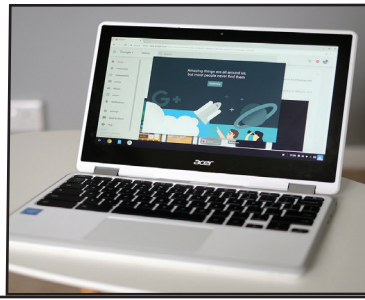




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The Spectrum

◆ *e cineribus et ad astra* ◆

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ONLINE SOURCE

Journalism: Objectivity in Today's Media

By MICHAEL CHENG '20
News Editor

It's almost a cliché: the media, like our politics, is more polarized than ever.

And while allegations of fake news and covert misinformation are what dominate the headlines, similar to politics, quarrels in the media over accuracy seem to be more a proxy for debating the contextualization and interpretation of facts and their relative importance in describing the nation.

Objectivity is the concept journalists have developed to navigate these perilous waters. It attempts to apply a version of the scientific process to evaluating information, holding journalists to a standard of unbiased, fact-based reporting delivered in a dispassionate, fair, and impartial way. It arose in the 1920s, partially out of a backlash to the sensationalist muckraking of "Yellow Journalism" during the Progressive Era, and partially in response to technological advances in communication; since newspapers were able to reach a broader audience, objectivity was seen as a way, in short, to alienate the fewest potential readers.

The term has been contentious ever since. For example, as Matthew Pressman detailed for *Time*, objectivity was criticized in its early years for

"turning journalists into stenographers" who were too afraid to challenge the statements of the powerful. The industry was forced to confront this issue in the 1950s, largely in response to the sensationalist rhetoric of Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist crusade. The resulting doctrine began to allow for a journalist's "professional judgement" to appear in "objective" articles, while still tabooing personal opinions.

While this delicate balance has prevailed in the decades since, it did little to settle the broader debate over a journalist's role. For example, some conservatives have long seen these "professional judgements" as nothing more than a veneer for promoting liberal and elitist beliefs. Meanwhile, others such as screenwriter Aaron Sorkin (a liberal cult hero for creating *The West Wing*) insist that news organizations haven't gone far enough to provide the necessary context and analysis, pointing to CNN as an example of an outlet substituting true objectivity for a "bias towards fairness."

In Sorkin's HBO series *The Newsroom*, a reformed cable news anchor explains that:

"[B]ias towards fairness means that if the entire Congressional Republican Caucus were to walk into the House and propose a resolution stating that the Earth was flat, *The*

[New York] Times would lead with the headline 'DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS CAN'T AGREE ON SHAPE OF EARTH.'"

While Sorkin proposes an extreme hypothetical, something similar happened this August in the wake of a mass shooting in El Paso, Texas that was considered to be a white supremacist act of terror. In a televised speech to the nation, President Trump condemned "racism, bigotry and white supremacy," and afterwards, *The New York Times* led with the headline "TRUMP URGES UNITY VS. RACISM." After a night of backlash from journalists, activists, and even presidential candidates, later editions that morning headlined the same story with "ASSAILING HATE, BUT NOT GUNS."

The first headline is reminiscent of objectivity's original form; it provides an accurate synopsis of statements made by the president that morning. However, critics found it misleading because it did not frame these statements in the "proper context" of Mr. Trump's prior rhetoric on race and immigration. Some even went so far as to portray this headline incident as part of a broader pattern of editorial decisions (e.g. around the Clinton email investigation) from the NYT that—intentionally or not—directly contributed to

Mr. Trump's election.

Inherent in this last claim is an acknowledgement of the power commanded by news organizations not just to react to the events of the past and present, but to shape the events to come. This is because journalists are—by popular demand—not stenographers, but storytellers at heart. The reality is that we ask journalists not just for the facts, but for why they matter and what they mean in the broader narratives of American life.

America is incredibly diverse, and the vast majority of us will only be able to interact with a sliver of that breadth in our personal experiences. For the rest of it, we rely heavily on the media, especially national news outlets such as *The New York Times*, to explain and humanize the rest of the country we do not see. We ask them to define what is newsworthy to an entire nation, and for that, there is no mathematical formula.

Thus, journalism in its natural form has a tremendous amount of power to determine what is newsworthy, what is an aberration, and what is indicative of American life, questions which are inherently subjective. As a result, the media was historically nicknamed "the Fourth Estate," as an institution comparable to (and distinct from) the three...

(continued on p.7)

Intro

Letter From the EICs

By SERENA HAN, KIRTANA KRISHNAKUMAR, ANJALI RAMAN '20
Editors in Chief

Hey Siri,

It's Serena, Kirtana, and Anjali. Can you type this out for us? Is this thing working?

Back in our day, *The Spectrum's* Fall Issue was many students' first introduction to journalism. Empowered by the possibility of discovery, they wrote articles to develop their insight and expand their horizons. It seems that this time, however, each writer already arrived with an innate curiosity to explore the myriad questions and intricacies that affect our community and our world. Seeing the freshman and new writers at our first Thursday meeting filled us with immense hope for the rest of the year.

And then they clogged up our hallways and destroyed our economy.

Indeed, though we initiated the boom, they created the bust. After

first befriending them, we realized that they spoke in confusing teen lingo and proposed articles about some clock app called "Tick Tock"... Personally, we prefer Mark Zucchini's Facebook. Do the children these days no longer enjoy high-angle selfies and cute yellow minions? We're quite confused. Now, their humor is rooted in strange "memes" and synchronized dances. We can only drown out the sounds of their profanities with the sweet melodies of Kidz Bop.

At the same time, equipped with their avocado toast, they've tackled the rapid changes of this community without fear. From the unconventional pedagogy of teachers to the new policies at the RJ Grey, this issue contains both stellar articles and our other favorite thing: coupons.

You must be thinking, "Ok, Boomer."

You're right,

Serena, Kirtana, and Anjali

Reasons to Fence

By COLIN YU '20
Fencing Team Co-Founder

You've all seen the movie sword fights—blades clashing, metal ringing—and you might have thought, "I want to do that." If so, consider fencing. Besides actually picking up a sword and challenging someone, fencing is one of the few sports that allows you to experience the thrill of the duel (without the pain of using real swords).

To understand fencing, you need to understand the most important rule: "Hit the opponent while not getting hit." Simple, right? Of course, it's more complicated than that. In fact, many people refer to fencing as "physical chess" because the mental game is just as important as the physical one. Similar to any sport, fencing requires the strength and stamina to outlast your opponent. However, unlike other sports, you can still easily beat your opponent even if they are stronger and faster—you just need to outsmart them. People of all ages compete, and there are even international events for fencers aged 80 years or over. Clearly, the mental aspect is very important; it can carry you a long way despite any physical limitations.

So let's say you're interested in fencing and want to join AB's new fencing team. What can you expect? The first few practices will be dedicated to learning the basic

movements in fencing. Because fencing is complex, it is important to have a solid foundation so that it becomes easier to learn new skills later. You will also be introduced to electrical fencing, a modern system used to determine who gets the point. After that comes the fencing meets.

I can guarantee you that the meets are where you will have the most fun. A squad on both ends of the fencing area will shout and cheer for their teammates and friends. They'll also be the ones giving you suggestions and advice as you fence. With all the commotion around you, it is hard not to get caught up in the atmosphere and join in with the cheering. After all the fencing is over, usually the team will have snacks and lunch together along with all the other schools that are competing, making it really easy to make new friends.

Hopefully, I've managed to convince you to try fencing. If you are interested, the new AB fencing team starts meetings around Thanksgiving break and runs all the way through February. Practices are flexible and happen throughout the week, so you can join at any time. If you are interested in joining or have more questions on fencing in general, email me at 20yuc@abschools.org, and I'd be happy to help.

The Spectrum

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Combatting Prejudice at AB

By JESSICA ZHANG '22 &
SOPHIE ZHANG '22
Spectrum Staff

Biases, both explicit and implicit, manifest in our speech, thoughts, and actions. Fortunately, our school has initiated a program to address these prejudices. As part of a wide-ranging partnership with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), AB is introducing the Peer Training Program, which seeks to "provide students training and resources to lead activities and discussions with their peers on bias-related issues."

The ADL began as a non-governmental Jewish organization fighting against anti-Semitism and hate, but over time, it has broadened its focus to include all forms of prejudice and bigotry. According to its website, the ADL's World of Difference Institute "recognizes that attitudes and beliefs affect actions, and that each of us can have an impact on others, and ultimately on the world in which we live."

In September, representatives from the program along with Ms. McGrath and Ms. Nugent, the Peer Training advisors, presented the initiative to sophomores and juniors. To participate as peer leaders, students had to fill out an application and sit down for an interview with the advisors; from there, McGrath and Nugent narrowed the pool down to the final twenty-nine students. They specifically looked for people "who represent the school's demographics... [and] the 'hidden voices' of the school" to include new perspectives and create meaningful conversation.

