



From Portable to Permanent



A complete rendering of Marco Island Academy's new lobby.

By Colin Donegan

After years of development and preparation, Marco Island Academy will be graduating to a permanent campus for the 2021-2022 school year. Made possible by the support of the generous donors of the Marco Island community, the building will feature numerous upgrades from the charter schools current setup.

The lobby of the new cam-

pus will give a first impression of the school, and will serve as a hub to the different regions of the building, such as the gymnasium and the classroom wing. The entrance area will feature a reception center, multiple entrances, and staircases with sitting areas. Atop the main staircase, the building will host what has been dubbed as a student lounge. Principal Scott stated that it serves as a place for students to "be

together," and review notes or study. The classrooms will certainly be an area of interest for both students and teachers alike. According to Principal Melissa Scott, "everything is an upgrade" in the new classrooms that will soon be available to students. The classrooms will feature the newest generation of SmartBoards, along with a variety of new technology. With third-floor views of the island, students will still be able to eat lunch outdoors next year. The new lunch terrace will offer views of San Marco Road, similar to the students current outdoor dining area. MIA's new campus will host an expanded variety of new athletic opportunities, due to new components such as a gymnasium, locker rooms, a field, and a fitness center. Ryan Marie Roberts, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, predicts that enrollment will grow as a result of the brand new athletic offerings. "We're looking to hopefully add JV teams for all of our athletic sports," Roberts explained. She detailed that her goal was to expand upon MIA's athletics, all while improving student involvement. With the addition of the gymnasium, Roberts stated with certainty that HOPE physical education would be hosted on campus.

Located at the forefront of the

gymnasium is the stage, which will further MIA's performing arts department and its capabilities. Utilizing a rear projection system, the stage will provide a different experience for students interested in the performing arts, who usually perform using a '360 degree' stage format. "It's going to open us to be able to do more things," said performing arts instructor, Chris Dayett. Dayett and Principal Scott have both mentioned utilizing the stage to hold presentations similar to 'TED Talks.' To further the sound quality, the area will also house two separate sound systems for both the gymnasium and the stage. Dean of Students, Kevin Ray, explained that he looks forward to the advancement of safety precautions in the new building. Describing the new campus as the "forefront of school safety," Ray explained that the security of the students will flourish with a properly enclosed facility. The new campus will certainly be an upgrade from Marco Island Academy's current offerings. It will provide a heightened academic atmosphere and experience, all while creating additional opportunities for students. As seen through its many exciting features, the new building will serve as a beneficial learning environment for students in the years to come.

Wynne's Warriors

By Jorge Rodriguez

Like many toddlers, Wynne Lockwood loves playtime and snacktime, especially with her older sister. She adores her family and loves to go swimming on the weekends. However, Wynne has experienced far more in her lifetime than the average adult. Her prognosis has put the Lockwoods in a race against time.

At just 3-years-old, Wynne Lockwood was diagnosed with Kleefstra Syndrome - a rare genetic disorder that delays cognitive and psychological development. Wynne is one of only 500 people in the world with Kleefstra Syndrome, which is caused by the mutation or deletion of one gene - Euchromatic Histone Methyltransferase 1 (EHMT1).

Initially discovered in April 2010, its more common features include intellectual disabilities, sleep disorders, limited or absence of speech, behavioral difficulties, and a general loss of enthusiasm or interest. Those diagnosed with Kleefstra Syndrome typically begin to experience regression once they hit puberty.

Having been diagnosed in the summer of 2020, Wynne's parents Matt and Maria Lockwood have been working to raise awareness for this rare disease.

Her diagnosis threw the Lockwoods a curveball, leaving them to research on their own. As Matt says, "when your child is diagnosed with a rare disease... you realize that it is your responsibility as a parent to drive progress toward treatments and a cure." Shortly after her diagnosis, Wynne's parents discovered a non-profit organization that they could turn to, IDefine, which is dedicated to identifying treatments and cures for Kleefstra Syndrome and other rare intellectual disabilities. Since then, the Lockwoods have been working closely with the group in support of their efforts.

Wynne has been undergoing multiple therapies from a very young age in order to build up her strength and other skills before her disease worsens. Despite the lack of a remedial treatment or cure for Kleefstra Syndrome, the Lockwoods have worked tirelessly together. Fortunately, Matt and Maria's efforts have paid off, as IDefine has partnered with the Boston Children's Hospital to open a Kleefstra Syndrome Research Clinic, and has already launched a patient registry. However, there is far more to be done. As her mother puts it, "[Wynne] works so hard. It would be devastating

to see all of her progress wiped away." A treatment or cure could change that.

Wynne's story found its way to MIA through her grandmother, Marie Lynn McChesney. McChesney has been very involved with Marco Island Academy's Key Club as the Marco Island Academy Kiwanis Advisor from the Kiwanis group, and has become close friends with the Key Club Advisor, Lori Galiana. Once Galiana learned of Wynne's condition, she immediately began searching for ways that the MIA community could support the family. As MIA sophomore and Key Club Officer Taylor Drott says, "McChesney

has done so much for Key Club, and we wanted to help her family because she has really helped our Key Club family." To repay the kindness and raise funds for Kleefstra Syndrome, many students and Key Club officers baked goods and sold bracelets on the pavilion during lunchtime. In total, the bake sale raised about \$910, where Key Club then donated to reach a total of \$1500.

If you wish to support and become one of "Wynne's Warriors," please donate to the GoFundMe link below. <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/wynnes-warriors>



Key Club officers and the total donations raised for Wynne Lockwood.

In Sickness and In Health

By Abigail Gallup

One theme, 2 days, and endless creativity for Marco Island Academy's Valentine's Day Bake-off Program. This Valentine's Day program not only featured the work of alumni and theatre head, Mr. Dayett, but also the work of students from both Thespians and Mr. Eder's photography class.

Mr. Eder's class was tasked with writing sonnets and shooting photos that would accompany their written work. These posts can be found on The Wave.



Theater students were given the same theme, Valentine's Day, and asked to write a play in under 48 hours. The script had to play into the Valentine's Day theme and had a limit of three characters. Riley Letendre, an award-winning playwright, was the first featured play included in this program. She said, "I can't make it a love story" and so she decided to craft a play with, "all girls, where they're all just ranting." Her play, a story centered around the 90's riot girl movement,

featured three actresses: Grace Fields, Rachel Weiner, and Isabella Burgos. This play was placed first and offered her a well-deserved spotlight.

When asked why she writes she said, "I like writing for people," and "I like seeing people bring my stuff to life." It's this clear passion that has won Riley awards and has given her the opportunity to have one of her plays, "directed by a professional director." Riley has no plans to stop writing, she revealed that she just submitted a play to states and hopes for even more recognition.

As the theatre department continues to grow and writers like Riley continue to inspire, the opportunities are truly endless. This program is ever-changing and she said, "going to the meetings is the best way to get information."

We are sure Riley and the theatre community will continue to produce award-winning content and we can't wait to see what's next. Congratulations to the department for this wonderful program, MIA is proud of their tireless work.



Optimist Essay Contest

By Paola Cortazar

A list of the winners for the 2020-2021 Optimist international Essay Contest has finally been released. With the prompt of 'Reaching your Dreams by choosing Optimism', students were able to fully express themselves with little limitations to the topic itself. Given as an assignment by the head of the English Department at Marco Island Academy, Keith Scalia, to his juniors taking AICE English language.



1st place - Riley Letendre

2nd place - Haylen Irvan

3rd place - Ryan Miner

4th place - Abigail Gallup

5th place - Keagan Hallock

Five MIA students were recently recognized for having won the Optimist Club of Marco Island's essay contest based on the theme of "Is Optimism the Key to Achieving the Dreams you Imagine?"

First place honors went to Riley Letendre, with Haylen Irvan

being awarded second place and Ryan Miner third place. In fourth place came Abigail Gallup, rounded out by Keagan Hallock in fifth place. OCMI further awarded their efforts with certificates and checks ranging from \$50 up to \$250. OCMI Club Chair, Jayme Lowe said the "prompts are never easy and the requirements are pretty strict. They always do a great job and this year was no exception. We had a very hard time scoring as they were all great and heartfelt."

In addition, Letendre and Irvan's essays will be sent to the district level to be judged along with winners from other Optimist Clubs in the district. College scholarships are available for top winners at the district level.

Optimist International is one of the world's largest service club organizations with 80,000 adult and youth members in 2,500 clubs in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico, and throughout the world. Carrying the Mission Statement "By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in youth, our communities, and ourselves." Optimists conduct positive service projects that reach more than six million young people each year.

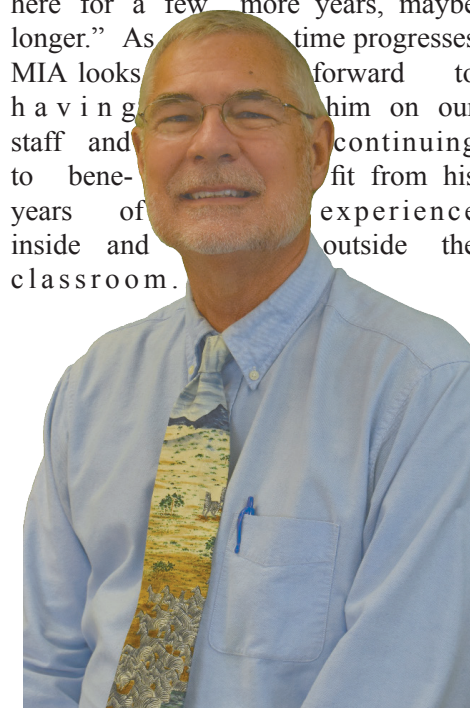
Get Psyched!

By Abigail Gallup

It isn't often that you are fortunate enough to find a teacher with a wealth of outside experience and expertise besides curriculum and instruction. Recently, Marco Island Academy was lucky enough to hire on Mr. Howard to build the psychology classes back and better than ever. Mr. Howard wasn't always a teacher. Before teaching he, "worked in the mental health field for almost 20 years," focusing on adults who suffered from "chronic mental illnesses like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and substance disorders." In his last two years working in the mental health field, he was in charge of staff training and development at a large organization." This gave Mr. Howard the opportunity to teach and he fell in love with the profession.

Before working at Marco Island Academy, Mr. Howard worked in the Tampa Bay area at two large public schools. He eventually taught at the same school his daughter attended "which was a great experience for both" of them. Mr. Howard worked for a combined 19 years as an educator and became involved with his students as the cross country and track & field coach, sponsor of the Psychology club, and co-sponsor to NHS. Mr. Howard decided to make the move in July of 2020 after his only child, Whitney and her husband both moved. When asked about his proudest accomplishment in life Mr. Howard said, "I am most proud of the relation-

ship I have with my daughter." With this in mind the decision to move and "be closer to them" was a no-brainer. With Mr. Howard's arrival to MIA, he admits that this is a very different setting from the larger schools he was accustomed to in the Tampa Bay Area. He said he would describe his, "MIA experience thus far as 'a learning experience.'" As he continues teaching his psych and AICE psych courses he looks forward to improving his "ability to teach Cambridge courses." Marco Island Academy is truly lucky to have Mr. Howard as an educator. His students and colleagues recognize his passion for teaching and his ability to connect with students. Mr. Howard said that he looks forward "to teaching here for a few more years, maybe longer." As time progresses MIA looks forward to having him on our staff and continuing to benefit from his years of experience inside and outside the classroom.



