip through along the sidelines, while others would rather be the center of attention. Some find themselves lost in the shuffle, while others steer clear from it. No matter the experience, though, we have all gained something. At the time, perhaps it seems like nothing truly life-impacting

could be occurring, yet these moments create our futures - and that is important.

For those of us still slogging through each passing day, it is vitally important to, as much as possible, pull ourselves away from the stress and the anxiety that all of our lives entail and to focus on the most important of things: ourselves. High school is filled with people telling us who to be, how to be that person, and what to do every waking hour of every day we remain breathing. It is so easy to ignore ourselves as we try to crawl out of the mounds of stress we can get buried under. We let others or schedules take control of our lives. The harsh reality is, that won't get us anywhere. This idea goes beyond just picking courses or colleges. Others will never have the same thoughts as you; they won't ever know what it is you should be doing

as best as you could.

The best way to overcome this stress and anxiety is to ignore them. Tap into your inner thoughts and realize then that you should take the first steps of your life path. Go out and make a million of the same mistakes over and over before you learn from them because that is high school, and the inevitability of being a teenager, might I add. Like great historians do, go deeper, beyond the surface, and find the meaning, the truth behind every aspect of your life. Live the high school years of your life the way you want to live them. Don't just become another word in a eight hundred page textbook. Allow yourself the ability to grow into you these four years, with full knowledge that things will not be as easy as any definition could explain.

A Review

Liam Reilly
Entertainment Editor, Junior

Pharrell Williams, GIRL

It-producer in the music industry Pharrell Williams saw his most recent album released roughly a month ago. Currently the third-highest selling album on the iTunes store, GIRL is Williams' first album since In My Mind in 2006. Pharrell started out as the frontman of the hip-hop/rock group N.E.R.D in the late nineties and early 00's. A decade and an Arby's hat later, Pharrell has transformed his sound from rock infused hip-hop to soulful pop reminiscent of seventies' disco. Besides the ridiculously popular (and catchy) single “Happy,” GIRL is chock-full of

gems. “Marilyn Monroe” starts the album off with an orchestral string-filled bang that is a guaranteed toe-tapper. Cameos from the likes of Miley Cyrus (“Come Get It Bae”), Justin Timberlake (“Brand New”) and Daft Punk (“Gust of Wind”) keep the energy high the rest of the album. Altogether, GIRL provides Pharrell with the platform necessary to emerge from the shadows of producing in the music industry and establish himself as a musician in his own right.

Key Tracks: “Happy,” “Marilyn Monroe,” “Hunter,” “Lost Queen”

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