



THE SPRING ISSUE

LIME and the CHS Theatre Guild Present: The 2nd Annual In Tune

By Sonya Voloboi

Restructuring the Half Day Schedule

By Hetil Patel

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On February 16th, the everyday silence of the PAC was replaced with a medley of students and teachers showcasing their musical talents. In Tune is an annual opportunity for members of the CHS community to showcase their unique talents, all while helping a relevant charity cause. This year, all proceeds were donated to the Madame Queenan Scholarship Fund in order to ensure that the scholarship could become permanent and continue for upcoming years. Through ticket sales and donations, the show raised over fifteen hundred dollars towards the cause, helping insure Madam Queenan's legacy lives on.

The show featured over 30 acts, ranging from traditional Chinese piano symphonies to a violin duet to a performance from the Thursdays, our own a capella group. Mr. Courtemanche's band, Gale County, served as the house band of the event. They did an excellent job providing the background music for the vocalists, as well as being the opening and closing act. From the language department, Sra. Gauthier and Mme. Chagnon performed a moving and sentimental rendition of "For Good" from *Wicked* to commemorate the impact Madame Queenan had on all those that knew her. The concert featured many others who came out to showcase their musical talents in support of this worthy cause.

It was profoundly heartwarming to see members of the CHS community come together. Whether it was by buying a ticket or by performing, In Tune is one of the many examples of the CHS community uniting for a common cause. A special thanks goes out to members of LIME and the Theatre Guild for all their hard work planning and executing this wonderful event. The Madame Queenan Scholarship Fund will serve as a reminder of the patience, passion, and persistence Mrs. Queenan brought to CHS through her teaching.

YAY! It's a half day tomorrow! Half days are supposed to be a rejuvenating and joyous occasions, but the half day schedule is simply ludicrous. Every time we have a half day, the rotation is set back two days and the contact time between teachers and students is greatly decreased. At CHS the half day schedule consists of four blocks. The school begins at 7:19 a.m. and ends at 10:25 a.m. Each block is approximately 44 minutes long with 4 minutes of passing time in between.

Many teachers and students aren't content with this. It totally muddles their schedule. Repeating the same schedule again is unproductive and illogical. Some teachers repeatedly miss one of their classes, which results in the teachers not being able to teach new material. This creates a dilemma. The teachers could move on with their curriculum, but then their *other* class will ultimately fall behind.

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Musings from the Newspaper Staff

Term three is drawing to a close and the end is in sight, especially for CHS's class of 2017! From Promposals and Cotillion anxiety to classes and field trips to dances and charity events, there's quite a bit going on around our high school. With all that's happening and all that's on the horizon, it's easy to feel overwhelmed or to be distracted from schoolwork. In the midst of the quasi-organized chaos, and as we approach the end of the year, try to remember these two things: do what you can to keep your grades up, and take time to relax and enjoy your friends' company. As a senior who's currently staring graduation in the face, believe me when I say that you have less time with them than you might think.

Let's go Lions, we're hitting the home stretch!

--Bethany Ward
Editor in Chief

The Family Album

By Fiona O'Hearne

Recently, our highly skilled theatre guild (not that I'm biased) competed in the 2017 METG Festival Prelims, and moved on to the semifinals! A lot of you are probably thinking, "This is extremely exciting, but what exactly are the 2017 METG Festival Prelims, and what did CHS perform exactly"? I'm glad you asked.

The rules are all a bit complex, so I'll just put down the rough gist of things. Basically, Festival is a statewide theatre competition between schools. All schools must perform a one act play that is no more than forty minutes long. Prelims are held on a single day at locations all across the state, and then the winners from the prelims move on to the semifinals, and winners from there move on to the finals.

CHS performed the original comedy *Family Album*. The show is a series of adventures and memorable moments had by one large family over the years in their cabin in Maine. The play begins with Mary (played by Jenny Mitchell), her adult daughters Gigi (Nadya Lisciotto), Lulu (Julie Ruff), Kiki (Mia Kelly), and Marlene (Hannah Kunze), in addition to Kiki's husband, Gary (Nathan Sullivan) checking out a cabin for sale with their realtor, Mr. Johnson (Tristan Heck). It is the 1960s, and everyone is dressed for the period. It is impossible to describe just how spunky and wonderful Mary is, and how mortified she makes her daughters. Right away we see that all the characters have unique, real personalities and a great chemistry. The scene ends with Mary giving her daughters a photo album to record all of their good times up at the cabin. They take the first photo then, of Mary, her girls, and Mr. Johnson. Gary, of course, had to take the photo, a theme that will repeat through the rest of the piece.