Once selected, participants took part in three full days of diversity and anti-bias training sessions in addition to weekly meetings with the advisors "to review and practice co-facilitating the curriculum activities." After six to eight weeks of preparation, peer leaders will lead "discussions" in freshman World History classes. The ADL will then present "an experiential exploration of the curriculum and strategies that parents and caregivers can use to foster a bias-free home environment"

Our district focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the Peer Leader Program furthers that mission. AB has seen a large overhaul in demographics headlined by—but not limited to—an increase in Asian-American students. Ms. McGrath cited this change as a primary reason for the initiative and also mentioned recent hate crimes. She hopes that the program "will assist students in developing safe and practical prevention and response strategies to prejudice and discrimination."

The question now is: will this program be effective? The administration plans to teach students how to recognize bias and act in the face of prejudice so that they can alter their and others' preconceptions. In this endeavor, the advisors are playing the long game, planning to run with the Peer Leaders and a new group every subsequent year. If they carry out such a sustained effort, it may just prove effective.

Megan Lin, a sophomore peer leader, believes that an interactive student approach will be more appealing since "most students, in-

cluding myself, don't want to listen to another teacher lecture them." Moreover, the applicants seem invested in this program due to their personal experiences and desire to make a difference. Lin explains, "I come from a multiracial family, with both Taiwanese and white parents, so I'm very familiar with the benefits of being immersed in different cultures.... people have a very specific idea of what it means to be 'Asian,' or 'white,' or 'gay'... and it can be really harmful to people who don't fit that expectation, like me."

The ADL program hopes to be more effective than past initiatives—such as advisory mini-lessons—by having peers present the topics in a more welcoming fashion. However, some students believe this new initiative might not succeed. Some are concerned that students will not take the program seriously, while others believe the AB community is already sufficiently inclusive, and that the resources put towards the ADL program would be best used elsewhere. As one student put it, "micro-prejudices, though unfavorable, cannot be extinguished by simply promoting diversity or mindlessly repeating slogans; it would require a complete psychological change throughout the entire student body."

Prejudice is not always an easy concept to erase. However, especially with the changing demographics, people may feel that a diversity training program is in the school's best interest. Students may predict different outcomes, but we'll have to wait and see whether this program will succeed.

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News

Chromebooks at JHS

By ADI RAMAN '23
Spectrum Staff

Students wait eagerly in a single-file line to pick up their Chromebooks. As the bell rings, however, they don't return the laptops. Instead, they place them into their backpacks, and the Chromebook carts sit empty for the rest of the day. Thanks to a new initiative at RJ Grey, junior high students no longer waste precious minutes of class time walking to the Chromebook cart or listening to teachers complain about replugging the laptops.

This year, the junior high has implemented a new 1:1 Chromebook policy that the high school is looking to emulate next fall. Junior high students now carry around their assigned Chromebooks, which they pick up each morning during homeroom and return by the last bell. Teachers had once shared Chromebook carts and struggled to coordinate the laptops' usage. Now, each student has consistent access to a school-owned Chromebook, so teachers can take advantage of online resources and activities on a regular basis. By providing each student with a device, the school can also better teach students digital literacy and online etiquette, thus promoting effective online communication in an increasingly tech-dominated world.

For a teacher's perspective, we asked Mrs. Ahl, 8 Green's English teacher, about her thoughts on the initiative. She sees great benefits in the change—her class is “able to move at a faster pace” because “students do not lose papers as often or spend time finding papers in their binders.” Now that all handouts can be stored online and made consistently accessible to students, teachers also minimize paper copies of assignments, readings, and note-taking sheets, which has both environmental and logistical ben-

efits. In addition, all classwork can be efficiently submitted and reviewed now that Mrs. Ahl's students “are using Google Classroom to access assignments and to turn in work.” Mrs. Ahl generally appreciates the new policy—it increases the accessibility of information, saves time, and conserves a considerable amount of paper.

An eighth grade student at the RJ Grey is more critical about this change: while students can get more classwork and homework done throughout the day, the Chromebooks also pose potential disruptions to class. The student agrees that “having...papers and notes [on] Chromebooks instead of 5 different binders makes everything more organized and harder to misplace.” However, students are also becoming distracted, “tempted to play games and listen to music when they are not supposed to.” While the Chromebooks should increase productivity by providing more time during the school day to finish schoolwork, the possibility for procrastination on Cool Math Games renders the policy somewhat ineffective. Along with helping students become more accustomed to the Internet, it is supposed to help them accomplish more homework at school, but students may not be taking advantage of this time.

The new Chromebook policy is certainly a drastic change that has garnered mixed reactions from both teachers and students at R.J. Grey. While the Chromebooks lend more organization to class structure, students may not necessarily be utilizing this privilege to its full potential because of its inherent possibility for distraction. As the change trickles its way down to the high school, Chromebooks will become all the more prevalent in the AB community. However the question remains if they will yield an appreciable return on investment.

Model United Nations

By KAM NARRA '21
MUN Captain

Model United Nations might not have the most exciting name, but we can assure you that our club is the best one out there. Now, it's at AB! The real United Nations is an international body of 193 countries that maintains peace and security between its member states. The institution's actions play an indirect, but substantial, role in each of our lives—one overlooked by many Americans. Model United Nations replicates the UN processes, giving high schoolers the opportunity to learn about the intricacies of foreign relations through competition and public speaking. In addition to learning about international affairs, MUN participants develop valuable public speaking, essay

writing, and research skills that will come in clutch you get in to college, no matter the major. But that's not all: MUN is lots of fun! You will have the opportunity to attend conferences (if desired) and compete against other schools alongside your teammates. The club is just starting out, so this is a great time to join. As high schoolers, we understand that school is very important, and we won't hold it against you if you have to miss a meeting to grind out some history homework, but we can assure you that the skills you gain from Model UN will outlast many of the things you learn in school. If you want to improve your public speaking, refine your knowledge of global affairs, or just have some fun, MUN is the place for you.

Programming: A Creative Outlet

By PRISHA DAYAL '21
Off Topic Editor

Non-coders often perceive programming languages as a scramble of parentheses, commands, and infinite loops guided by a rigid set of rules, leaving no room for creativity. However, Maria Shkolnik, the new AP Java teacher at ABRHS, disagrees with that perception. She views learning and teaching programming as a transformational experience for herself and her students, by changing their views on problem-solving.

Mrs. Shkolnik believes in “inquiry-based learning” where students learn concepts through hands-on activities rather than lessons. Students “experiment and inquire” through labs and follow-up lessons. Discussions are an integral part of her classroom because not “sharing alternative ways of solving a problem is denying other[s] the opportunity to learn.” Further, by providing an extra credit section for Honors students to synthesize all learned material to solve a problem, she encourages students to think outside of the box.

To her, “a programmer's job is never done.” For students who finish assignments quickly, she always gives suggestions on how to make their code more efficient, or assigns additional work to engage them. Mrs. Shkolnik challenges her students but makes sure that everyone feels accomplished—whether “they have gotten through two lines of code, or

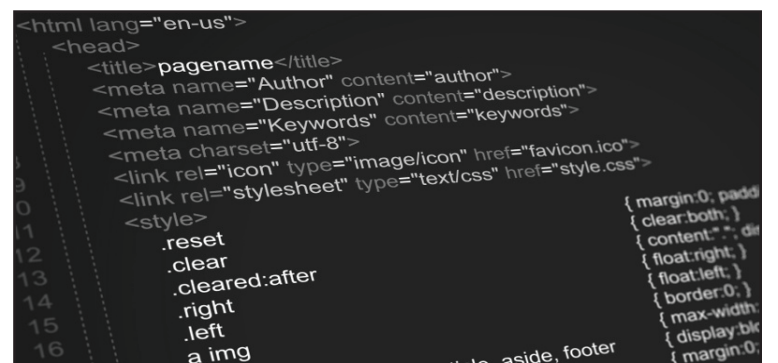
added on a new method that no one thought of, any students that try are successful” to her.

Java may seem difficult, but students at ABRHS receive more resources than Mrs. Shkolnik's past students. At her previous teaching position, students did not have access to “counselors, AP tests, or accommodations for learning disabilities.” Students often had to “earn an income to support their family,” so they “could not complete the homework and were sleep-deprived.” Despite this, Mrs. Shkolnik ensured that everyone had opportunities to succeed by building in extra time for those who needed it and providing “emotional support” for those with academic or personal challenges. Furthermore, she framed her teaching to help students apply the theoretical knowledge to their personal problems—what mattered most was “not the material, but how to approach the material.” She helped students learn to break problems

down into manageable parts and to find solutions on matters inside and outside of class.

Mrs. Shkolnik believes that every student should have the opportunity to learn programming. To address the gender disparity in computer science, she tries to emphasize the intersectionality of coding and other subjects like math and art to appeal to a wider audience. She also relates Java to real life, showing memes about how Minecraft was made entirely with Java.

Learning Java has changed her own perspective as well. She has learned to approach problems with the mindset that there can be more than one solution. “Tak[ing] a step back” has showed her that it's okay to not know “all the answers at once.” Shkolnik teaches her students to thrive in a digital world that requires critical thinking, problem solving, and constant iteration, but she also hopes to impart some of the deeper lessons that she learned.