2020 - 2021 Wave Staff

Editors:

Abigail Gallup - Editor-in-Chief
Phoenix Gutierrez - Digital Media Editor
Riley Letendre - Entertainment Editor
Colin Donegan - News Editor
Paola Cortazar - Opinion Editor
Kathryn Barry - Associate Editor
Lily Braun - Features Editor
Haylen Irvan - Environmental Editor
Caitlyn Sadofsky - Sports Editor
Kendall Jacobs - Layout Editor
Emma Blankenship - Photo Editor
Lexi Smith - Arts Editor

Staff Writers:

Jorge Rodriguez
Michelle Armas
Laura Alvarado
Arlette Villela-Hernandez
Emily Reisinger
Isabella Portu
Madison Moyer

Contributing Writers:

Isabella Burgos
Angel Bartlett
Yessenia Martinez
Robert Davis
Sommar Kashey

Surging Waves

By Isabella Burgos

Journalism’s roots all began in room 104 with Mr. Scalia at the head. The start of the school year opened with an entirely new journalism staff. The Editor-in-Chief, Abigail Gallup, had just moved to MIA and was new to Journalism as a whole. That wasn’t the only new thing, Advisor Keith Scalia instituted the Editorial Board hoping to bring more student voice to the decisions of the program. Mr. Scalia is “convinced that the implementation of the Editorial Board is what moved the program to new heights both academically and collegially.” Even though the pandemic put a pause on recruiting new members, we were able to expand our team to 25 writers. This group has nev-

er been stronger and the once unfamiliar writers have become a family. With the growth of the department, for the first time, the majority of the newspaper staff wasn’t consumed by the journalism class offered at MIA. Students throughout the school began to show an interest that had never been seen before. The growing amount of involvement gave the newspaper a chance to alter how we were regarded throughout the school. Team member Yessenia Martinez said this, “It is no longer a class that you have to take or were placed into, but rather one that you’re fortunate enough to have.” Having a bigger pool of writers has allowed for the club to create well-rounded content and a safer environment for feedback and constructive criticism. Students were able to expand their writing skills

by learning from others. Having the ability to be honest with each other created a tight-knit environment that only strengthened the publications. Having a family atmosphere encouraged the team to be more vulnerable when writing which led to more personal stories and learning about each other on a deeper level. Suddenly, our group’s enthusiasm grew and elevated the quality of our pieces. Our writers enjoyed working with others who also cared about content creation. Eventually, the team launched iMIA, a multimedia extension of the newspaper. With this expansion the team began creating podcasts and videos that related to a variety of topics - Editor-in-Chief, Abigail Gallup women’s rights, hockey, and the progress of the building. iMIA will thank for my highschool experience. I couldn’t be luckier.” All of these triumphs were the program as well as a result of the hard work of our the opportunities for newspaper team. *The MIA Wave* the students of Marco Island Academy. continue to improve in the future.



The entire team: editors, staff writers, and contributing writers with Advisor, Keith Scalia.



By Phoenix Gutierrez

In this video, our news editor, Colin Donegan, and I were fortunate enough to explore the school’s new building, which has been in the works for multiple years. We showcased an interview with our principal, Melissa Scott, in discussion of the new lobby, where we included footage of the progress and general layout. This video also features an interview with one of our classmates giving the student perspective on the new building.

Videos



Podcasts

By Colin Donegan

In the first episode of “Light the Lamp,” News Editor, Colin Donegan, sits down with English instructors Mr. Scalia and Mr. Butler to discuss recent trades in the National Hockey League. Throughout this series of lengthy analysis, the three theorize the outcomes of trades in the four divisions of the NHL.



Val Simon: Hometown Heroes



By Lily Braun

About forty years ago, Val Simon was looking for a job. Every day, she would apply to three jobs, in hopes to land just one. One day, she was driving home from an interview, and saw the local newspaper, the the Racine Journal Times, from the corner. She thought it might be interesting at the time, so she decided to go in and have a look. She applied there, and when she got the job, she fell in love with journalism.

She especially enjoyed that being a journalist does not require you to be committed to one specific place. Mrs. Simon loved that you could be anywhere in the world and still do this job. Journalism allows you to write about anything that you have an interest in. It provides a place for journalists to find their audience.

As big newspapers continue into a decline, smaller, community focused papers like the Coastal Breeze have retained their audience. As more people have transitioned

to online news forms, less newspapers were being sold. The convenience of online news outweighed that of a printed copy. Mrs. Simon feels that smaller newspapers started to “fill the void.”

Newspapers are always evolving, from the past, to the present, and into the future. In the past, newspapers have been the only source of information for people and were a true necessity for news coverage. Today, newspapers have completely evolved into somewhat of an online revolution. Mrs. Simon continues to play a vital role in keeping her newspaper alive. She focuses on investing time into her community, especially into finding students that could become the future of journalism.

Val Simon has assisted The Wave since its infancy. The students at Marco Island Academy did not have access to software or funding that would allow them to print the newspaper, and in response, Simon kindly opened the Coastal Breeze office to The Wave editors so they could finalize their paper. At least once a week, students would go there and perfect the layout. She would even pause production to make sure that

the students were able to have the time they needed. Because of her dedication, the journalism staff of The Wave expressed interest in awarding her with a token of appreciation. On Wednesday, January 6th, Simon came to Marco Island Academy to meet with the Editorial Board and their advisor, Mr. Keith Scalia.

During her visit, she offered advice to the students who write for The Wave. She relayed the importance of being open-minded and dedicated, especially for students who have an interest in journalism. If you have a passion in a certain area, she advised to “go for it. It’s not a lifetime commitment...” Simon explained that journalism covers a variety of topics and material to write about. She added that if you have any interests, you could most certainly make a living writing about it as a journalist. She then recalled some of her experiences in her tenure working for the Coastal Breeze. Subsequently, Simon was presented an award for her role in the publication of the print variant of The Wave.

In the last few years, online papers have really taken to the forefront of the journalism scene. However, this

is of no concern to Simon. She feels that since many newspapers have migrated online, this leaves a lot of room for smaller publications like the Coastal Breeze to find their market.

She noted that running a paper now is very different than even ten years ago- “now you have to have a website, you need to have a Facebook page - you need to reach the other age groups.” But if you can evolve and take the right steps to reach varying audiences, you can grow a following, just as the Coastal Breeze has.

Simon remarked, “If you can make people feel a bit better after interacting with you than they did before, you will go far,” and Mrs. Simon has certainly left her impact on The Wave. Marco Island Academy is eternally grateful for Val Simon’s dedication and our strong partnership with Coastal Breeze. As time progresses, The Wave staff looks forward to the publication of their sixth volume and their continued cooperation with Val Simon.



Val Simon pictured with Colin Donegan, Kathryn Barry, Cassandra Scalia, Paola Cortazar, Haylen Irvan, Riley Letendre, Phoenix Gutierrez, Lily Braun, Abigail Gallup, Caitlyn Sadofsky, and Keith Scalia.

Mark Melvin: Hometown Heroes



By Editorial Board

Mark Melvin, a man not seeking recognition but very deserving of it. You might see him walking through the halls or giving tours of the brand new building. Regardless of the size or scope, Mark Melvin continually makes it a point to help out, living to serve his community, especially the students of Marco Island Academy. He understands the importance of direct involvement and personal connection. That’s why Melvin invests in the little things like donating candy canes for the holiday season and investing quality time on campus with the students.

After the devastation of Hurricane Irma, fate would have it that Melvin would find his home on

his ability to help led him to discover the need for a permanent campus as the Marco Island Academy student body quickly grew. As he came to know Jane Watt, the Chairperson of the Academy, and her mission, he made the decision to officially get involved in the construction of the permanent campus.

With his history in IT development, Melvin brought a crucial perspective to the building and it’s new technology. With the progression of the new build, Melvin also became a part of the Capital Campaign.

Melvin has always followed his mother’s advice to, “give until it hurts.” This selflessness has become the foundation for his contributions to the scholarship opportunities for MIA students and the building as a whole. Reflecting back on his high school years, Melvin

understands the importance of community and has mirrored this through his donations. Most recently his contribution to the Class of 2021 naming-right opportunity for a set of home bleachers has reflected the importance of student involvement. Mr. Melvin hopes the new building will serve as a catalyst for opportunity and eventual success. He has been inspired by the students and the sense of community on campus and treasures his continued opportunity to further MIA. Melvin’s willingness to give stands true as he reminds students to always remember to “take advantage of the opportunities

and to repay the people that helped you get where you are today.”



Mark Melvin and Michelle Melvin on site of the new building

The Rhineharts: Hometown Heroes

By Editorial Board

Brenda and Scott Rhinehart have a dream. They hope that Marco Island Academy, a school fueled by dreams, will be a place to foster creativity and quality education in students for generations to come. A contribution to this dream, a stage called The Rhine, is quickly coming to fruition as our school building reaches completion. Before moving to Marco Island, the Rhineharts resided in Pennsylvania where Mr. Rhinehart was a member of the Board of Directors at York College. He liked being able to aid the success of their students.

Around 2011, the couple decided to permanently make the move to Marco Island. Once they had settled in, they started their search for a local cause to support. With the hopes of contributing an abundance of aid to their new community, the two were looking to help with both financial support and volunteer work. Instantly after meeting Jane Watt, the Rhineharts knew Marco Island Academy was the perfect opportunity.

With their pasts in education, the decision to help MIA was obvious. The two have always been interested in helping schools and “giving students and their families a choice in education.” Mr. Rhinehart, with his connec-

tions from Pennsylvania, helped gain an audience with the governor which would have been impossible otherwise with the size of our school. Watt’s meeting with Rick Scott gave MIA credibility. The Rhineharts donated a large sum of money to the performing arts center at MIA’s new campus. Mrs. Rhinehart noted that they chose performing arts specifically as a result of their granddaughter’s involvement in theatre back in Pennsylvania. Their experience exposed them to how much a school’s theatre program can impact a child, which led them to hold it close to their hearts.

Christopher Daylett, the performing arts director at MIA, tells us that he is “very grateful for their support of the performing arts and look forward to all of the future productions on ‘The Rhine.’” Mrs.

Rhinehart is on the board, and says that her biggest accomplishment was help-

ing “up the game with fundraising.” She helped change the campaign from everyone working too hard with little results to the successful effort we see today. In addition, both Mr. and Mrs. Rhinehart have a part in the Capital Campaign. They know that the school is going to “do nothing but flourish” and Mr. Rhinehart added that the “new building is going to bring us credibility,” which is very important for a successful future.