The next scene jumps several years ahead. It's the Fourth of July, and the cabin is in chaos. Children run about, dressed in red, white and blue, while their parents try to grab a glass of wine and a little rest at the kitchen table. Tom (Will Marcotte), Gigi's husband, tries to organize the children to make s'mores, but his little daughter Sarah (Lauren Pratt) insists that everyone needs to see the show she wrote. Tom resists, but Mary calls him over and says that of course everyone will watch Sarah's show. Sarah is joined by her cousins

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MCAS

By Hannah Kunze

For many students, the MCAS stains blissful childhood memories from third grade onwards. At just eight years old, kids are expected to abandon their finger paintings and embrace the wonderful world of Common Core. I am not one to advocate for the complete termination of standardized testing, as a consistent method of analysis is vital, the increasingly large role tests have come to play in the future of students is damaging and unjust. Ever since the No Child Left Behind bill of 2002 was passed, each state has created their version of a standardized test. Despite the supposed benefits of increased testing, many critics argue that the tests are doing more harm than good. While standardized assessments are necessary to provide an objective picture of the academic standing of districts, these tests fail to emphasize and assess the skills that will actually be necessary to ensure a prosperous future. One could argue that tests like the MCAS fail to improve the country's academic standing, decrease the quality of teaching, and are vulnerable to external factors and biases.

To begin with, placing this much emphasis on standardized testing does not prepare students for the "real" world outside of school and creates unrealistic expectations for achievement. Rather than testing and enforcing skills such as cooperation and problem solving, vital in nearly all professions, we restrict students to filling out tiny bubbles and memorizing archaic vocabulary words. Life outside the classroom requires skills beyond filling in the best answer in a multiple choice activity. Although there is no doubt about the usefulness and accuracy of standardized testing in evaluating academic achievement, standardized testing neglects to delineate a student's creativity, leadership, and communication skills. Each

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Kids vs. Homework

By Grace Mescall

For centuries, there has been one rivalry more intense than any other. Everyone's heard of it. The feud between the Red Sox and Yankees doesn't even hold a candle to the ongoing battle between kids and their homework. In past confrontations, the kids have always lost pitifully. But this time, things are different. This time, the kids have their facts and statistics ready for this tide turning battle.

Round One. Fight!

Now everyone knows that a fighter has to be in tip-top shape if they're going to win. But odds are, if they're doing homework, they are not going to be in good shape. Homework can have multiple psychological and physical impacts on developing children. Due to the surplus of homework teachers assign, students rarely get the recommended amount of sleep they need, and in extreme cases, they go without sleep for days. Homework can also take away essential time that could be used to develop other life skills. For example, students spend less time participating in extracurricular activities that aid in their social development. Rather than teaching children to be functioning members of society, the schooling system is teaching them to regurgitate facts.

A study conducted by Stanford Graduate School of Education* found that not only does homework lead to high stress, but stress can also manifest into physical health problems. In milder cases, the student would complain of headaches, low energy, or frequent colds, but more extreme symptoms include an upset stomach, insomnia or even chest pains. When fifty-six percent of students say that homework is a major stressor in their lives, this can potentially

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MCAS

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student's approach to learning is unique; standardized testing is a crude way to measure their achievements. Open-ended projects and essays would better allow students to be represented as individuals, rather than as just a number on a Scantron sheet.

Perhaps the most crucial criticism of standardized testing is whether or not it's actually effective at improving the quality of our education. For all of the United States' power and wealth, its students have been consistently outperformed by European and Asian countries. Their troubling performance is what inspired Congress to issue state mandated tests, in an attempt to help American students better compete on the international level. Since the bill was passed, the United States' performance on the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) has remained nearly stagnant, with countries such as Poland consistently surpassing the US. Interestingly enough, some of the top scoring countries, most notably Finland, don't even have standardized tests, yet somehow they manage to keep pace with nations like China, notorious for the difficulty of their tests.