Computer science is a growing interest at AB.
ONLINE SOURCE

RJ Grey's New Speech Club Cap

By REBECCA ZHANG '22
Spectrum Staff

You stand frozen, unable to move or speak, a million pairs of eyes boring into you. As a silence envelops the room, all you hear is the pounding of your heart. You open your mouth to speak, but only a feeble squeak escapes. Several years ago, this was me. However, as a member of both the RJ Grey Speech Club and later the ABRHS Speech and Debate Team, I have learned to voice my ideas with an air of confidence that once eluded me.

Last year, the former RJ Grey speech advisor—Mr. Harvey—retired, and Mr. Zeese, a seventh-grade Social Studies teacher, filled his shoes. After a year as an advisor, Mr. Zeese decided to enact a series of reforms, including a sixty-student limit to club participation. While the reforms aim to “address a number of observations from last year,” several critics have questioned the enrollment cap's inherent exclusivity.

Mr. Zeese was a member of his high school Speech and Debate team, and he was the debate advisor where he last taught. Working with Mr. Shen, Zeese decided that the cap would promote adequate supervision and “create a high level of engagement for all participants that results in an interactive and fun environment.”

At RJ Grey, current ABRHS Speech and Debate team members mentor their younger peers. Unfortunately, due to schoolwork and other obligations, the number of coaches available each week fluctuates significantly. Thus, Mr. Zeese and Mr. Shen enacted a sixty-student cap to enable “appropriate adult supervision” and more

one-on-one interactions between coaches and students. As Mr. Zeese explains, “Given that we have two adult advisors [for the club], setting the number at sixty [students] means that we were adopting a 30:1 ratio” that is necessary to provide for the safety of students.

Whereas the RJ Grey Speech Club has imposed this strict enrollment limit, the ABRHS Speech and Debate Team remains open to all students. When asked about this difference, high school speech advisor Ms. Hennessey stated, “As an administrator, for the safety of the people on this team, I understand that a decision had to be made... [however] I want every student who wants to give [Speech and Debate] a shot to have a chance to do that.”

Additionally, she finds that students fill many of the responsibilities that come with sustaining a large group, enabling them to develop excellent leadership skills in the process. In fact, many captains find their mentoring as or more fulfilling than their individual competition.

Unfortunately, capping the team at sixty members places at least twenty-five interested students on the waitlist, and possibly more who were otherwise deterred. But while the junior high speech club once prided itself on being a large and open group, it must also balance inclusivity with the needs and expectations of middle schoolers who are distinct from the high school participants.

In addition to safety and capacity concerns, Mr. Zeese sees this cap as a way to “reinforc[e] the commitment that students should have towards the program” by creating a more cohesive, engaging environment and encouraging students to participate more regularly in tournaments. However, high school

speech member Aarti Jeslani claims that “[i]t was the inclusivity of [the RJ Grey Speech Club] that created such a tight knit community [which] later moved to the high school.” Although the cap could create a more intimate environment, Jeslani believes that the heightened expectations may make the team seem “scary to kids just looking for a place to express their emotions or present on a topic they are really passionate about.”

Conversely, current eighth grader Pranav Akshath thinks that “this year [is] better because now you can't skip speech,” meaning those who join the ABRHS Speech and Debate Team as freshmen will enter with more developed skills and higher levels of engagement. Evidently, the new policy benefits current members by providing them with more support, but at the same time, other students may miss out on an impactful experience.

At the high school, the Speech and Debate team will continue to encourage participation for all students, regardless of their past experience. And while RJ Grey speech administrators currently plan to retain the enrollment cap of sixty students, “if there are adjustments that can be made to enhance the program,” Mr. Zeese says he is “always open to considering different options.”

Ultimately, both Mr. Zeese and the high school advisors have the students' interests at heart, and they will always root for their success. Thus, it is less so a question about the ends and more so a question about the means; whether forming a more experienced yet exclusive team or a more inclusive and casual group is the best way forward, only time will tell.

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Power

Powerful Women

By SUPRIA SHROFF '22
Spectrum Staff

Our history books are filled with an overwhelming number of male figures, but in recent years, strong, influential women have redefined gender roles by pioneering new paths for women. From fighting for gender equality to challenging body images, these women have defied social norms and experienced immense hardship to establish their place in society. It's important to learn about these powerful women and how they shaped and continue to shape the world.

1. Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Ruth Bader Ginsburg is an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court. After she graduated from Columbia Law School, she became one of the few female professors of the time. In 1972, she founded the Women's Rights Project to remove societal barriers for women. When Bill Clinton appointed her as the Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Ginsburg became the second of four female Justices in US history. Unafraid of challenging gender stereotypes, she made monumental steps for women in both law and education. Because of Ginsburg's courage and strength, her career has inspired young women across the country.

2. Emma Gonzalez

Emma Gonzalez is a young activist who passionately advocates for gun control. After the shooting at Marjory-Stoneman Douglass, her high school, Gonzalez founded Never Again MSD and March for Our Lives to advocate for gun control. She is an incredible ex-

ample of how a high schooler can make a difference across the nation. Gonzalez took an issue that impacted her and addressed it, increasing awareness and inspiring students across the world.

3. Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai is a human rights and female education activist. In retaliation for her activism, she was shot at age fifteen. Thankfully, she survived and now bravely tells her story about facing discrimination and racism. In addition, she created 'Malala's Fund' to bring awareness to the stories and different hardships that girls have to go through for equality in education. In 2014, Malala became the youngest to ever receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

4. Ashley Graham

Ashley Graham is a plus-size model and body positivity activist. She is shattering the stereotypes associated with being a model and teaching millions of women worldwide to love themselves and accept their body. Despite receiving harsh comments about her physique, Graham spreads her body positivity message to others so that no one else will have to suffer from such comments.

5. Tarana Burke

Tarana Burke founded the Me Too movement, which helped survivors of sexual violence in 2006, and inspired the #MeToo hashtag after the Weinstein allegations. She also founded Just Be Inc., a nonprofit that supports victims and protects women of minorities. Burke was voted Time's Person of the Year in 2017 for her activism in breaking the silence. She has helped victims share their stories and find solidarity.

Power of Protest: Then and Now

By SOPHIE HUA '22 & SOPHIE WU '22

Spectrum Staff

Throughout history, people have turned to protest to express their discontent over major issues without violence. This way, the public can voice its opinions without provoking further conflict. But the protests of earlier generations differ greatly from those of the present. Whereas past protests pushed for specific policy changes, today's causes are not as clear-cut. As a result, it is harder to gauge the success of modern-day protests. People have shifted from campaigning for civil change to demanding social change, which is illustrated through past and present protests that aim to end racial discrimination.

In the case of the 1960s' Civil Rights Movement, because its main objectives were clear, activists could effectively mobilize for a common cause. Despite post-Civil War amendments designed to protect the rights of black citizens, the passage of Jim Crow laws in the 1880s, which segregated many public facilities, only fueled prejudice and discrimination against African-Americans. Slowly, the Civil Rights Movement began to grow as important figures like Rosa Parks and groups like the Little Rock Nine challenged these laws.

Ultimately, all of these efforts culminated in the largest moment of the movement—the March on Washington. On August 28, 1963, millions of supporters demanded desegregated public

institutions and fair hiring practices. The march is most remembered for Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech in which he eloquently conveyed the grievances and struggles of the African-American community in seventeen minutes. His speech helped enact change regarding segregation issues, including most notably the Civil Rights Act of 1964, by challenging the common mindset of the American public about racial prejudice. The passage of this law answered many of the dissidents' demands by desegregating public facilities and making employment discrimination illegal. This powerful moment in history illustrates how people could unite in support of a clear cause and create transformative change.

Despite the efficacy of the Civil Rights Movement, residual prejudice against African-Americans exists today. As outcry against such prejudice grows, movements advocating for equal treatment grow with it. One such example is the Black Lives Matter movement. Fueled by the 2012 acquittal of white police officer George Zimmerman after he shot and killed Trayvon Martin, an African-American man, the BLM movement gained traction through social media and the use of the popular hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. Unlike the Civil Rights Movement where protesters dissented by marching and focusing on politics, BLM combines art, technology, politics, and pop culture to spread its cause. The specific problems that BLM is trying to fix, such as

those of unequal pay and police brutality, stem from implicit biases against African-Americans, which in turn prevents true equality.

These more conceptual goals behind BLM make it difficult to see obvious results. In contrast, the Civil Rights Movement was fueled by a clear problem that the protestors had with society: African-Americans were suffering from lawful segregation. Because the issue was so apparent, the protestors' demands were also very straightforward—they wanted to completely get rid of segregation, and the Civil Rights Act demonstrated their success. However, today's BLM protests focus on subtler issues that cannot be fixed with a simple policy change. As a social movement, BLM requires something more difficult to achieve: shifts in intrinsic beliefs.