COVID-19 has brought a lot of unexpected challenges, but the Rhineharts are proud of how MIA has shown resilience and work has continued on our permanent campus. They are also grateful for the new people that have come to this island and stepped up to believe in MIA’s mission. No longer will The Rhine just be a river in Europe. It will be an amazing performance space for generations to come.



Scott Rhinehart and Brenda Rhinehart overlooking the progress of the new stage.

David Gardner: Hometown Heroes

By Editorial Board

Every dream starts with a humble foundation. It takes a great deal of hard work and dedication to reach your destination. Construction is no easy feat; whether you are building your future or a state-of-the-art campus, the foundation must be solid.

David Gardner is no strang-

er to the art of construction. Building his construction company from the ground up, this Cape Cod native became a successful entrepreneur.

He found himself on Marco Island after receiving an offer to wine and dine with the locals. A new opportunity arose when he was given the chance to buy property. In exchange, the trip to the island would be free. After purchasing a home on

Marco Island, he soon fell in love with the island’s atmosphere. This is where Gardner began a new foundation. Soon, this bond would lead him to sell his house up north and reunite with his home on Marco Island.

David Gardner continued building bonds and creating new foundations wherever he went. His local Lions Club acted as a new

slate, where he would later meet Jane Watt. This is when his legacy at Marco Island Academy began. Watt had dreams of building a school on Marco Island for local high school students. Gardner had friends whose children went to a large Naples high school, and he agreed that there was a need for a smaller high school on Marco Island. It all started with a dream, much like a blueprint. The two began collaborating and working hard to bring this dream to life. Gardner generously donated money and offered his help for the project.

up to me, and I want to be able to give back and help them.” Now, students at Marco Island Academy will have something to look up to - the new building. Standing tall as a symbol of resilience and honor, the new MIA campus will embody those who worked hard to make the dream a reality.

Gardner is optimistic about the new building because of the excitement it will bring to the community. He knows that MIA is special, and that the school is student-centered with an emphasis on community and leadership. He is optimistic about Marco Island Academy’s ability to provide students with new opportunities and a continued improvement to their overall learning. Gardener loves Marco Island, and he cannot wait to see how the new school will help the island foster creativity in MIA’s students.

Marco Island Academy would like to thank David Gardner for teaching us to not overlook the foundation and for constantly supporting our MIA family. It all starts with a foundation, how you build upon it determines your success.



Hillary Noyes, David Gardner, and Jane Watt on site of the new building.

The Iordanous: Hometown Heroes

 By Editorial Board

Athletes display their last name proudly at the tops of their jerseys. They proudly wear their team’s name along with their own name as they conquer each court, field, or track. The Iordanou name is recognized as both a last name and a team name. Marianne and Dinos Iordanou are a team, husband and wife, that work together to be the change they seek in their community.

Mr. and Mrs. Iordanou are a team for change. They believe “education is the ladder of society,” and show it in their actions to support our school. From investing in a new scoreboard for MIA at Winterberry Park to donating the Arts and Athletic center for the new building, the Iordanous see the importance of working together. Ultimately, they are a team that intends on being successful and improving the community in any way they can.

When looking at a team, it is important to look at each individual player, along with their impact on the team as a whole. Marianne Iordanou is a determined woman who many students look up to. In New York, Mrs. Iordanou acted as Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors for Our Lady of Mercy Academy and chaired their capital campaign to build a new technology center for the school. When she overheard about the need for funding and support at Marco Island Academy, she knew this was a great opportunity to contribute to their new community, and an opportunity to act on their calling to help children. Mrs.

Iordanou graciously offered to help and upon meeting Jane Watt, her decision was finalized. She chaired our entire Capital Campaign for the new build. From there, she says “the rest is history.” Indeed it was history, a history leading up to a home run; our new campus.

At a young age, Marianne Iordanou had a spark of curiosity when it came to athletics. However, she wasn’t allowed to participate in sports because her father believed it wasn’t appropriate for women. With age, her passion for athletics grew, prompting her to work with her husband and donate to the Arts and Athletics Department at Marco Island Academy. In addition, Mrs. Iordanou had also noticed that there wasn’t much of a theatre program on the island. In theatre, a cast full of actors works like that of a team. In her eyes, “team-manship gives kids pride, and the theatrical performances and working together brings kids together,” so donating to build up both programs was the perfect way to bring the importance of working together into the lives of many students.

The other player on the team, Mr. Iordanou, also sees a lot of importance in education. Somewhere in a small town in Greece, was a young boy seeking education. His hometown did not have access to quality education. When Dinos Iordanou was 19, he moved to the United States and worked several jobs to be able to pay for a better education. He saw firsthand what school can do for someone and how it impacts their success, so he wanted to repay society by contributing to MIA’s educational

facilities. He added, “you need a great curriculum, a great staff, and the proper facilities to help shape young minds.” Building this new school will provide

not only the proper facilities but numerous expansive opportunities to the growing youth of Marco Island.

The Iordanous are very excited to see this community “moving ahead and not staying stagnant.” A team must work cooperatively to move as a well-oiled machine. Mrs. Iordanou wants to see the community thrive and for everyone to enjoy the opportunities Marco Island has to offer. The Iordanous will always be a part of the Marco Island Academy family, and their contribution to building up this community and truly believing in MIA’s message will help to create a strong foundation for young leaders. The Iordanou team will

forever be known to all at MIA as they continue score for our MIA family.



Marianne and Dinos Iordanou.

Top 5 Hiking Spots In Southwest Florida

 By Emily Reisinger



A small strip of Gator Hook Trail.

5. Gator Hook Trail

Gator Hook Trail is 4.7 miles of muddy terrain off of Loop Road. This trail, although difficult, has an interesting history. During the prohibition era, Loop Road was used by bootleggers, smuggling alcohol from Cuba to Miami and Tampa. At the end of the road, there was a town called Pine Crest, which was a rather raucous area; definitely not suitable for children. The town has now disappeared into the wilderness and is left uninhabitable. Gator Hook Road, the influence for this trail’s name, was sourced from the gator poaching

that happened in the area. The history of this trail is incredible, but the hike needs experience and is not as easy as some say. If you choose this hike, bring your rain boots as you’ll often encounter terrain that will require you to walk through water up to your waist.

4. Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

This is the easiest hike on the list and some elementary schools in the area even take field trips here. The hike is on a boardwalk, and you’ll walk through a variety of different ecosystems from pine flatwoods, wet prairie, stands of pond cypress, bald cypress, and marsh. It’s also home to a ghost orchid that is visible during certain parts of the year- it’s very rarely in bloom. You enter through a building with a little cafe, museum, and gift shop that then leads to the boardwalk. It’s an incredibly safe hike, but it can be quite crowded. You have to go, tourist or not!

3. Fakahatchee Hilton

Fakahatchee Hilton is a 5-mile hike just west of Copeland, Florida. The trail leads to a beautiful lake with many alligators. Though gators on the trail are

not common, there is a chance of encountering one along your hike, so exercise caution! The hike is reasonably easy and a good adventure for older children. The trail leads to a cabin with a gorgeous view of the lake. You cannot enter the 1957 cabin, but it’s still super interesting to look at from the outside. Near the cabin there is an outhouse, but I definitely wouldn’t recommend using it. This would be the perfect hike for a date with a romantic picnic at the end and it’s not crowded, so it’s perfect for some alone time. It’s a nice, simple, and easy hike with an outstanding view.

2. Deep Hole

Deep Hole is located in Myakka State Park, which has a fee to enter. Deep Hole Trail is 4.4 miles long and offers little to no coverage, so avoid hiking it on hot days. The hike brings you to the deepest sinkhole in Florida that’s filled with water and is currently home to over 100 alligators! The Deep Hole Trail is also a spot for bird watching. When the water levels are higher, you won’t have access to Deep Hole or view of the alligators, so keep this in mind when planning your hike. Once you

finish your trail there is a little restaurant and gift shop where they offer boat tours and canoeing in Myakka Lake and river. This is also a prime fishing spot which can be a nice afternoon activity. Though the hike can be a bit painstaking, the view and experience at the end make it worth it. With a large number of gators, be careful and exercise caution!

1. Bird Rookery

Bird Rookery Trail is a hike for someone who understands wildlife, especially gators and water moccasins. Gators are often on the trail, so beware and careful. It’s 11.9 miles, but signs tell you your exact distance and you don’t have to do the full trail. During the wet season, many spots of the hike are submerged, so you’ll have to hike through puddles of water. With the distance and Florida’s heat, I recommend you bring more water than you think you’ll need, as well as some snacks. Throughout the trail, there are many spots for a nice picnic and relaxation. Once you’re done with the hike there are some good restaurants nearby such as a Mexican Restaurant called, Mi Ranchito. Overall, Bird Rookery is a beautiful hike; just hike with caution.

Day in the Destination: Yosemite National Park



By Kathryn Barry

As an avid summer-time traveler, I have visited some very interesting places that are full of natural wonder. Yet, one of the hardest things when it comes to travel is picking out what to do when you only have a short period of time. This article will provide you with the “perfect day” at each destination, to save you both the time and hassle when making day plans.

Our location today is Yosemite National Park. It is located in the middle of California, on the eastern side. For the best waterfall experiences (aka most crazy), go in mid to late spring or during the summer when the snow is still melting off from winter. I went during the summer in early July. Yosemite is most known for its raging waterfalls, towering granite monoliths, and the Yosemite Valley, surrounded by huge granite rock faces. Most know Yosemite for El Capitan and Half Dome, yet there is so much more Yosemite has to offer. Since we are given limited time, let’s hit the big sites!

To have the best day, you want to get up early, preferably around 6:00 a.m., pack two “lunches” and get on the road fast to beat the crowds. From the entrance gate, you will want to drive to the Yosemite Valley loop, the most famous road in the park. Along it, you will get a glimpse of “Tunnel View” and Bridalveil Falls as you drive along the right side of the loop. Tunnel View is the most photographed place in the park because you can see many of the iconic sites from there. It is looking down the valley. To the right, you can

see Bridalveil Falls, to the left is El Capitan, and at the back is Half Dome.

You will drive along the right side of the loop until you get to the Mist Trail. The Mist Trail is the most epic hike in the park because there are huge views throughout the entire trail. Unless you have permits and are willing to spend the night on the trail, you will not want to go the whole way up to the top of Half Dome. Since you only have one day, my recommendation is to just hike up to the top of Vernal Falls. It is a 7 mile round trip trail that is moderate, but at times can get strenuous. The big sites along the trail include the wide, raging Vernal Falls, Nevada Falls at the top, and the panoramic views throughout. Be sure to bring a raincoat because the mist from the waterfalls is pretty intense (hence called the Mist Trail). When you get to Nevada Falls, be sure to go to the lookout where you can look down directly over the waterfall and take in all of its power. At the top is where to eat your early lunch and then head back down. This is a truly awesome hike that speaks for itself.

Once you have completed that feat, I would recommend continuing around the rest of the Yosemite Valley road loop. If you need snacks, bathroom breaks, or places to rest for a while, there are plenty of lodges around the loop.