In addition, standardized tests have a challenging effect on the way teachers choose to deliver their content. A system that uses standardized test scores to evaluate a teacher's quality restricts academic freedom, and often forces educators to abandon traditional hands-on activities in favor of test practice. Due to the increase in funding for schools that do well on tests, schools are placing more and more emphasis on the necessity of high test scores. Standardized test scores are widely considered

to be an accurate representation of the teacher's effectiveness, not just the students' success.

Last but not least, many tests tend to be biased against low-income students, minorities, the disabled, and ESL students. For instance, a recent College Board study found a correlation between family income and SAT scores. The truth is simple: families with a greater annual income can afford to hire better SAT tutors and send their kids to school in wealthier districts, leading to higher test scores and consequentially more options for a quality university education. Although the information is hardly surprising, it's still discouraging. The influence that external factors have on standardized testing is an important criticism of the process. Unlike the SATs, many other standardized tests can't be retaken, and rely wholly on the student's performance on that one particular day. Taking into account the anxiety and pressure a student feels during a test like this, one test on one day shouldn't be used to reflect a whole year of learning.

In conclusion, although it is unrealistic to propose a complete boycott of all standardized testing, a decrease in the emphasis placed on tests would prove to be beneficial to all. The debate over how to teach the new generation has been a persistently controversial topic. The pressure to live up to the international standard for education is higher than ever, and our education system is clearly not achieving the task. School should encourage creativity rather than restricting the thoughts of its students to five-option multiple choice questions on tests. After all, a child's future is worth more than a pattern of bubbles on a Scantron sheet.

Kids vs. Homework

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become a big problem.

In a New York University survey** of two private high schools, forty-eight percent of students reported at least three hours of homework each night, on top of taking college level courses and feeling pressure to excel in extracurricular activities. They had little or no time to release the pent up stress. More than two-thirds of the students said they used alcohol and drugs to cope with the stress. During another study***, conducted by Stanford University, more than eighty percent of students reported having at least one stress related symptom in the past month, and forty-four percent proclaimed they experienced at least three.

DING! The final bell tolls, signaling the end of the fight. The teachers are aghast. They never knew the impact their combined effort had on their students. Luckily though, there is a solution- many, in fact. The most obvious one is to not assign any homework at all. However, it's doubtful many teachers would willingly agree to this request. So, an alternative solution would be to assign less. The National Education Association and the National PTA support the adoption of a standard method of assigning homework. That means that, starting in first grade, the grade level multiplied by ten should be the amount of time a student of that grade spends on homework each night. The total number of minutes should be divided equally between each core class. If teachers change the way they assign homework, it can make a major difference to the students who are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or worthless because of their work load. Teachers are the ones that can make the biggest difference, so why shouldn't they?

Resources

*<http://news.stanford.edu/2014/03/10/too-much-homework>

**<http://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2015/august/nyu-study-examines-top-high-school-students-stress-and-coping-mechanisms.html>

***<http://www.healthline.com/health-news/children-more-homework-means-more-stress-031114>

Restructuring the Half Day Schedule

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There has been a committee, consisting of several teachers, set up to address this matter. They usually meet on half days. The committee has proposed an idea of having a normal schedule, with five blocks. The periods would be shortened, but the loss wouldn't be extremely drastic. Instead of the typical 44-minute classes we have on half days, we'd have roughly 35-minute classes to accommodate all five classes. This new schedule will eliminate the repletion of the same day and let the teachers meet with their classes regularly with the cycle undisturbed.

Some teachers may think this is too short, but it is only ten minutes shorter. If the teachers think they simply won't have time to teach a full lesson, they could make this a catch-up or review day. Students could finish work they missed in class, ask the teacher questions about something they don't completely understand, or they could get a head start on something that's due later on. More opportunities to meet will benefit all.

The Family Album (continued from page 2)

Abby (Emma Dewitt), Meghan (Sophie Bellone), Mckayla (Madison Good), and Sam (Michael Xavier). Her plays is about a dog, played by Sam, named Leaky, and, while I won't go into details, suffice it to say, it is appropriately gross for children. A picture is taken of the cast of this "play", and the picture is hung up on one of the walls, along with the first photo the family took.