Looking to the future, the effects of BLM are difficult to discern. The impacts cannot simply be seen through policy changes as it was in the Civil Rights Movement. People's opinions cannot be easily measured, making it difficult to gauge the influence of BLM in society today. Furthermore, convincing people that they must combat their own implicit biases is challenging because no one wants to admit to their prejudices. Even so, moving forward, the unity and strength behind BLM will further the cause of equality. Just as the Civil Rights Movement advanced its cause through policy change, the BLM movement will, in time, contribute in its own way.

The Influence of Celebrities

By IRIS LI '21
Spectrum Staff

Emma Watson. Leonardo DiCaprio. Kim Kardashian. All these names sound familiar because they have all been featured in various tabloids. Celebrities can bring awareness to issues they care about, such as climate change, poverty, and world hunger, but some promote health fads, earning up to one million dollars just for one sponsored post.

If you have ever explored one of the Kardashians' Instagram pages, you've probably heard of SugarBearHair gummies. Playing into people's concept of a "perfect body," SugarBearHair guarantees that these gummies will result in amazing skin, nails, and hair due to an ingredient called biotin. However, the FDA issued a warning in 2017 that taking the vitamin could change your blood test results if you do not have a biotin deficiency, so just because Kim is popping gummies doesn't mean you need a biotin boost, too.

Celebrities also inadvertently influence our ideas of a perfect body as they promote Facetuned photos of unhealthily thin bodies. Girls can feel pressured to match the images, but boys are also affected by the portrayals of the ideal male as six feet tall with an eight-pack and a sharp jawline. These expectations are unrealistic for the average male or female because they are largely influenced by one's metabolism or surgical means.

Alternatively, celebrities bring awareness to urgent issues such as

climate change because they realize the power they have to elicit change and inspire their fans to act. For instance, during the 2016 Oscars, Leonardo DiCaprio used his acceptance speech as a call to action for climate change when he finally won the Academy Award for Best Actor after six nominations. According to The Washington Post, DiCaprio's speech was viewed by 34.4 million people, and climate change was mentioned 636% more than usual on Twitter.

Sustainable products are another issue that many celebrities tackle. In 2015, Jaden Smith founded the bottled water company JUST Water to provide an eco-friendly alternative to plastic bottled water. He also launched the Water Box earlier this year in Flint, Michigan to help families gain access to clean water after bottled water donations weren't enough. His machine filters 10 gallons of water in just 1 minute and has replaced 68,000 plastic bottles as of September this year. Smith's new initiative 501CTHREE, which aims to make water, food, and energy more accessible, released a video calling for donations to provide more water jugs and Water Boxes to the Flint community. This video was well received with more than 4,000 water jugs donated, showing that celebrities can give back to communities in need.

While some celebrities contribute to harmful female stereotypes, celebrities like Emma Watson and Demi Lovato use their voices to empower women worldwide. In 2014, Watson launched the HeForShe campaign alongside the

UN to encourage men to join the fight against gender inequality and harmful gender-based stereotypes, emphasizing that gender equality is more of a humanitarian issue than a feminist one. Watson also visited Malawi in 2016 to call attention to the prevalence and dangers of child marriage, encouraging leaders in Africa to ban child marriages and change traditional practices.

Demi Lovato has used her voice to raise awareness about mental health and addiction and to spread a body-positive message to children. Lovato often shares messages about self-love on Instagram and Twitter, as well as unedited photos of herself. Lovato has also opened up about her past struggles with her body, especially her experience with bulimia, through her YouTube documentary "Simply Complicated." Demi Lovato talks about her various substance abuses and her struggle with bipolar and depression and how she dealt with them as she aged. Celebrities like Lovato have started conversations that break the stigma behind mental health. Unlike other celebrities who have spoken about dealing with mental illnesses, Lovato doesn't provide a linear path to overcoming her mental illnesses, and she has opened up about her relapses.

From Leonardo DiCaprio to Demi Lovato, these celebrities demonstrate that they are willing to use their power and influence to encourage others to change the world for the better. They bring attention to taboo subjects and dire situations while empowering people to voice their opinions and to take initiative.

IG Power Dynamics

By SOPHIE ZHANG '22
Spectrum Staff

Instagram dominates the teenage social scene. According to the Pew Research Center, 72% of teens aged thirteen to seventeen say they use the platform. The majority of my friends are on it, posting about their vacations and sharing news. By sharing our unique perspectives, we open conversations and eliminate cultural barriers. However, many social issues exemplified in school are further amplified on Instagram. We are disinterested in students of lower "popularity," which exacerbates social hierarchies and leads to isolation.

For example, in my free moments, I scroll through my feed, clicking away at Instagram stories. When I'm feeling particularly confident, I issue follow requests, nervously pressing the blue button. The next day, I check to see if the user has followed me back. If not, I promptly unfollow them. Many teenagers constantly maintain their profile to have a favorable follow ratio; when we receive a follow request, we calculate others' popularity to determine whether they are worth the follow back.

By using follower counts and ratios to gauge popularity, we prematurely evaluate others' value and worth. By only following certain people we deem "cool," we miss the chance to communicate

and interact with others outside our scope. Whenever someone does not follow me back, I question why and ponder my worth. However, as I began to familiarize myself with the platform, I realize that just as I calculate the social risk of follows and likes, so too do my peers, in the arbitrary way that does not reflect self-worth. The only opinion of yourself that truly matters is your own.

By deemphasizing the power of a follow and popularity itself, we can instead focus on Instagram's ability to empower; the social platform can also broadcast identities and open discussion. With social media, people can more easily find their voices and express themselves. Through stories, we can broadcast political opinions and important initiatives we are passionate about. By posting pictures, we further magnify our unique style and influence. Instagram allows us to explore ourselves more deeply, inspiring confidence and boosting self-esteem. We can further erase ignorance and bigotry by learning more about each other and our different perspectives. Instagram is a powerful tool for connection where we can message anyone anytime. By eliminating these preconceived boundaries of value, we may reach out to more diverse people and create a more positive space of encouragement and kindness.

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Power

Do Teachers Have Too Much Power Over Their Students?

By JASMINE WU '22
Spectrum Staff

As I walked through the crowded hallways in September, I couldn't help but catch snippets of student conversations: "I'm totally going to fail my history test." "My math teacher is so mean. We have so much homework!" "Ugh, my science teacher sucks. I literally can't stay awake in his class." At the start of the school year, new teachers always make for a good topic of conversation (or complaint). While demanding teachers and tedious assignments might seem like the bane of our existence, school plays a monumental role in shaping us, and teachers—as the facilitators of our school experience—affect us more than we realize. They have the power to alter our growth and ultimately our lives by helping us through this journey.

As a student, I've envied teachers because they seem to have the easier job: they assign homework, schedule a test, smack a deadline on it, grade everything, and then repeat. However, when I asked two of my former teachers about their jobs

as educators, neither considered their assignments and subject material arbitrary; rather, they hoped to instill a deeper lesson.

Mr. Mishrikey centers his seminars and assignments around conditioning students to "think critically." While he wants students to be independent, he provides opportunities for them to receive guidance and direction through conferencing. He hopes that students will remember him as a teacher who truly cared about their academic lives and helped them to improve.

While Ms. Fox might not have exactly the same end goals, her objectives have similar foundations. She pushes students to learn *how* to learn by ensuring that they are "engaged in the learning process." It is her hope that her students' journeys challenge them while also allowing them to "learn more about themselves." In order to get the most out of these teachers' efforts, we students must demonstrate our best work and be thoughtful about our class contributions. Likewise, teachers must be attentive and deliberate with educating so that their values can be reflected as students

grow.

After gaining this insight from my former teachers, I contemplated how my own experiences reflected their beliefs. Originally, some of their lessons seemed unnecessary or forced. When I first learned about Mr. Mishrikey's green marks—the hundreds of critiques he made in green pen on each student's essay—the rewriting they demanded seemed rigid and tedious.

Yet I found that clarity lay obscured beneath unnecessary prepositional phrases. My noun and verb choice didn't convey intention, and sentences dissolved into piles of meaningless, crowded words. Although I don't completely adhere to Mr. Mishrikey's guidelines, I see things in my writing that I hadn't before and recognize my own mistakes. His class made me aware of my writing and taught me to analyze it, seek improvement, and remember my previous errors.

Similarly, Ms. Fox challenged our preconceived notions with her frequent reading quizzes, which seemed superfluous at the time. As much as I didn't enjoy them, I soon

realized their benefit. When she first explained reading quizzes, Ms. Fox told us that she wanted to guide our reading and make us recognize and focus on what had significance. She didn't want us to stress, but instead to be thoughtful about our reading.

Reflecting on these experiences, I realized that students and teachers pursue similar objectives but have very different roles. Everyone knows that students are supposed to work hard and improve based on feedback, but teachers apply this same concept to their own role as educators: they share a responsibility to contribute their best effort. Obviously, teachers have more power because they define the class, but that power is for our benefit.