Next, you will come across Upper and Lower Yosemite Falls. If you are up for it, I would highly recommend taking the flat paved path that is only one mile round trip to the bottom of Lower Yosemite Falls. As you walk down the path, you can see both upper and lower, but at the end, you can

see Lower Yosemite Falls much better.

Now, after all that walking, time for some relaxation. On the loop, continue on and drive to near the base of El Capitan, where you will find a small parking pullout. There is a little trail for rock climbers, but instead, cross the street to another trail going along Devil’s Elbow in the Merced River. The trail is the Yosemite Valley trail. We are only taking about 100 steps on this trail because our goal is to get out to the Merced River. Here, there are small islands with beaches and trees in the middle of the river where you will eat your second lunch under the shade. (When you wade out, it only goes up to your knees, but the water is shockingly cold to a Floridian.) This is a great place to spend the afternoon because of the up close view of El Capitan. If you have binoculars or really good eyes, you can see climbers on the face of the rocks. If you’re brave like me and want to cool off, take a daring full body plunge into the river. This spot is arguably my favorite in the park because it is so secluded, and no one knows about it.

By now, it is approaching late afternoon, so you want to get back on the road again and complete the Yosemite Valley loop. If you want, go back and see Tunnel View again, because this time, it will be lit up from the nearly setting sun.

Our last spot to end the day will be going to Taft Point and the Fissures at sunset. Once you exit the loop, head back towards the entrance and take Glacier Point Road up to the trailhead. This road is only open during the summer and autumn months, so keep that in mind if you are visiting Yosemite



Walking up the path towards Upper and Lower Yosemite Falls.

in the spring. Taft Point shares a trail with Sentinel Dome, but once you get to the fork early on, take the left one. It is only a 2.2 mile round trip that is decently easy with some elevation gain. The payoff pitch is enormous. Taft point is far above El Capitan (which is absolutely huge) and above Yosemite Falls. It is one of the highest vantage points in the valley. When you get to Taft Point and the Fissures, it can be overwhelming because of the height, so keep this in mind. Let’s just say that if you dropped a large dresser from the point, you would not be able to see it hit the ground, and would most likely lose sight of it well before. There are a couple of guard rails on the point, so you can lean your head over the edge and look down. It is definitely a reframing experience. The sunset makes it that much better.

Congratulations! You made it through one very epic day in Yosemite. Although these are my top choices, there is so much more to explore. You would need much more time than just a day to explore the majority of Yosemite and all of its wonders.

Juggling Life as a Teenager



By Caitlyn Sadofsky

My mom has always told me how proud she is of me. It makes me feel accomplished and proud of myself, but then I remember that I still have so much more to go. All that I’ve accomplished could be washed down the drain with any mistake. That’s a lot of pressure for a 15-year-old.

Adults always say that the years spent in high school are the ones you will never forget. Who ever said this first forgot to mention that those years weren’t all sunshine and rainbows. What they didn’t mention was the stress, the fear of disappointment, and the pressure of success. Once every detail and factor of life is forced into our developing brains, we are set off on our own, hoping to succeed. Our intelligence is classified by a number or letter that ultimately defines our future.

High school is basically one big test to determine how capable a person is to survive in ‘the real world’. It’s the time to learn about priorities and how to get them straight. However, this isn’t something taught by teachers. Priorities are the things someone must figure out

on their own. There are so many more things all thrown at once and we are expected to juggle it all with one hand.

All of my time is often spread too thin between the demands of school, work, sports, and clubs. When I am asked what I like to do in my free time, I never really have a definite answer. In reality, I don’t have much free time. When I’m not doing homework, working, or physically at school, I’m getting ready for bed or taking a shower. When working seven hours both days of my weekend and almost every day throughout the week, things get stressful. The fear of failure often burdens my mind as I realize what’s expected of me.

I know that this stress is universal and everyone feels overwhelmed at times. Imed Bouchrika, an expert on the mental demands students face, offers a variety of statistics on the startling increase in student stress. The article states that, “Three quarters (75%) of American high schoolers and half of middle schoolers described themselves as ‘often or always feeling stressed’ by schoolwork.” It’s likely that many students at MIA are a part of that 75%.

Lily Douglas, a sophomore at

Marco Island Academy goes through similar struggles. When asked about the hardest part of this school year, Lily says that, “Preparing for state testing and being ready for all the exams has been hard. I’m not used to having all the tests, and now I have like 20.” Marco Island Academy is a school that prepares students for the rigors of a college education. Being the number one school with the highest test scores in all of Collier County, the testing season is the most stressful part of the year for both students and staff.

On top of the already stressful workload that students face at Marco Island Academy, many also take on jobs during the school year.

Charli Noyes, a sophomore at Marco Island Academy, is one of these students. She works three to four days a week at an ice cream shop right after school for about five hours each day. Along with work, she is an active member in Key Club and track. Charli also experiences the stress of academics, saying that, “The most stressful part of school is having the pressure of keeping all A’s.”

With COVID-19 still around, missing school for being contact-traced

or sick in general makes keeping good grades even more difficult.

The one thing I always try to remember is to be positive. As a sophomore in high school, I will admit that there are many fun and exciting memories that you will make throughout your four years. School dances, summer, and weekends will help create some of the best memories of our lives.

Even though it’s hard to juggle school work, sports, my job, and volunteering, I know that it will all pay off in the end. High school so far has already brought me so many unforgettable memories and friendships. I can only hope that these four years really will prepare me for ‘the real world’. I don’t want to let anyone down, especially myself.



Students feel the stress of academics.

The Evolution of Liberty



By Colin Donegan

Since the beginnings of a young nation, the personification of Liberty has played a prominent role on American coinage. Two of the most beloved designs of Liberty will return in 2021 as silver commemoratives.

Although its portrayals have adopted numerous changes over the centuries, the depiction still remains a testament to the ideals of America's foundings; freedom, opportunity, equality, and of course, liberty.

The imagery of Liberty has existed for millennia on coins, dating back to coins of the late Roman Republic, in which the Roman goddess Libertas was portrayed on countless government issues. When precursors to revolution initiated in the early 1770s, Liberty's personification became growingly apparent in the colonies. Liberty became an allegorical representation of the early American patriots, and served as a rivalry to Britannia, the national personification of Great Britain.

Post Revolutionary Liberty

Under the Articles of Confederation, it was the responsibility of states to mint their own coins. The Coinage Act of 1792 established national coinage and denominations, along with the United States Mint in Philadelphia. The legislation called for the obverse (front of the coin) of coins to be inscribed with the word 'Liberty,' along with her imagery and the date. The depiction of an allegorical figure representing an American ideal on a coin was much more pleasing to the masses than a sitting president, which was deemed too monarchical by President Washington.

In 1793, the first federal issue intended for circulation was released. Dubbed the 'Chain Cent,' the large copper cent featured Liberty with flowing hair on the obverse, whose untied hair symbolized America's newfound freedom [1]. A linked chain representing the newly unified states dominated the reverse, or back of the coin.

The design was met with disapproving opposition from the public; an article in the Boston Argus publication went as far to describe Liberty as 'in a fright,' and a letter described the

representation as portraying an 'Idiot's head with flowing hair.' The design was quickly revised in 1794, making way for a revamped Liberty that would remain on the large cent for just three years.

By 1796, the 'Flowing Hair' design that appeared on numerous denominations had been replaced by the 'Draped Bust' series [2]. The new design portrayed Liberty donning drapery, and was present on the obverse of all copper and silver coins minted from 1796-1807. Full of intriguing history, these coins remain a testament to America's early years, and are extremely sought after among numismatists.

19th Century Liberty

In 1807, yet another depiction of Liberty came about, featured on the obverse of the half dime, dime, quarter, and half dollar. The new design, classified as the 'Capped Bust' series [3], proved to be popular, as seen through the duration of its minting, which lasted as late as 1839. Now facing left, the design showcased the bust of Liberty, adorning a gown and an elegant cap. Liberty appears to be older and more matured, a comparison to America as an evolving and growing nation, flourishing upon its success and accomplishments.

In the 1830s Liberty was changed once again. The new portrayal, classified as the 'Seated Liberty' series, was present on most silver coins from 1836-1891 [4]. The design depicted Liberty in full figure seated upon a rock, grasping a Phrygian cap topped on a liberty pole, popular representations of freedom and liberty made popular by the French Revolution of the late 18th century. Another indication of its French inspiration, the new design closely replicated the 1794 painting, *La liberté*, by painter Nanine Vallain. Liberty's representation in the Seated Liberty series is regarded as neoclassicist in style, which experienced a height in popularity during the Age of Enlightenment.

1859 marked the first year in which the iconic 'Indian Head cent' was minted [5]. The design featured Liberty wearing the headdress of a Native American chief, and was the size of a modern-day cent, a contrast to the size of its pre-1857 predecessors that were nearly the size of a half dollar. The design last-

ed until 1909, when it was replaced by the Lincoln Wheat cent, which was the first American coin to showcase a president. A similar design to the Indian Head cent was featured on the Three-dollar gold piece, struck between 1854-1889.

The Bland-Allison Act of 1878 authorized the government to purchase large quantities of silver to convert into silver dollars. As a result of this legislation, the United States Mint issued the new 'Morgan dollar,' named after its designer George T. Morgan [6]. The coin would be minted from 1878-1904, and once again in 1921. Its revolutionary design featured Liberty wearing a Phrygian cap, decorated with a ribbon stuffed with wheat and cotton, a symbolic nod to the country's agricultural powerhouse long featured on American coinage. The portrayal of Liberty on the Morgan dollar is traditionalist in style, inspired by classic Greek portraits and figures.

Designed by Chief Engraver Charles E. Barber, a new design of Liberty came about in 1892 [7]. Highlighted on the new dime, quarter, and half dollar, it was clear that the design was heavily inspired by the classical Roman woman. Also influenced by the French coins of the time, the design of Liberty was rooted in the traditional European style. Liberty's design on the coins was the center of public dissatisfaction, and was criticized for its visually unappealing design; the appearance only got worse after the coins were worn slick due to heavy circulation.

20th Century Liberty

The years 1907-1916 marked the beginning of the 'Renaissance Era' of American coinage, in which the most iconic and timeless coin designs would emerge. Under the guidance from numerous presidential administrations, the United States Mint revamped every existing denomination during this period. In 1907 and 1908, the gold coins were revamped, replacing the 'Liberty Head' gold pieces which had been struck since as early as 1838. Similar to the Indian Head cent, the new \$10 gold piece portrayed Liberty wearing a feathered Native American war bonnet. The new \$20 gold piece, the Saint-Gaudens double

eagle [8], featured a full-figure depiction of Liberty in a flowing gown clenching a torch and an olive branch in her hands. Curbing to the universal displeasure that the 'Barber coinage' received, the silver denominations underwent their own changes in 1916. The new dime, quarter, and half dollar each featured their own designs, a departure from the shared designs of their historical predecessors. The dime now displayed Liberty wearing a winged cap that closely resembled that of the Roman god Mercury [9].

The new quarter displayed Liberty in a standing position clasping an olive branch and a shield in hand [10]. Designed before the United States entered World War I, the design signified America's readiness for war or peace.