The story goes on, and photos are continuously added. At one point, everyone frantically searches for little Eddie (Kevin Hamilton), who has snuck off, but reappears once all but Lulu have left the cabin. As the show progresses, it becomes apparent that some people have died, while others have grown into awkward teens. Mary dies after the "Leaky" scene, but she continues to hang each picture up, lovingly haunting the cabin she always cared for, while watching over her family. Highlights include a psycho cousin (Jonathan Puffer), a problematic mouse, an actual bat at Girl's Night (killed by Lulu), a heated argument between Kiki and her brother Eddie (Philip Ferdinand Jr.) over whether a mattress is a piece of furniture, and a failed kidnapping film.

The show closes out with Kiki, Marlene, Lulu, Kara (Sophie Lee), Eddie and Gary all coming up to the cabin one last time, now as old as Mary was when she came up to buy the place. It is time for them to sell it. One of the sisters reveals that Gigi has passed on, saying how much she misses Gigi. Mary slides in and drops the family album on the kitchen table where they are sitting. They all flip through it, reminiscing about the memories they made at the cabin. They all decide to take one last picture, and this time, Gary finally gets in the photo. It was a funny, thoughtful play, and finished far too soon, in my opinion.

It Only Gets Stranger From Here: Part Three

By Fiona O'Hearne

"Hello? Is anyone there?"

My words sink like a stone. The blackness surrounding me is frigid, and almost...viscous, in a way.

Nice word. I appreciate a young lady with a vocabulary.

The voice comes from nowhere and everywhere all at once, which is exactly as confusing and terrifying as it sounds. It's almost as if the darkness itself is speaking. I feel a tickle at my ear, and someone murmurs,

"Perceptive too, I see."

The shriek that leaves my mouth next could have made a banshee jealous.

Then, everything is silent. I reach up to touch my face to make sure that my mouth is still open, and it is, but my vocal cords have stopped functioning.

"Yes, you are technically still screaming. I took the liberty of silencing you until you stop that infernal wailing. Go on, shut your mouth."

you?”

“It said several things to me. Most of it was just banter, really.”

His pale eyebrows rise up and a grin sweeps across his handsome face. “The voice bantered with you?”

I try to laugh, but it comes out garbled and small. “It sounds funny doesn’t it? The voice seemed to be everywhere, as if it *was* the darkness. And when I thought that, the voice said “Perceptive too, I see.”

I glance over at Luca, and he seems a shade paler than he had been a minute ago. His voice is softer when he speaks. “What else did the voice tell you?”

I swallow, and suddenly the dream seems very real. “It told me something about the moon, and light and dark, and a prince.”

He stares at me, all his mischief gone. For some reason, this scares me. Even though I know it’s impossible, I could swear the temperature has dropped several degrees. “What did it say exactly?”

Mechanically I recite the voice’s words. “When the moon hides half her face, dark and light be fair. The foreign prince must take his place, and you must bring him there. Au revoir, ma chérie.”

He gazes at his shoes, frozen. I hear him mumbling to himself, and lean in to hear what he is saying. It’s one word, over and over again. “*Merde.*”

I’ve known him long enough to know that this is not a good sign. Gently, I reach out and take his hand. “Luca? What’s wrong? What does it mean?”

His head snaps up, and I lean back in surprise, and fear. Because in his eyes there is no twinkle. Only rage, sorrow, and terror. “It means that you’re coming to a ball with me.”

Out of everything he could have said, that was definitely not what I was expecting. It so disorients me that my only reply is “Huh?”

Luca reaches out and takes my other hand so that both of them are captured in his own. I stare at him wildly, my heart racing in fear or anticipation or just mere confusion. His eyes hold steady on mine, and I can’t look away. My brain, helpful as always, decides that now is a good time to jump in. *His eyes are like an emerald green tractor beam. Ooh, that rhymes! Emerald green tractor beam, emerald green tractor beam, emerald-*

“SHUT UP!”

Luca stares quizzically at me, perhaps wondering, as I am, if I’ve finally gone insane.

“Just, talking to myself...”

While I mentally beat myself with a stick, Luca simply nods and locks eyes with me again.

“Jamie, I have to tell you something.”

I halt my mental stick beating and gaze back at him. He doesn’t shift uncomfortably or even blink, but I can tell he’s nervous. “You can tell me anything. As long as you want to, that is.”

His face is so serious. He’s like a statue.

“My full name is Amaranthine Lucain Viridess, and I am a prince of the Spring Court.”

Would you be surprised to hear that I fainted?