Too often, we see teachers as villains, wielding their power to confine us to a set of strict rules. We resent their power because we falsely perceive classes as haphazard concoctions of assignments. However, Mr. Mishrikey told me that the best teachers "invest themselves the best they can in students' lives so that they can become the best versions

of themselves"—a standard that students can internalize too.

Students who strive for their own progress have the support of their teachers. Teachers challenge students, but they also encourage and assist them. Because of our inherent classroom roles, the less powerful scorn the more powerful because they automatically assume that those with more power may be abusing it.

Even though we have the same goal, we don't empathize because students resent having to follow these rules and do as they're told. However, rules are detested for the fact they are rules, rather than for the reasons behind them. We project this resentment onto teachers who are in a position of power. But the presence of power doesn't necessarily mean that it will be abused; although teachers exert their power upon us, they do so to help us grow as students. We need to have mutual empathy between teachers and students, and let students recognize that teachers are not dictators but our best critics and advocates instead.

School Perks Timeline

By ANJALI RAMAN '20
Co-Editor-in-Chief

We've compiled a list of some of the biggest things to keep in mind as you continue through high school.

DRIVING

If you are younger than 18 in Massachusetts, you must complete 30 hours of in-class instruction, 12 hours in a car with a driver's ed instructor, 6 hours of observation, and 40 hours of out-of-classroom driving with a licensed adult before you can take your road test to get your license.

Age 15 ¾ — Eligible to enroll in driver's ed classes.

Age 16 — Eligible to get your permit. Go to the RMV with documents and payment to take a test about road safety. You need an 18/25 to receive your permit. You can only drive with a licensed adult over the age of 21.

Age 16 ½ — Eligible to get your license IF you have completed the aforementioned state-mandated requirements. There is a six-month waiting period between the time you get your permit and the time you may sign up for a road test. Go to the Leominster RMV, get the last appointment of the day, and show up early. Happy test administrator = happy road test.

6 months after you get your license — You may drive friends. Until then, you may only drive yourself and immediate family members, but you cannot drive others. Be smart and be safe!

PRIVILEGES & FREES

As a freshman, you have directed studies, but starting sophomore year, you have a free period. Freshmen, fear not! If one of your teachers is absent without a sub (check the morning email!), you also have a free. Now what can you do with it?

Freshman and Sophomore Year — As underclassmen, you may not leave campus. Chances are you won't have a car, and it's unsafe to let 15-year-olds storm the town on foot. Take advantage of the extra time to finish homework in the library or the counseling center so you have time for a quick DD stop after school.

Junior Year — You can apply for extended privileges starting the second week of your junior year, which allows you to leave campus during the day.

A recommendation from a senior: don't go out every time you have a free period. Think about your workload. Bagels Plus might sound good, but when you get home, trust us when we say that you won't be thinking about that toasted everything with cream cheese. Also, eating out all the time adds up!

COLLEGE

As a freshman, you should keep college on your horizon, but don't let it impact your first year of high school! Do the activities and classes you enjoy without worrying about your applications!

Standardized Tests — Chances are you will apply to a school that requires the SAT or ACT. Taking these tests between August before your junior year and November of your senior year is recommended. Take whichever test you feel better about, and don't take it ten times in search of the perfect score!

Early Action/Early Decision — Early Action allows you to submit your application around mid-October to mid-November of your senior year and hear back some time in December. Early Decision is a similar program, but if accepted under early decision, you MUST attend that school, with only a few exceptions.

Regular Decision — A non-binding program. You apply in mid-December to mid-February and hear back around April.

Committing — You must commit to a school by a certain date, usually May 1st.

A helpful note! Your counselor will provide you with much more information when the time comes. This is just to quell some of your nerves. Fret not: you still have years to learn about yourself before you learn about college.

All of these new possibilities can seem extremely overwhelming, especially considering that many of them occur in tandem. Just know that you have a wonderful support system designed for you to seize these opportunities and succeed.

Power Dynamics in the Workplace

By VICTORIA LI '23
Spectrum Staff

A healthy relationship between management and its employees forms the backbone of a thriving workplace. However, the power dynamics of this pair contain many delicate dangers that must be carefully navigated and steadily maintained. The line between encouraging employees to do their best work and micromanaging is very fine, as is the boundary between giving an employee autonomy and neglecting them. However, organizations have taken different approaches to the structure of management, and a comparison may reveal some potential best practices.

Traditional companies tend to employ a standard, vertical structure in which managers carefully oversee their employees' work. A prime example of a hierarchical company is Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD), a medical technology company whose workers are split into clearly defined sections. The tremendous power imbalance inherent in such a rigid hierarchy can create the potential for micromanagement neglect, and even outright abuse.

However, managers who invest significant time and effort into maintaining this relationship will reap numerous benefits with regards to productivity and morale for both the boss and the subordinate.

More recently, some technology companies have adopted a different work structure that aims to cultivate a more collaborative culture. For example, Google radically changed its organizational structure in 2015 after adopting a conglomerate that they named Alphabet. Alphabet is composed up of several independently operating units, each of which contains many smaller teams, mimicking the feel of newer start-up companies. This type of approach de-emphasizes hierarchies and prioritizes people's ideas and skills, enabling everyone to play a part in decision-making and feel included in Google's successes.

To achieve a healthier relationship and work environment, certain criteria must be met by both sides.



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To begin, both the manager and the worker have to authentically communicate with each other. Both sides have to put in equal effort, and no single side should dominate the relationship. In a more team-based organizational structure like Google's, there are much fewer opportunities for abusive power dynamics between bosses and employees because there aren't many lines separating them in the first place. To establish this team-based structure, bosses and employees must carefully listen to the other and address others' concerns, even if they themselves have more power or view the concern as insignificant.

Listening only comprises part of the solution: empathy and understanding are also crucial components to any business relationship. Each party must genuinely care about the other and respect each other and their ideas. One person should not be stifling the other or

making them feel uncomfortable.

Ultimately, both the boss and employees have to trust each other and commit to their word. Trust is easily broken, especially if someone breaks a promise or does not follow their core beliefs. Without trust, no relationship can ever hope to progress beyond its most rudimentary step.

All workplaces require an amicable relationship between a boss and their employees. Maintaining this power dynamic is not easy and requires a lot of effort from both sides, but in the long run, it benefits everyone. The principles behind establishing a healthy relationship do not have to be restricted to the workplace—they can be applied to practically any situation. Thus, although there are many dangers and roadblocks in the power dynamics between a boss and an employee, the skills to maintain it will last a lifetime.

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Stranger Things TV Show Review

By MATTIE DIAZ '21
Spectrum Staff

After the riveting second season of *Stranger Things*, fans of the show waited nearly two years for the third installment. Companies such as Burger King and Baskin Robbins helped build anticipation for the award-winning show until the big day arrived on July 4th. While Americans typically spend Independence Day at barbecues and fireworks shows, this year, many people—including myself—spent the day binge-watching *Stranger Things 3*.

Warning: minor spoilers ahead!

Being a huge *Stranger Things* fan, I enjoyed this season immensely. It is a great show to binge-watch as the lack of predictability compels you to keep watching. I loved the balance the season had between comedic and dramatic scenes. Interactions and conversations between El and other characters were often humorous as she is still learning how to act in social situations. But still, many scenes also expressed heartfelt emotions, especially during the tragic deaths of the last episode.

I was enticed by the nostalgic summer mood of this season. The 1980s vibe was established with era-appropriate clothing, films such as *Back to the Future*, and a soundtrack featuring songs including REO Speedwagon's "I Can't Fight This Feeling" and Foreigner's "Cold as Ice." Moreover, it was interesting to see the show address

the politics of the 1980s by involving Russian spies in the storyline.

Additionally, the chemistry between the main characters was excellent. One that stood out to me in particular was the emotional connection between Hopper and El. David Harbour does an exceptional job portraying Hopper as a dad who is learning the difficulties of parenting, while Millie Bobby Brown gives a powerful performance as a daughter with immense love for her father.

I also appreciated that *Stranger Things 3* focused on a relatable theme: the struggle of maturing as a teenager. For instance, Will, Mike, and Lucas argue about whether they should play Dungeons and Dragons like kids or go out with girls like teenagers. Although the argument is slightly immature, it expresses the struggle between clinging to childhood and growing up.

However, some aspects of *Stranger Things 3* seemed repetitive or somewhat annoying. For example, I felt that the plot of this season mirrored that of *Stranger Things 2*, since the main task was to, once again, defeat the Mind Flayer. Also, the pacing of the season was inconsistent: the first few episodes were slow and boring while the second half of the season was much more fast-paced. Further, although fans like myself love seeing Mike and El together, the constant conflict between them was irritating. I felt that their behavior during these arguments were childish in comparison

to their maturity in handling other, more frightening situations.

Finally, there were two new characters in this season of *Stranger Things*: Robin, Steve's co-worker at an ice cream shop, and Alexei, a Russian scientist. Unfortunately, I believe that these new personas were not meaningful to the show as their only purpose was providing the main characters with information. A large part of this season was Robin's relationship with Steve, which added nothing to the plot or the development of either character. Moreover, Alexei's character seemed unnecessary; when Joyce and Hopper were learning of the Russian spies' intentions, it would have been more compelling if the two had spied on the Russians alone rather than relying on Alexei for information.