Rooted in patriotic symbolism, the new half dollar [11] portrayed Liberty in a walking stride, draped in the American flag and bearing branches of laurel and oak, significant of civil and military glory. Since its retirement in 1947, the 'Walking Liberty' half dollar has remained the last circulating American coin to feature the personification of Liberty, as all denominations were replaced by portrayals of presidents or prominent figures.

In December 1921, a new design of Liberty appeared on the 'Peace dollar' [12], which commemorated the end of World War I. A symbol of changing times during the 1920s, Liberty appeared younger and to have taken on the style of a flapper. A Philadelphia based publication stated that Liberty 'has lost her Greek profile' and that the Hellenic beauty of its predecessor had been 'superseded by the newer 'flapper' type.'

The 21st Century And Beyond

Although Liberty has not been featured on any circulating coin since 1947, many portrayals of the iconic American figure have appeared on non-circulating modern commemoratives and bullion issues. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the simultaneous minting of the Morgan and Peace dollar in 1921, the United States Mint will bring back both designs as a silver commemorative not intended for circulation.

Glitter and Gold

 By Abigail Gallup

On May 15th, Marco Island Yacht Club hosted the MIA prom. The night was filled with dinner and dancing as a student-

ganized playlist was run by Chris Dayett, acting as DJ for the night. A prom court of four girls and four boys which were voted upon earlier in the week. The girls court consisted of Reese Jones, Casey Erickson, Emma Blanken-

ship, and Kendall Jacobs. The boys court consisted of Luis Aguilar, Joseph Krepel, Johnathan Watt, and Jacob Niedbalski. After the votes were counted, Jacobs and Watt were crowned Prom Queen and King. The tradition-



Alex Winnik and Reese Jones.



John Creedon and Allan Borges.



Cadence Snover and Jocelyn Snover.



Quintin Fitton and Kendall Jacobs.



Prom King, Johnathan Watt and Prom Queen Kendall Jacobs.



Isabella Portu, Isabella Burgos, and Sophia Lowrie.



Hannah Jahn and Noah Blaskovich.



Michael Camacho and Hailey Cartwright.



Peyton Phillips and Charli Noyes.



Kaleb Chamberlain, Nate Thompson, Grant Brusco, Michael Camacho, Peyton Phillips, Matthew Vergo, Peter Morales, Spencer Siems and Nicholas Vergo.



Luis Aguilar
Florida State University



Keaton Ashby
Workforce



Nicholas Baker
Military



Kevin Barry
Rice University



Emma Blankenship
Florida State University



Allan Borges
Florida Atlantic University



John Creedon
Florida Gulf Coast University



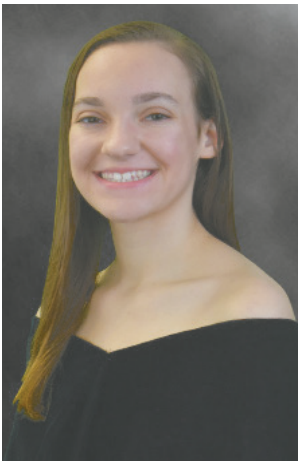
Rachel Drake
Florida SouthWestern State College



Casey Erickson
Florida State University



Michael Fabregas
Florida Gulf Coast University



Grace Fields
University of Hartford



Amelia Fontella
Florida SouthWestern State College



Aidan Libby
Florida State University



Brooklyn Long
Florida SouthWestern State College



Danyell Long
Florida SouthWestern State College



Vanessa Lopez-Ortega
University of Arizona



Morgan Maile
Lynn University



Sutton Miller
Florida Gulf Coast University



Peyton Phillips
Workforce



Nicole Politi
Florida Atlantic University



Kirra Polley
Nova Southeastern University



Jose Puell
University of Florida



Connor Ragan
Workforce



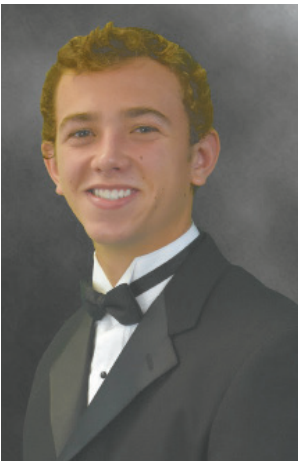
Juan Rojas
Florida SouthWestern State College



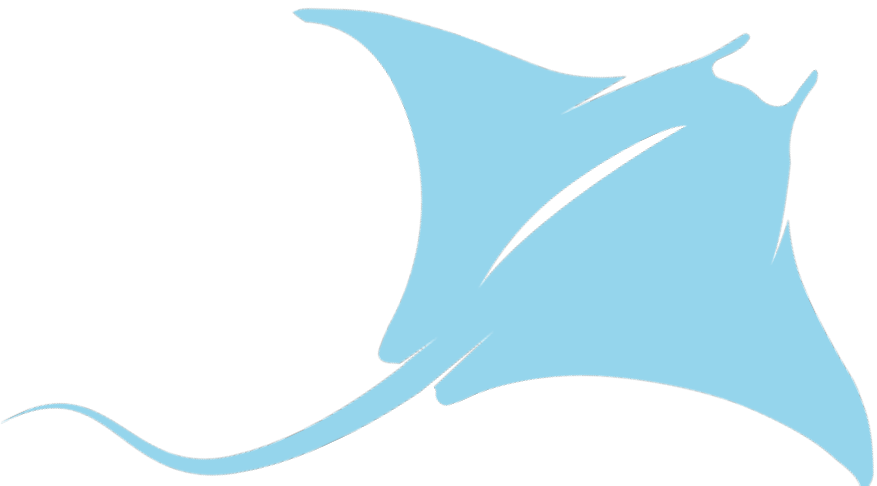
Julian Totten
Florida Gulf Coast University



Matthew Vergo
Florida Gulf Coast University



Johnathan Watt
University of Florida





Russell Brueckner
Lorenzo Walker Technical College



Grant Brusco
Workforce



Michael Camacho
Florida Gulf Coast University



Hailey Cartwright
Florida Gulf Coast University



Tyler Chute
Florida Atlantic University



Cody Couture
Workforce



Koby Garcia-Lopez
Florida SouthWestern State College



Kyler Howard
Florida International University



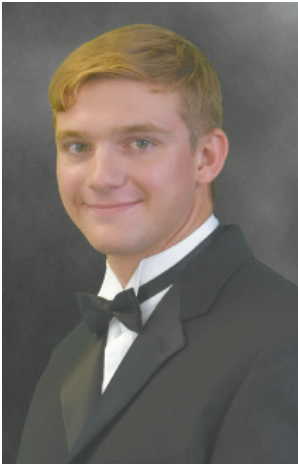
Kendall Jacobs
Florida State University



Reese Jones
Florida State University



Joseph Krepel
University of Florida



Christopher Lewandowski
Florida Gulf Coast University



Peter Morales
Auburn University



Zeke Morris
Trade School



Nate Nicholas
Florida Gulf Coast University



Jacob Neidbalski
Florida State University



Reese Pawlowski
Florida Gulf Coast University



Eddie Perez



Sofia Saavedra
Trade School



Taylor Savage
Florida Atlantic University



Jasmin Schauer
Florida Atlantic University



Spencer Siems
Florida Gulf Coast University



Bridget Sweeney
Florida SouthWestern State College



Megan Sweeney
Florida SouthWestern State College

Marco Island Academy
Class of 2021

Piney Point Information: Leaked

By Haylen Irvan

Toxic wastewater rushing into nearby neighborhoods does not sound like a particularly pleasant accompaniment to the Easter weekend. However, this was the case for Manatee County, Florida on Saturday, April 3rd, 2021.

The Event

A wastewater reservoir began leaking toxic material that has the potential to be hazardous to the surrounding areas. This reservoir is associated with the Piney Point phosphate plant in Manatee County.

Who is Involved?

Several news stations briefly reported on the toxic leak, but there are still many people who are unaware of the current conditions. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis toured the area and gave a few comments about the situation, "What we are looking at now is trying to prevent, and respond to, if need be, a real catastrophic flood situation." DeSantis has expressed his concern for the flooding, rather than the water quality issue.

What They're Not Telling You

So what happens if humans are directly exposed to the contaminated water? A scientific study from 2019 showed that daily exposure to phospho-



The Piney Point Reservoir in Manatee County, Florida.

gypsum can pose some carcinogenic risks. This means that the contamination of local water sources can result in various cancers. Phosphogypsum is known to have radioactive qualities with the presence of Uranium and Thorium. So, it's probably not something you want in your backyard. As soon as the word "radioactive" was leaked, people began panicking- and rightfully so.

Where is this a Problem?

Phosphate plants are not all that unique. In fact, Florida is home to 27 phosphate plants, nine of which are active. The Piney Point incident occurred at one of these abandoned facilities, where sedimentary rock is mined to use in fertilizers. Here in Florida, it may not be a surprise that we have had issues with fertilizers in the past. An overabundance of nutrient-high runoff has resulted in a phenomenon known as red tide. Red tide occurs when the nutrient-rich fertilizer is dumped into large bodies of water, which eventually results in algal blooms and oxygen dead zones. Red tide is an issue every year and alleviation efforts continue to be put on the back burner. This is in great contrast to the immediate attention placed on the Piney Point leak. However, this immediate attention has since been distorted into a governmental attempt to cover up this environmental catastrophe under the rug.

The problem is that you can't ignore an entire ecosystem that is hurting. Florida is home to some of the most complex ecosystems, but these diverse habitats could all become a thing of the past if this problem continues to endanger the flora and fauna that have been so carefully protected. Industrial advancements have so far proven to be one of man's waves of success.

However, it is a wave that continues to wash over the environment, constantly knocking it down before it has the chance to get back up. Phosphate mines are littered along Florida's west coast along with some inland areas and there are more than most realize.

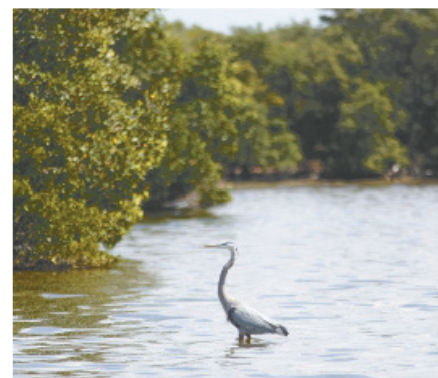
When Did All of this Start?

Piney Point was a phosphate mine 20 years ago, but all that remains is an abandoned reservoir containing stacks of phosphogypsum. In 2001, the plant closed due to bankruptcy and the Mulberry Corporation handed the property over to the Environmental Protection Agency. A company known as HRK then took the property in 2006. Phosphate has a shady past with government agencies like the EPA. In 1994, there was a voluntary ban in the United States in which there was a general consensus to ban the use of phosphate in detergent because of its negative effects. The idea of radioactive detergent certainly pushed many to agree and follow the ban.

Why You Should Care?

Not only does the leak pose health concerns for us, but the environmental impact is significant. As humans, we must remember that we are sharing our environment with other species, it is not ours. However, we must uphold certain duties by questioning the corresponding legislature and improving it for the better. Multiple reports indicate that Florida's Environmental Department has completely denied the significance of the leak.