Considering the season took almost two years to release, the beginning of the show could have been more exciting and the plot could have been a little more original. Still, overall, *Stranger Things 3* was worth the wait. I highly recommend watching this season for the many aspects of the show that make it so great—the compelling performances by the main actors, the major themes that are relevant to our daily lives, and the nostalgic 1980s mood.

It has also just been announced that *Stranger Things 4* will be released soon, so super fans like myself will have to wait to find out what the Hawkins gang will encounter next!

Live-Action Mulan

By JULIA LIU '23
Spectrum Staff

Recently, Disney announced that a new live-action remake of our beloved *Mulan*, directed by New Zealand filmmaker Niki Caro, will be released in March 2020. The greatly anticipated movie trailer hit 175 million views within the first 24 hours, but there's some discontent among fans.

Although the new *Mulan* is a retelling of the original animated film, the plot has gone through major changes. Both tell the story of a Chinese girl who takes her father's place in battle. However, the war itself has changed—Disney has replaced the historical aspect with a supernatural theme. Instead of fighting the Huns, *Mulan's* opponent will be a powerful witch. There's speculation that *Mulan* has superpowers, undermining her best abilities—using just her smarts and willpower to solve problems. Disney fans are also outraged that *Mulan* will no longer be a musical. So, if you're looking for a big song and dance number for "I'll Make a Man Out of You," sorry to disappoint. Nonetheless, there's a method to Disney's madness. The remake is the company's first attempt at a popular Chinese action genre, *wuxia*, that features heroes trained in martial arts to save oppressed people.

In addition to general storyline changes, Disney has added and removed several characters. A powerful witch named Xian Lang and her sidekick Bori Khan will be *Mulan's*

new foes, replacing Shan Yu and his army. Disney cut two characters from the animated film too—Mushu and Li Shang. Our favorite red dragon will still be squeezed in, but only as an Easter egg. Meanwhile, Li Shang, the talented, stern-faced general, will still be a part of *Mulan* but as two different characters: Commander Tung, a mentor for *Mulan*, and Chen Honghui, a soldier and *Mulan's* new love interest.

Even though *Mulan* is highly anticipated, there have been a surprising amount of pessimistic reactions from fans, mostly regarding the loss of Mushu and Shang. Fans were also upset about the historical inaccuracies in the trailer, which portrayed a 'tulou' house, which is a traditional common living center from a much later dynasty. The historical inaccuracies may be a result of the new storyline; most fans agree that it's for Americans to find appealing.

Despite negative comments, fans are still excited about the newest Disney film—especially since the new trailer seemed to focus on *Mulan's* independence and strength. In the end, the new live-action adaptation may have some flaws, but it still is one of the most anticipated films of 2020. This movie, like any other, will make us laugh and cry as we watch *Mulan* transform from concerned daughter to savior of China. Regardless of the complaints, we know that every single Disney fan will watch it within the first week of its release.

Saudi Oil Attacks

By PRATIK GAZULA '21
Spectrum Staff

Boom. Boom. The early hours of an otherwise quiet Saturday morning were interrupted by a drone attack that almost decimated the world's largest oil refinery plant—Saudi Aramco located in Saudi Arabia. Its output of crude oil and natural gas was nearly halved, disturbingly close to 5% of the global oil supply.

Not long after the attack, the Houthis insurgency from northern Yemen claimed responsibility for the attack. The US did not believe them—evidence indicated that the missiles were manufactured in Iran, not Yemen. As a result, many believe that Iran planned to initiate war. However, certain facts reveal a different motive—that Iran attacked Saudi Arabia to grasp Washington's attention in hopes of mending the devastating conditions Iranians are enduring.

In May of 2018, Trump withdrew from the JCPOA, which broke apart Iran's nuclear warfare program in exchange for relief from American and European economic sanctions. As a result, Trump has been imposing "maximum pressure" banking and oil sanctions on Iran—in order for a nation to access vital Iranian trade markets, they must give up access to American oil markets and the US banking system altogether.

The Iranian government gets about forty percent of its revenue from oil exports, and U.S. sanctions have nearly collapsed their economy, leading to devastating inflation and a humanitarian crisis. Reserves of federal bank notes are decreasing in numbers, and basic necessities such as food and medicine are becoming increasingly scarce for the average

person to find, and The National Interest reports that middle-class families "have resorted to buying withered cucumbers and rotting tomatoes, grapes, apples and peaches that grocery store salesmen put aside every day at dusk."

Seeing no other option, Iran likely attacked Saudi Arabia oil refineries which are crucial to the global economy in the hopes of attaining Washington's attention and persuading it to change its strategy. If Iran surrenders to the US, it will lead them into a bloody, extreme retaliation if American troops decide to conquer the nation and impose a military threat. In that instance, Iran will not have the military strength needed to defeat the United States.

So, what can Iran do? Iranians are cornered by US-imposed sanctions. Without inflicting a full-blown war, Iran must indirectly shock the United States, which they have done so through Saudi Arabia. In response to the attack, Trump said that he is "locked and loaded" until he confirms that Iran plotted the attack. Recently, the Pentagon announced that it is prepared to send about three thousand troops to Saudi Arabia. However, Saudi Arabia is currently preoccupied with a civil war in Yemen and likely cannot handle thousands of US soldiers fighting within their borders.

Could Saudi Arabia preclude the need to have US troops on its territory by disengaging from the war in Yemen? Could they instead bridge confidence with Iran? The chances of such an amicable resolution is unlikely. Still, the growing conflict between America, Iran, and Saudi Arabia necessitates action, and peace negotiations are likely the only solution left to prevent possibilities of war.

A State of Unrest in Kashmir

By RIBKA SHEIKH '21
Spectrum Staff

Snow-capped mountains, crystal clear lakes, and luscious green valleys is what makes Kashmir widely known as "heaven on earth." This Himalayan region is a majority-Muslim territory spread across northern India and Pakistan and is claimed as sovereign by both countries. Despite the longstanding tension, Article 370 of the Indian constitution grants Kashmir a great degree of autonomy, including its own constitution. While this arrangement allows for the region to have its own unique "personality," it does not extend them all the privileges of sovereignty.

On August 5th, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi shocked many people by revoking Article 370, believing that integration would be beneficial in the process of showing the balance between India and Kashmir. Hours after Modi's announcement was made, the government made the momentous decision to disconnect all phone lines, internet and TV cables, cutting off Kashmir from the outside world. The government justified its actions on the basis of national security to prevent terrorism and civil unrest. However, the government did not make these decisions solely for the benefit of Kashmiris. In one of many policy changes, mainland Indian citizens will be able to purchase Kashmiri land, thereby weakening the control of the Kashmiris over their own property.

As a fellow Kashmiri, I felt agitated from the fact that the region's freedom and identity was snatched from the authority. Additionally, I quite frankly disagreed with Modi's decision because it did not consider

the opinions of millions of people. I felt as if my own identity was taken away from me with my country's identity. Even though Kashmir is just a state, its culture, people, and traditions set it apart from India. In fact, it is the only state in India with a Muslim-majority population. I was astounded to hear that the government decided to jail the political leaders of Kashmir, merely because they expressed their opposition to the revocation of Article 370. Millions of Kashmiris around the whole world have been affected emotionally. Countless relatives of mine had to take domestic flights to leave their states just so they could receive access to internet. Having to communicate with my own family has been consistently difficult; it took around 40 days for landlines to start working even temporarily. All public transport has shut down, and numerous people have been unable to leave their homes for months now. The thought of my grandparents being forsaken in their homes for around 3 months is deplorable. The fact that millions of Kashmiris are unable to voice their opinions and are still considered to be "equal with India" is simply unfair.

A few weeks ago, a Kashmiri woman named Dr. Nitasha Kaul decided to speak out at a hearing before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S House of Representatives. She stated that the "political problem is with the human rights violation" and that "Kashmiris human rights and freedom should be acknowledged by the government." In other words, Article 370 is not the major problem here; the main issue is the government's failure to envisage the people's opinions before making such a major decision. Furthermore, thousands of political leaders have been arrested for be-

ing pro-Kashmir. According to reports, more than 4,000 people have been detained since August 5th for expressing their beliefs on the state. Millions of protests have been taking place all over the world with slogans such as "Free Kashmir" and "I Stand With Kashmir." On September 27, both Modi and Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan were present at the UN, where thousands of people from diverse cultures and religions protested in support of Kashmir. Khan stated that "I picture myself in Kashmir being locked up 55 days, hearing about rapes and the Indian army going into homes." Would I want to live this humiliation? When people lose the will to live, what is there to live for?" asked Khan. On October 13, Modi stated that it would take "four months to normalize the situation," which suggests that Kashmir will be under siege for the foreseeable future.