Jim McCarthy is a board member on the Environmental Regulation Commission for Florida and after speaking with him, he told me, "The leak at Piney Point is a disaster with



A great blue heron wades in the water at Port Manatee.

potentially long term effects." These unspecified 'long term effects' are the reason that many are questioning the legitimacy of the government's conclusions regarding the leak. The demand for change has increased as the consequences of this leak grow in severity.

ManaSota-88 is a nonprofit organization that has spent years trying to fight for the health of Florida's environment. The organization specifically focuses on phosphate mining, oil drilling, pesticides, and even plastic bags. Glen Compton, the Chairman of the nonprofit, told me that, "The citizens of Florida should know who is in control of the future of our environment and our pocketbooks." He continued on to explain how taxpayers have contributed to Piney Point in an attempt to make it more secure and environmentally-stable. However, millions of dollars were going to waste because of the recent leak.

This leak has already caused much more damage than expected. The economy, our ecosystem, and local communities are already beginning to face the 'long term effects'. The phrase, 'see something, say something' still applies. Now that you see it, it is your turn to say something.

Plastic Alternatives: Reusable Options

By Isabella Portu

From 'trash island', to plastic straws killing the sea turtles, over a million marine animals are killed from plastic every year. Given the technological advancements of our time, it is unacceptable that we continue to utilize such harmful materials in products we use every day. Here are some more environmentally friendly options to use in place of plastic.

One way to avoid the overuse of plastic is by investing in more sustainable alternatives that are made of glass, stainless steel, or cloth. These reusable options can be kept from months to years as opposed to plastic, which is typically single-use. Not only are these products healthier for our planet as they help reduce carbon emissions into our atmosphere, but these products are often healthier options for ourselves as well. Certain types of plastic such as polyvinyl chloride, polycarbonate, and polystyrene can be very damaging to

the body and have the potential to cause health issues. Although many are unfamiliar with its more scientific name, a plastic known as polyvinyl chloride is a common chemical in food packaging, plastic wrap, cosmetics, and even pacifiers. Despite its popularity in various industries, polyvinyl has been known to result in problems including cancers, ulcers, and liver dysfunction. Polycarbonate, another common plastic, is seen most frequently in water bottles. Like polyvinyl, ingestion of polycarbonate can also result in adverse side effects including cancers, impaired immune function, and other long term conditions.

As scientists continue to engineer more biodegradable plastics, they are fortunately becoming more mainstream and readily available to manufacturers and consumers alike. One of the most interesting of biodegradable plastics that has grown in popularity is actually made from seaweed. This plastic is free from any of the harsh chemicals seen in the current plas-

tic as it is made of organic rather than synthetic material. Seaweed plastic is also very environmentally friendly as it degrades much quicker than most other substitutions and does not release any harsh chemicals into the surrounding ecosystems as it degrades.

Personally, I think the glass, stainless steel, and cloth options are the most sustainable options. Investing into these durable products only requires a one-time purchase and allows the consumer to get hundreds of uses out of a single product. As for commercial use, like in restaurants, I believe there should be stricter regulations on which plastic is used, as well as what take out products are used given that this industry often utilizes single-use, non-compostable plastics. In some cases, the environmentally friendly options are much more expensive, which is why many restaurants are hesitant to implement them. The average cost of an environmentally-friendly paper plate is about \$7.00 for a pack of 50, compared

to leading brands, which cost about \$2.00 for a pack of 50. The protection of our environment doesn't have to be expensive, which is why I recommend reusable items like glass and stainless steel that only require a single purchase.

Living on such a beautiful, diverse island comes with more responsibilities, as it is up to us to take care of our beaches and protect the ecosystems surrounding us. The smallest changes make the biggest differences and in the conscious decision to invest in sustainable products can lead to a healthier planet and a better tomorrow.



An example of trash built up on the shore lines of the beach.

How Sunscreen is Affecting Our Oceans



By Madison Moyer

We use sunscreen to protect ourselves from the sun's harmful rays, but have we ever thought about what it's doing to our ocean's wildlife?

Sunscreen is made up of an assortment of chemicals, which can be both helpful and harmful. Even though sunscreen helps to protect our skin from the sun's damaging rays, it can also severely damage marine ecosystems. As we swim in the ocean, these chemicals wash off of us and end up making their way into our waters where they attack our coral reefs, fish, eels and other things that live in the ocean.

One chemical that has perfected the art of coral destruction is Oxybenzone. Oxybenzone is a UV ray blocker that is put into most sunscreen products. While Oxybenzone may be beneficial to humans, it's extremely damaging to our coral reefs. This chemical contributes to coral bleaching and several studies have shown that Oxybenzone also damages the DNA of young coral reefs and disrupts their normal growth and development. Bleaching inflicts

unnecessary stress on the coral and decreases the coral's ability to protect itself. During the bleaching process, coral expels algae from within its tissue and ultimately releases all nutrients. Algae is important to these corals as the algae helps the coral remove waste and produce oxygen. These conditions usually lead to the death of these creatures, and as of now, more than 50% of our world's coral has been destroyed, with Oxybenzone being one of the leading causes. The loss of this coral is so vital because not only does it protect our coastlines from things like erosion and heavy storms, but it also provides many with food, and in some instances, a source of medicine. Antiviral drugs Ara-A and AZT are both medicines that have been developed from extracts of sponges found in the Caribbean reefs, and without these reefs, we would no longer be able to access these medicines.

Along with coral, many other marine animals are harmed by the chemicals in sunscreen. Octinoxate is a chemical that protects humans from the sun's UV rays, but can also damage the reproductive and neurological sys-

tems in marine life if they are exposed to it. In many fish and marine mammals, Octinoxate can cause miscarriages, sex changes, egg reductions, behavioral changes, disruptions in estrogen, and even immune reductions. Statistically, marine wildlife like parrotfish, which help clean reef algae, dolphins, which help keep the balance of the ocean by eating other animals, and wrasses, which help with reducing anxiety levels in the ocean, have all been found to be affected by Octinoxate the most. Sadly, the animals who have been exposed usually end up dying, which can be detrimental to the species over time.

Today, there are over thousands of different sunscreen brands around the world, each with their own ingredient list and chemical makeup. Around a quarter of these lists have harmful chemicals like Oxybenzone or Octinoxate, that can be incredibly damaging to ocean ecosystems. Although there are many harmful sunscreens, there are also some safer alternative sunscreens like Hello Bello, which is vegan and cruelty-free, Raw Love, which includes natural ingredients like coconut oil and



An example of a healthy coral reef.

beeswax, Raw Elements, which is biodegradable and reef-friendly and so many others. These brands don't include any dangerous chemicals and are all reef safe, which allows us to keep both our skin and marine wildlife protected.

The only way we can ensure our oceans are protected is by making more mindful choices about what we are putting into them. When purchasing sunscreen, it is important to know which chemicals are unsafe and check the ingredient list to ensure that it excludes chemicals that could cause our wildlife harm. By taking the time to make a conscious and informed decision, we can prevent the further degradation of our oceans and become part of the solution rather than the problem.

Back the Vac



By Lexi Smith

As the United States starts to recover from the global pandemic, the country has begun to lessen restrictions. Businesses and companies are allowing people to return to work, and some schools are allowing in-person instruction. Lockdowns are starting to ease and the country has begun its road to recovery.

As the United States gains control over the pandemic, the amount of people receiving vaccinations has started to decline. With fewer individuals willing to take the vaccine, the country has grown further away from the possibility of herd immunity.

At this point, herd immunity isn't a solidified percentage of the population. Dr. Anthony Fauci said, "We need to have some humility here," when describing the projected numbers for herd immunity. Dr. Fauci later remarked that "newer surveys said 60 percent or more would take it." The move toward herd immunity requires the majority of the population to receive the vaccination and abide by the social contract.

Every person in the United States has a "social contract." The social contract outlines the obligations of the people in which they follow to protect the society in which they live. Their duty is to protect both the majority and the minority within the social contract. Every citizen is directly responsible for their contribution in protecting vulnerable people within both our local and national groups.

health problems. Some of those people aren't able to receive certain shots and vaccines- even something as simple as the flu vaccine could be harmful to someone with a weak immune system.

Due to the fact that I have chronic Lyme disease, I fall into the immunocompromised category. With this diagnosis I cannot receive certain vaccines, including the flu shot. Because of my weak immune system, I cannot receive the COVID vaccine. This is worrisome because if the people around me aren't protected from COVID, they can easily give it to me. Since I am unable to get the vaccine, I am relying on the people around me to help protect me.

When people who are not immunocompromised receive a vaccine, they might feel symptomatic for a day or so and then feel better the next day. For an immunocompromised individual like myself, I feel symptoms for a week and in some instances, I'm forced to miss school depending on the severity. Reaching herd immunity

get the vaccine to protect themselves.

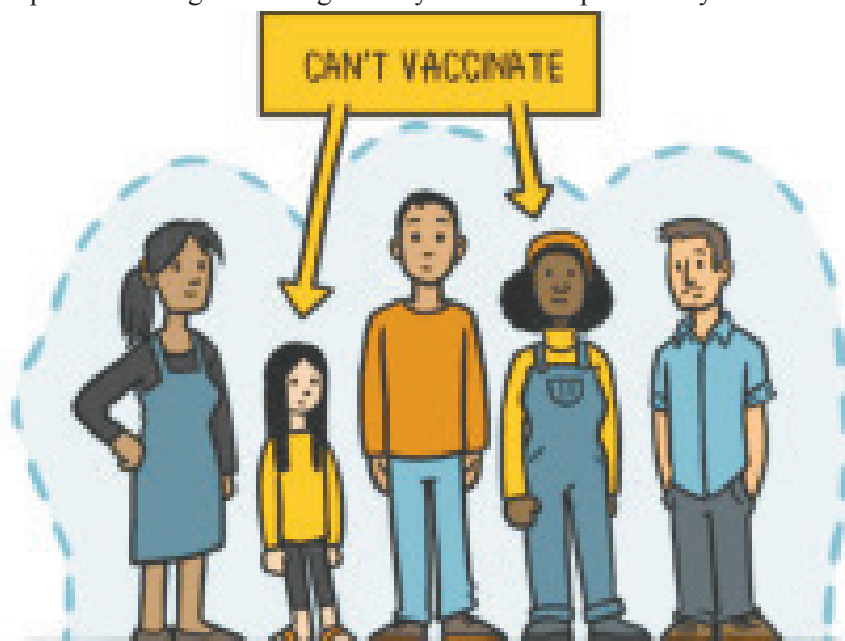
With compromised immune systems people are at a higher risk of infection from colds and viruses. With 583,000 Coronavirus deaths in the United States alone, it's hard to imagine what it could do to an immunocompromised person.

An increase in vaccination rates and herd immunity is crucial for the protection of our entire population, which plays into the fulfillment of the social contract.