I feel that Indians see Modi's decision as a positive change because they are granted additional privileges in Kashmir, such as the ability to purchase property. In addition, the government claims it will bring "peace and prosperity" even as the policy has brought an immense amount of civil unrest and international backlash—after all, the region has been under a security lockdown ever since. The purpose of the nation's lockdown is so that the Indian government can take control of Kashmir and make it associated only with India. If you were to ask me what the future holds for Kashmir, I wouldn't be so sure. I do not know what to expect from the people after this traumatic decision, but I know for sure that they will stand up for this nation. If I had a chance to speak with Modi, I would request him to consider the opinions of the people before keeping my motherland under siege.

Forum

Journalism Continued

By MICHAEL CHENG '20
News Editor

branches of government in its influence on public affairs.

In the first half of American history, local papers were often openly partisan, but with a diverse set of papers, one could presumably see many perspectives if they so chose. However, as the market became increasingly dominated by fewer, more national outlets, the resulting establishment was increasingly uncomfortable with the influence it wielded, and moved towards objective and transparent ways of wielding it. Under such standards, journalism seeks not to be an institution serving political ends, but rather an institution serving liberal democratic means.

To borrow a definition from Adam Gopnik of the *New Yorker*, liberalism prefers to use “reasoned and (mostly) unimpeded conversation, demonstration, and debate” in service of “egalitarian social reform and ever greater (if not absolute) tolerance of human difference.”

Our country was founded on this ideal, if not its consistent practice; the First Amendment attempts to protect unimpeded conversation in part by protecting the freedom of the press, because a free and diverse press is necessary to support the broader conversation by informing its participants and expanding its reach. And in the 20th century, as the industry was increasingly dominated by a handful of big-city publications, objectivity preserved the stature of the press in part by reducing its power, in order to

preclude a monopoly on context and perspective. An objective press specifically serves a liberal democracy not just by supplying the accurate facts needed for a reasoned debate, but also by exposing readers to perspectives that might otherwise be inaccessible.

Sorkin says that the media’s influence compels them to promote ostensibly righteous ends. But if we think of the media not as a political institution, but a democratic one, then objectivity democratizes storytelling. Journalists have the power to tell stories about the nation, the world, and human nature; objectivity attempts to distribute that power more broadly. Journalism provides us the facts and figures, the stories and events, for us to interpret on our own accord. That isn’t a flaw—it’s a feature.

Perhaps what I have outlined is still a form of “liberal bias.” If so, it’s because “liberal democracy”—democracy premised on debate and dissent—engenders philosophically “liberal” institutions. If our society strives for a diversity of thought, of values, of citizen perspectives—is it any wonder when our stories disagree? I would argue that such a variety forms a hallmark of liberty; I would argue that we don’t have the luxury of a single story.

I seldom agree with Rep. Mark Meadows (R NC), but here he is, in a midday tussle with the press during Wednesday’s impeachment hearings:

“Everybody has their impression of what truth is, just like all of you as reporters have your impressions of what truth is. The ultimate judge will be the American people.”

So be it.

The Rise and Fall of Minecraft

By RIYA SHAH '22
Spectrum Staff

Creep? No way! Minecraft is back? Hooray! Minecraft has been a childhood favorite for pretty much everyone, dating all the way back to 2009. Although Minecraft never disappeared, the old game has gone out of style over the last few years. Now, the classic game is making a resurgence. Perhaps it is due to nostalgia, as many of the people who once played the game are now in high school and college. It was also Minecraft’s 10th anniversary last May, which came with many new updates that rekindled people’s interest. More so though, social media has spread the craze through memes, Youtubers, and more.

The origin of Minecraft can be traced back to a Swedish man; no, not Pewdiepie, but video game programmer Markus ‘Notch’ Persson. People fell in love with Minecraft’s open world and creative nature when Persson first created it with Java. By 2011, one million Minecraft accounts had been registered, with ten million more registered just six months later. To extend Minecraft’s reach even further, an entirely new branch of the game called Minecraft Pocket Edition became popular on the smartphone. Soon after, the console edition emerged on the Xbox. Minecraft began to take over the gaming industry, with regular updates and addi-

tions to keep users excited.

The social media world was, and still is, a crucial factor in the popularity of video games. Millions of people watch gameplay videos to develop their own skills, as well as to feel like they are part of a community. In this sense, Minecraft was a reliable and popular choice for Youtubers, since it had a large audience when compared to other games at the time.

Nonetheless, other games such as Fortnite and PUBG began to take over the media, and Youtubers had to adapt in order to keep their channels healthy. Minecraft consistently supported a large player base, but many people noticed a decline in interest as people spoke less about it in public. Youtube has also become increasingly strict when it comes to monetization, as many companies do not want to place ads on videos with violence. However, last summer Felix “Pewdiepie” Kjellberg made his first Minecraft video, and his fanbase was surprisingly supportive. He pulled in almost 570 million views in the first month alone. For the first time in years, Minecraft surpassed Fortnite as the most searched game on Youtube. The term “The Pewdiepie Effect” has been used to describe Pewdiepie’s huge impact on the market due to his videos. Almost all of his “Let’s Plays” have led to a vast increase in sales for each particular game. Additionally, his interest has led to other popular

Youtubers hopping on the bandwagon. According to content strategist Rob Wilson, “This [explains] why some of your favorite YouTubers have suddenly returned to Minecraft, or started dabbling in it, jumping on the wave of a returning trend in this case.”

The uprising of the game doesn’t just have an effect on the gaming industry of Youtube but on our general society as well. For example, researchers at Radbound University found that Minecraft provides significant benefits to children. Certain video games can foster strong social ties and increase cognitive abilities. Playing games like Minecraft can increase creativity, problem solving, and community engagement. The game also exercises spatial awareness, geometry and artistic skills. However, the most important outcome is its effect on friendships and teamwork skills. Minecraft allows for multiplayer servers, where you can play with friends and family. Players can engage with one another and work together to overcome obstacles and achieve success.

So, now what? Will the surge of Minecraft players decline? Or will the player base continue to grow and stabilize? Although we cannot know for sure, we do know that other game creators can certainly learn from the successes of Minecraft, and its legacy will continue as the most epic, legendary game of all time.

What Really Went Down: Area 51

By NEHA SARAVANAN '22
Spectrum Staff

You all heard about it. Everyone did. For decades, people have suspected that Area 51, a military base located in Nevada, holds all of our nation’s deepest secrets: aliens, military programs, you name it. Those who attempt to trespass are arrested, but anything seemed possible as the idea of raiding Area 51 came to be.

It all started out as one big joke.

Matty Roberts, a student from California, decided it would be a good idea to create a Facebook group titled “Storm Area 51, They Can’t Stop All of Us.” The group grew in popularity in an extremely short amount of time, racking up over 2 million people attending and over 1.5 million as interested. Memes about the idea began to come out, spreading so quickly that the movement found its way onto national television. Roberts never thought the Facebook group

would become as popular as it did, underestimating the allure of Area 51. Paranormal enthusiasts and conspiracy theorists joined together with the wonderful users of Facebook who just happened to witness the memes in storming one of the most highly classified military bases in the nation.

People planned to “Naruto run” their way through bullets, claiming that authorities wouldn’t be able to catch them. The joke about attendees claiming their own personal pet alien escalated through meme pages on all social media platforms. The paranormal attraction of Area 51, along with a certain amusement of the idea, resulted in a major predicament for the Air Force. Authorities took the jokes seriously, and claimed that they would be “ready to protect America and its assets.”

As much as the Area 51 raid grew over social media, the actual outcome was extremely (extremely extremely) disappointing. Out of the millions who agreed

to come on Facebook, only three thousand showed up. Authorities arrested one person for alcohol-related issues, one man for public indecency, and detained one woman who actually attempted to get through the gates. People showed up in costumes and held signs, hoping to convince authorities to release a “locked-up ET” and his many other alien compadres. People did end up Naruto running and doing some things mentioned in the Facebook group, but it was an anticlimactic event in comparison to what people truly expected.

Overall, the Area 51 raid serves as an homage to this generation and an important piece of cultural history. Despite the small numbers, science geeks and Twitter trolls gathered, hand-in-hand, to save their mutual friend ET from the government. Although they failed to succeed, friends were made along the way, and the cultural impact of their actions will forever outshine all others.

Meghan Markle

By AKSHITHA MAQTEDAR '21
Spectrum Staff

If people had told King George III that an American would eventually marry into the British monarchy, he never would have believed them. However, on May 19, 2018, Meghan Markle, an American actress, married the British Prince Harry in a ceremony at St. George’s Chapel at Windsor Castle. The British monarchy is synonymous with various century-old traditions, but this American divorcee defied convention by becoming the first mixed-race member of the Royal Family. As British society evolves and becomes more accepting, the British monarchy is evolving too, as epitomized by Meghan Markle’s breaking of norms to become a modern icon.

In the past, individuals like Meghan Markle would have been legally forbidden from entering the Royal Family. In 1772, King George III passed the Royal Marriages Act, banning members of the royal family from marrying any individual who is divorced, Catholic, or a commoner. Nevertheless, marriage in the royal family changed in 2013 when the Parliament of the United Kingdom established the Succession to the Crown Act. This new act stated that only the first six in line for the throne had to have the Queen’s approval before they get married. Since Prince Harry is currently sixth in line to the throne, his marriage was subject to the Queen’s approval, which the monarch granted. With their marriage, Meghan Markle married into a family that has been white and European for generations. Given that her father was a lighting director and her

mother was a yoga teacher, Markle is far from rich or royal. Thus, her marriage shows that the monarchy is embracing the culture of the current society and not sticking to the strict unfair rules of the past.

Not only is Markle notable for her distinct pre-royal background, but she is also breaking royal tradition with her looks. For example, while royals normally wear light pinks or neutrals on their nails, Markle wore dark nail polish at The Fashion Awards on December 2018, even though it is rumored that the Queen is not a fan of colored nail polish and prefers colors such as Essie’s Ballet Slippers. No rule forbids wearing dark nail polish, but light nail polish is simply considered more appropriate at royal engagements. However, Markle breaks this rule in her journey to redefine royal fashion and make it more modern. Through all her outfits, she shows off her unique background. Her style and choices inspire observers around the world who now see a person of color represented in British high society. Through her fashion choices, Markle is able to highlight her personality and mix that with the sheen of royalty.

Through her entrance into the royal family, Markle demonstrates that times are changing and the royal family is becoming more accepting of all people. Markle also uses her newfound influence to inspire children all around the world to be themselves and let their personalities shine. Personally, I was inspired when I heard that a person of color was joining the royal family, and hopefully more diverse individuals will continue to rise up into positions of power, inspiring individuals all over the world.



Area 51 raiders seek the truth in Nevada.
ONLINE SOURCE

Off Topic

High School Superpowers That I've Witnessed

By EMILY HILTUNEN '22
Spectrum Staff



Get Woke With Gen Z Lingo

By ALICIA GU '23 & SIVAPRIYA MARIMUTHU '23
Spectrum Staff

Some of you might have vocab quizzes to study for, but this is the only vocab list you'll ever need to communicate with fellow hip teens.

Let's start with the basics:

Tea: all tea, all shade, all pink lemonade; the juice

"What's the tea, sis?"

"Be quiet."

Oof: when you accidentally throw your dog out the window

"A car just ran over my pet lizard. I don't think I'll ever be the same again."

"Oof."

Mood: when you become one with the meme

"I feel fine, I just cry myself to sleep every night."

"Big Mood."

Sus: those sketchy guys at the back corner of Chuck E Cheese

"Yo, did you see that dude over

there?"

"That's pretty sus..."

Skrrt Skrrt: when you wanna bust out of there

"I can't believe school's almost over."

"I'm ready to skrrt out of here."

Clout: the real reason people become friends with the popular kids

"He just wants clout, buddy."

Joe: ask me who Joe is

"Did you hear about Joe?"

"Who's Joe?"

"JOE MAMA!"

Snack: a fine specimen

"Dang, she lookin' like a snack."

Let's get this bread: time to hustle

"Are you excited for class guys?"

"Yeah. Let's get this bread."

Quirky: She's not like other girls. She wears socks with

crocs, likes Billie Eilish and only shops at Urban Outfitters

No cap: for real

"No cap, but I think I just saw Donald Trump at the grocery store."

Flex: a way to brag

"Not to flex, but I just got a 98 on my test, and I didn't even study."

Yeet: I be like yeet

Past tense: yote

"I can't believe you didn't come to your mother's funeral."

"Yeet!"

Ligma: what is that?

"Joe got ligma from slawbunnies at sawcon."

Here are the basic words you need to know. Once you study this you're all set to talk to any high school student at Acton Boxborough with no fear! But don't forget the most important word of all: fetch.

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Guide to TikTok Fame

By KATHERINE LEE '23 & EMMA XIANG '23
Spectrum Staff

If bobbing up and down to "Martha dump truck in the flesh... Here comes the cootie squad!" sounds familiar, you're probably a Heathers' fan. If not, you might be familiar with TikTok, a trending social media video app, made up of dance videos, snippets of people's lives, and a touch of dark humor.

Almost every TikToker's goal is to have their video plastered over millions of "for you" pages—or FYPs—sections designated to show you videos that might interest you or that have been double-tapped by other users. Videos should attract people's attention and spark some sort of emotion, whether it be a hilarious cringe or a wholesome feeling. However, no one really knows TikTok's formula for getting on the "for you" page. We sought to find the truth about the app to unlock the path to the holy FYP.

Like detectives, we took the opportunity to interview an account that had experienced the "clout" themselves. The owners were mutual friends of ours, two girls who ran the account @vvscoogirls, and had amassed over 17k likes and 70k views. As we sat down with them, we learned that there are several must-do steps to guarantee success. First, one must use hashtags in

their caption to reach a large audience. Things like #fyp, #foryoupage, or #foryou, are an absolute must. Next, use ones that relate to your video. For example, if you make a funny video, you would use #funny, #humor, or anything else that can help someone stumble upon your video. Likewise, using the right sound is crucial. If you are a TikTok user, you must have noticed that while scrolling down the FYP, there are a few sounds that are used repeatedly. They can be dancing videos that some "very creative" influencer came up with (hitting the woah multiple times and essentially trying to break your back every beat), memes about the PSATs, or some cosplayer walking in place with a brightly colored wig doing inhumanly fast hand motions that are lowkey creepy but mesmerizing at the same time.

Indeed, TikTok is quickly growing to be a collective spot for free, unhinged humor; you can make a video of you staring into the camera and eating Goldfish. Who knows? It might just get on the "for you" page. It's a place where the humor centers around Gen Z, making it exclusive to a certain population. And that's what makes one's video so compelling and popular nowadays.

Download TikTok today in the app store! At the very least you'll learn ten different ways to hit the woah.

Love Nest: It's Cuffing Season!

By JULIA KUANG '22
Spectrum Staff

Hi friends! It's me, the Love Doctor, back with some more questions right in the midst of spooky szn! As the weather gets colder, you might find yourself more lonely and desperate for a relationship. That's where I come in.

Question 1: I love someone, but they think I'm a creep.

Ok. Think back on all of your interactions with this person. Has anything, ANYTHING AT ALL, created these feelings? Did you perhaps follow them to their house, their classes, or even the bathroom (BTW, ew!)? If you haven't done any of the above, maybe you sent them strange messages or even... noodles? If you haven't and they still think you're freaky, there must be something SERIOUSLY wrong with you. You're probably a psychopath that types in Comic Sans and pulls all-nighters every night and has a shrine dedicated to your crush. Some real advice, though: you probably don't really LOVE him. "Love" is a pretty strong word in relationship and you don't even have one. Honestly though, if they think you're a creep, you probably don't have much of a chance at a relationship and should move on.

Question 2: My boyfriend is rich in Minecraft diamonds, but

not in real life. Should I break up with him? Also, he's mad at me since I killed his Minecraft doggo (whoops), so no better time than now.

You should DEFINITELY break up. Only rich in Minecraft? Press F to pay respects. Psssh. I don't know about you, but baby tonight the Creepers try to steal all our stuff again, again, again. I shoot my arrows in the air sometimes, singing A'yo, Creepers KO. But only sometimes. So the take-away message from that is Minecraft diamonds aren't always the most reliable source of wealth, no matter how impressive. Thus, killing his Minecraft wolf*, not dog (you uncultured swine) was probably the way to go. Congrats! You have put yourself in a convenient position to chop up the relationship with a diamond sword and hit up another epic gamer, if you're into that. To help you out, here's some school appropriate, handy dandy pick up lines I found off a very credible source:

Are you a torch? Because you light up my world!

Are you the Nether? Because you're hot!

Are you gravel? Because I'm falling for you!

...and those were the most "school safe" ones I could find (notice how I only found three). Good luck, though you probably won't need it with the phenomenal pick-up lines I've provided.

Question 3: I'm a VSCO girl but my BF is an E-boy. He said he doesn't care about the turtles. How do we see past each other's differences and find something in common? Besides TikTok.

To be honest, besides TikTok, I don't think the relationship has any chance. This is a problem the Love Doctor cannot fix. I'm incredibly sorry. Instead, I can offer you advice on getting revenge on him and his lack of concern for the turtles and their impending doom. Steal his black and white striped shirts, rip them up into little strips, glue them back together, and wear that to school. Record yourself dumping his black nail polish in the toilet, and then send the video to him. Take all of his beanies, Vans, and chains and wear them as if they were your own. Now, you're basically an E-girl, and together, you guys have plenty of angsty things in common. Also get off TikTok, because that platform sucks now.

To conclude this fantastic issue of Love Nest, I'd like to mention that I was really surprised people actually emailed me from last issue, so if y'all got any more questions or have any fun love problems (or wanna make up one) just hmu with an email (please! I'm running out of ideas), because Love Doc loves some luv too. <3333333

Julia <3