For young people, the slow return to normalcy may be about the little things- dancing with your friends

at the prom, hugging your grandma, or going to sports events without feeling the tension of social distance. But the effects of a vaccinated world would not be exclusively small.

Once herd immunity is finally reached, the United States will experience a restoration of normality that lifts the entire country on a national level. The economy will flourish more than ever before, as reborn industries facilitate commerce and the flow of money. The government funded vaccine will eventually pay off and set the country on a newfound road to success, made possible by those becoming vaccinated.



When a community is vaccinated,
everyone is protected, even those who can't

He Said, She Said: Court Packing



By Colin Donegan

Introduction:

Months ago, former President Donald J. Trump nominated Federal Circuit Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court of the United States. She was confirmed to the Supreme Court as an Associate Justice on October 27th, 2020. The addition of Justice Barrett contributed to a 6:3 conservative majority.

There is no text in the Constitution that prevents the addition of Supreme Court justices, but Congress can change this by advancing an act that has to be signed by the sitting president. The first incarnation of the Supreme Court was established with the passing of the Judiciary Act of 1789, which issued six justices to the high court. The number of justices on the Supreme Court shifted in the early nine-

teenth century during the presidencies of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. During the mid-nineteenth century, the justice count on the Supreme Court fluctuated, and eventually returned to the count of nine justices that we have today. President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed the Judicial Procedures Reform Bill in 1937, which suggested the addition of justices to the Supreme Court, but this plan ultimately failed.

Supporters say that packing the court will ensure that the unethical promotion of Justice Barrett will not undermine the democratic principles of the United States. Opponents say, court packing is a radical proposal to unfairly overthrow the partisan majority of the court that was achieved justly and through due process.

He Said:

Court packing is a ridiculous attempt to gain political power unjustly and a last minute solution to dissolve a fair and just majority. During his tenure, former President Trump had the full right to nominate Associate Justices Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court of the United States. He fairly did this within the boundaries of his power as president, therefore legally changing the makeup of the court in the favor of the Republican Party. Outraged by the president's opportunities and actions of appointing three justices to the high court in one term, many support court packing in order to balance out the party demographics of the justices. However, this "cheats" the system in order to increase political power, no matter which political party attempts this.

In order to better understand the absurdity of court packing, I'll use an analogy. Imagine you are playing your favorite game, and you are losing. Instead of waiting until you will have leverage over your opponent, you just rewrite the rules of the game in order to win. The same can be said about court packing; the Democrats have realized that they are losing the game that is the Supreme Court due to the fact that Republican justices outnumber them by double. Instead of waiting until they are in power, Democrats propose rewriting the rules and adding additional justices unjustly in order to win the "game."

If either party turns to court packing as their solution to "fixing" one party's majority, they will undermine the democratic principles of justice and the judiciary—the system that was put in place to resolve conflict and legal disputes. In essence, the goal of court packing was to change the political makeup of the court, and the contradictory solution is by adding more partisan justices, now just in one party's favor. Therefore, the United States must firmly keep its nine justice Supreme Court, in order to prevent political games from threatening and overthrowing the fair majority of the court. The traditional demographics should be ensured, and one party should not be given additional justices on the court for the mere reason they are down a few in a fair system.

As many political leaders have pointed out, packing the Supreme Court is just another absurd partisan attempt. Texas Senator Ted Cruz warned Americans to not "be fooled by Democrats' hyperbolic rhetoric," and ex-

plained that "packing the court means one very specific thing: expanding the number of justices to achieve a political outcome. It is wrong. It is an abuse of power." As highlighted by Cruz, court packing is an unjust, last minute, attempt to gain power unlawfully.

Additionally, even Senator Joe Biden denounced court packing. In a 1983 hearing, Biden called President Franklin D. Roosevelt's attempt to pack the Supreme Court a "bonehead idea." He continued by stating that it was: "a terrible, terrible mistake to make, and it put in question, for an entire decade, the independence of the most significant body—including the Congress in my view—the most significant body in this country, the Supreme Court of the United States of America." As Biden called attention to in this statement, packing the court would also threaten the balance and separation of powers, to which this country's governmental systems so heavily rely on. Building off of history, Biden's quote shows that some Democrats also view court packing as an unnecessary manipulation to acquire political advantages.

Although opponents would argue that packing the court is not a new idea, they usually fail to mention the fact that it still remains a radical idea. Currently, packing the court is only supported by only the most progressive members of the Democratic Party. Radical left-wing representatives like "Squad" members Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and

Ilhan Omar are some of the only Democrats that openly support court packing. The reason that the mainstream Democratic party does not support court packing is because they know that it is a preposterous and unjust proposition that could cost them political power. This was seen in the results of the 2020 Congressional Elections, where Democrats came very close to losing their majority in the House of Representatives. The fact that court packing remains a progressive ideology favored by few, shows how uncommon and abnormal it really is, and reiterates my argument to how it should never belong in our republic.

The opposing argument often claims that the American people should decide the fate of the Supreme Court, and whether to add additional justices or not. Just like any other president in history, former President Trump had the full rights to appoint justices to the court that fit within his beliefs. In other words, it has been tradition that Supreme Court Justices are appointed by the President of the United States, who was elected by the people to represent them for four years, not three and a half. In a New York Times and Siena College poll, 58% of respondents stated that the size of the court should not be increased, where just 31% responded that the court should be filled with additional justices. So if you were to let the American people decide whether to pack the Supreme Court of the United States, they would overwhelmingly denounce it, as seen

through these statistics which numbers well outside the poll's margins of error.

Adversaries frequently speculate on how the confirmation of Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett would affect certain groups of people. Going off topic, they conjecture on the potential decisions that the credible academic may make on the bench, instead of citing solid reasons why packing the court would be beneficial.

Court packing would also sabotage the process of judicial review, whose role is featured prominently in Alexander Hamilton's Federalist No. 78. The opposition claims that this information is outdated, but I beg to differ. Hamilton, along with the other great minds that built this country, established and proposed ideas for some of the most important institutions today, and their accomplishments and wise ideas paved the way for generations to come and are still applicable to modern day problems.

As seen in the evidence and analysis above, court packing theory blatantly disregards the visions that the founding fathers had for our great constitutional republic. After all, the Supreme Court of the United States has had a total of nine justices since 1869, so why change it now over 150 years later? The late liberal Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said that "Nine [Justices] seems to be a good number. It's been that way for a long time."



The Supreme Court Justices as of September 18th, 2020.

He Said, She Said: Court Packing



By Abigail Gallup

She Said:

After serving a remarkable thirteen years on the Supreme Court, the Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg has been replaced with the controversial Justice Amy Coney Barrett. Regardless of the current president, the issue regarding packing the court faces two obstacles, one being the realistic ability to pass an increase in justices, and secondly, the morality of the decision. Court packing is a historical decision but one that will ensure that the American people have their voice heard and represented through the Supreme Court.

What some call a “changing of the rules” has already been established through written legislation submitted by Franklin D. Roosevelt. Although this did not pass, the concept of adding up to 15 justices has already seen support. Packing the court is by no way a new or radical idea, as this concept was not only seen, but supported in 1937. The change of legislation and addition of justices is the natural evolution of a democratic state. This evolution is inevitable, especially in such turbulent times when civil rights and women’s rights are at the forefront of the conversation. As former President Trump stated, “What separates the winners from the losers is how a person reacts to each new twist of fate.” The people are being met with a new twist of fate and we must respond accordingly. The application of this legislation would undoubtedly meet opposition from the congressional committee as well as the general public, but we must pursue this line of inquiry.

Regardless of the possibility of accomplishment we must address the ethical question. This kind of question is hard to address, but I look to the general behavior of the two parties for an answer. The opponent clearly supports the idea that packing the court is an unethical changing of the rules. Their analogy is nothing more than a logical fallacy.

This analogy employs a false equivalency, relating the Supreme Court to a game which can be won or lost and the Constitution to the rules of said game. The court has not been changed in 150+ years, so it’s clear that this complex issue goes far beyond a winner and a loser. The Supreme Court is not something to be won but it is something to be honored with respect and reserve with a focus on nonpartisan justices.

The comparison of the highest court to a simplified game is not only unfair but shows a lack of judgment. What the adversary fails to mention is that the initial “rules” that were set for Obama were then dismissed for Trump. I propose this question, have you ever played a game where the referee changes the rules half way through? In the beginning half of this hypothetical game, former President Obama was refused an appointment nine months before the election date. This decision was made on the basis that the next president should elect the justice to give the people an indirect say in the nomination process. In the second half of the game, the referee, in this case the Senate, allowed for Trump to appoint a justice during the election. In this analogy, the initial rules were altered to favor former President Trump, so no wonder the other “team” seeks to right the wrong through the packing of the court. “The American people are perfectly capable of having their say on this issue, so let’s give them a voice. Let’s let the American people decide,” Mitch McConnell, the Republican Senate majority leader, declared when Obama sought to nominate a Supreme Court Justice. There is no written rule that determines the applicable timeline to the nomination of a justice. During the 2016 election the precedent was set that a nominee could not be appointed within a year of the election. Lindsay Graham, a head Republican Senator explicitly stated that, “We are setting a precedent here today, Republicans are, that in the last year... you’re not going to fill a vacancy of the Supreme Court.” Furthermore, Lindsay Graham goes as far as to say, “That’s going to be the new rule. When y’all changed the rules... I thought it was a really abuse of power.” This quote speaks for itself, the appointment of this justice during an election was an abuse of power. Within weeks of the 2020 election, that precedent was dismissed and the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett was accepted. This hypocrisy and denial of precedent only highlights the “changing of the rules.” So let us answer that call. Let us, the American people, decide the legislation and ultimate fate of this country.

Former President Trump nominated and approved a conservative justice just weeks before an increasingly divisive election in which he would lose, and refuses to admit de-

feat. Let’s not pretend that the nomination of Justice Barrett was anything but the last political Hail Mary before a close and tense campaign in which Donald J. Trump would lose.

The Americans have the right to vote in a president who nominates the justice to represent the United States, not just the ideals of the Republican Party. The argument could be made that if Donald Trump had won the election he had every right to nominate this Justice, but he didn’t. He did not win, and the American people have spoken. The majority of the country, both in electoral votes and popular votes, do not want Donald

The opponents evidence embodies The Federalist Papers written in 1788 and an oversimplified version of the Supreme Court. The use of the word “radical” and the fear mongering that Ted Cruz and Donald Trump are notorious for will not stand. The issue of packing the court exceeds a party issue but goes to the standing of America’s democratic foundation. It is not our place to assume the standings of the American people nor is it the place to divide this country further.

No longer will the American voice be disparaged. The packing of the court should undergo a direct referen-



The Supreme Court of the United States.

Trump to lead the U.S., which includes the responsibility to select justices.

In the opponents previously said argument, there is a hyperfixation to conserve this distorted version of what our Founding Fathers wanted for our country. The time for change is now, and we the people have a fundamental duty to carry out what our Founding Fathers wanted in application to modern time. As James Madison historically remarked in his Report of a Constitution or Form of Government in the year 1779, “Government is instituted for the common good...” and “not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any man, family, or class of men.” Furthermore, the diversity of representation seen within our current political climate is drastically different from that of the white, male, land owning population that the Founding Fathers accommodated when writing our Constitution. It is the God given right to vote and to be heard and that is the power of the American people.

dum to reflect the voice of the American people, the voice that was dismissed by our incumbent President Donald Trump. Whether the American people decide for or against packing the court, our voice will be heard. According to Gallup Polls, 46% percent of people are not in favor of the Amy Coney Barrett nomination. This 46% percent is the highest disapproval rate in thirty three years. This poll only highlights the political division between our people. Let’s not assume the position of Americans, let’s offer a direct referendum which would give the opportunity to embody what the citizens of the United States want.

Amy Coney Barrett was Donald Trump’s choice, not the American peoples and now it is our time to protect the values of both the majority and minorities that create the diversity so celebrated by the American people. Change is natural with the progression of time, and this change will protect the lives and validity of minority

Solutions:

As the late Senator John Lewis famously said, “Democracy is not a state. It is an act.” It is the responsibility of the United States to create legislation that favors the majority. In order to find this majority we must compromise. Common ground is the foundation for a good compromise. Our compromise may start with maximum caps on term

circuit panels to rule on a higher number of cases, and the removal of partisan politics from the Supreme Court altogether.

A possible change would be the addition of term caps which would limit the number of years a sitting judge can serve as well as the inability to be reelected. This would help to prevent and possibly remove party bias from those sitting on the court.

and are ignored by the Supreme Court because of the lack of space and lower level conflict. With the addition of smaller circuit courts these sitting cases can be judged and the overall judicial system will work in further cooperation.

Another possible settlement would be the removal of justices that directly associate with a political party. Although this leans closer to

would help to alleviate partisan tensions and operations, and increase the justices adherence to the Constitution rather than their political party.

The beauty of a democracy lies within the convergence of differing opinions to meet at a majority ruled agreement. These compromises fund the growth and development of the United States and it is invaluable to the dem-

It's Rabbit Season



By Paola Cortazar

“...well, without you and countries that allow animal testing, I’d be out of a job. I’d be on the streets- well not the streets, more like a field I guess... you know, like a normal rabbit?”

A viral short story has consumers shaking their heads as it exposes the cruel reality of animal testing.

Humane Society International posted a four-minute video called ‘Save Ralph’ on YouTube, which now runs close to 11 million views in less than 3 weeks.

The content of the short story itself pertains to a rabbit named Ralph who ‘works’ in a laboratory serving as an animal test subject. Throughout the video, he sarcastically describes the harm brought to him as necessary for protecting humans. As the video progresses, Ralph’s condition worsens starting with blindness and eventually closing with respiratory distress.

This short story advocates against animal testing in the cosmetic industry. This social media movement has utilized many hashtags such as ‘#becrueltyfree’ and ‘#saveralph’ to

educate consumers and call out brands who continue to use animal testing.

The question arises if animal testing is even necessary. Currently, there are existing alternatives to animal testing in the cosmetic industry that reduces harm completely.

Rabbit Testing:

Annually, hundreds of thousands of rabbits, like Ralph are used for experimentation with cosmetic products. Specifically, most rabbits fall subject to the Draize Eye and Skin Irritancy Tests wherein the short film, Ralph experienced.

The Draize Eye and Skin Irritancy Test was developed in the 1940s. It is responsible for the restraint and testing of harmful chemicals on animals. There are different procedures to each test.

In the eyes test, the rabbits’ paws are restrained to prevent interference with the experiments. From there on, they proceed to have chemicals dripped into their eyes. It usually results in swelling, redness, or even blindness.

In the skin test, rabbits’ skin gets shaved or scraped. Again, they are restrained to prevent experiment interference. From there on, the chemicals are smeared onto their skin. This

procedure usually results in skin irritation, cracking, or even bleeding.

With the goal in mind to claim the product ‘safe for human usage’ the Draize tests are ultimately invalidated. Rabbits are typically only used because they are cheaper, easier to handle, and easier to breed as opposed to any other animal. However, the anatomical differences between a human and a rabbit make the tests out to be extremely unreliable.

Alternatives to Animal Testing Exist Many cruelty-free cosmetic brands, such as The Body Shop, have stuck with ingredients qualified to be ‘safe for human usage’. This category of ingredients is typically all-natural, made up of fruits such as bananas, or even oils such as nut oil.

Even if not reliant on natural ingredients, cosmetic companies have other alternatives to testing their products. The most popular being a recently developed synthetic cellular tissue that is similar to human skin. Tests like EpiDerm™ and EpiSkin™ have the capability to replace the Draize Skin and Eye irritation tests completely.

With this technology, the ability to completely eliminate animal testing is possible. There is clearly a lack of con-



Ralph the Rabbit has sparked controversy regarding the ethics of animal testing.

sideration towards animals’ well-being and quality of living. Moreso, the idea of sacrificing animals to something so subjective in society, like cosmetics, is not justifiable. These lab animals typically die at the hands of experimenters and this cruel practice must come to an end.

Art Depreciation



By Kathryn Barry

I would like to risk telling you about a promising high school sophomore. As an eighth grader, academics balanced elegantly with friendships and a passion for the arts. Painting, photography, dance and even knitting begged for attention. Athletically, the exhilaration of basketball and running melded her imagination with competition.

As an incoming freshman, our student became conflicted. While witnessing her older brother vie for the attention of prestigious colleges, she had gleaned the importance of class rank. Advanced, weighted courses would surely put her near the top of her class, yet she knew this would sadly sacrifice the fine arts. She did request Creative Photography as her elective, but was denied, as upperclassmen took preference. The elective she was given was interesting, but not artistic.

Ambition brought perfect scores and athletic success. She resolved to pursue her arts outside school, but her rigorous schedule prevented it. Therefore, she decided to attack academics and revisit art later. After all, what if she wants an academic career, but does not have the class rank to attract a prestigious college?

As freshman year was culminating, her view began to blur. Peers had begun obsessing over weighted grade point averages and class rank. Curious, our girl checked where she stood. She was dismayed to see her rank was third, despite achieving perfect scores. Some sleuthing revealed that other freshmen had been placed into a weighted, college-level course. She was unaware of this option while picking freshman courses as an eighth grader. This infuriated

our girl. She vowed to work harder than ever. She achieved nearly 100 percent in every class, yet her effort proved futile. The weight of the college-level course dwarfed her elective.

Then came sophomore year.

Our little workaholic had just come off a summer of intense SAT preparation, another yardstick used by our institutions of higher education. As her brother began his applications, college planning was now fully on her radar. Elite colleges clearly valued stellar SAT scores and a number one or two class rank. She was determined to get there, even at the expense of her interests. She requested the most rigorous courses available, but her plan was foiled when she learned she must take an art elective due to state mandate. Ironically, she grudgingly chose Creative Photography. She was appalled that she could not take a higher weighted course. At this point, art was just a figment of her past.

School was now a battlefield. Top students were keenly aware of class rank and did everything necessary to hold their place. Homework collaboration became a labyrinth; vague help became a strategy. Each hoped that if others faltered, they might spring ahead in the race for the silently-coveted junior year ranking. The mentality was, “If you help, you might as well slit your own throat.”

Then came Creative Photography. This nirvana did not have the kill-or-be-killed vibe. Instead, collaboration was fostered by a true art master-teacher.



“She was determined to get there, even at the expense of her interests.”

Our girl was able to relax and thrive, if only for an hour or so. Not only was she able to truly learn and explore, but also rebuild friendships and collaborate. Creativity blossomed out of the rubble of her lost interest.

The teacher mentored our youngster to enter a photography contest, which she subsequently won. She was even interviewed about her inspiration on National Public Radio. This experience was monumental. When queried by the radio host if other art classes piqued her interest, she embarrassingly divulged why this would be her first, and last, high school art class. In order to gain acceptance into ranked colleges, she must, once again, give up her love of creativity. It was time to re-enter the battlefield, wielding her pencil and calculator as weapons. She had become as ruthless as our system taught her to be.

A piece of our girl runs through most top students in our system. How is one to choose as a 14-year-old? What if her art is not good enough to put food on the table? She must give herself options. She understands the game and needs to play it right. Giving up interests is perpetuated by our system; it has always been this way. Creativity and collaboration are the first victims of this unwritten statute. Nobody is talking about this dilemma... let alone trying to fix it.

Perhaps the most controversial, yet simplest solution, is to discontinue class rankings. Students would be encouraged to take a healthy amount of

rigor, while delving into their interests. After all, it has long been agreed that the arts define a person. Without the added pressure, students would be able to transition from competitors to collaborators. Colleges, in turn, would have to reset their algorithms to judge the whole person. Student athletes and artists could stop trying to beat the system, and start becoming the collaborators our world needs.

Our second solution would require a curricular change. Honors art classes could be offered at every school. For example, Creative Photography class could be divided into two types of students: those looking for a more basic understanding, and those seeking more immersion in the subject. This would allow students to pursue their interests, while not sacrificing their weighted grade point and class rank.

Now, I know what you are thinking. “Woe is she; poor little girl has to make a choice. Don’t we all have to make choices sooner or later?” The answer is no. Leonardo Da Vinci was a scholar, inventor, artist and collaborator. Our girl is not seeking sympathy... she simply exemplifies what our system is lacking. Interestingly, many of our higher-learning institutions now offer gradeless courses and student-driven curriculums. They seek collaborative ingredients to make delicious learning recipes. Yet, these same institutions still judge their applicants with archaic measurements.

Our rising junior continues to seek her value. She is taking all the “right” classes; she does not feel she has a choice. As long as she is part of this game, she will play to win. Her brother appears to have won. She curiously wonders what will come of us.

Riley's Rad Reviews - Cobra Kai



By Riley Letendre

With the recent arrival of Cobra Kai's season 3 to Netflix, it seems one of the 1980s' most popular franchises is having a stronger comeback than ever. The series has revived The Karate Kid trilogy in a more successful and meaningful way than prior spin-offs and sequels.

The Karate Kid follows Daniel LaRusso upon his move to Los Angeles, or "the Valley," as it is often referred to in the film. In the first film, he struggles in school with a group of bullies, led by karate dojo Cobra Kai's star, Johnny Lawrence. That is, at least, until he befriends his maintenance man, Mr. Miyagi, who teaches him karate and becomes the father figure that he had been missing in his life.

The conflict between Daniel and Johnny culminates in the All-Valley Karate Tournament, where after his now-signature "crane kick," Daniel is victorious.

The other films in the original trilogy, The Karate Kid Part II (1986) and The Karate Kid Part III (1989), follow Daniel through other karate-related

1984 All-Valley Tournament, Johnny has struggled to hold down a job and lead a good life. Daniel now owns a successful car dealership and has a picture-perfect family of his own—the LaRusso/Lawrence dynamic now the complete opposite of where they started in The Karate Kid. Because of Daniel's success, Johnny's disdain for him has only grown. Upon running into Daniel when he needs his car repaired, Johnny is inspired to "strike first," one of the tenets of Cobra Kai's karate, and re-opens the dojo for a new set of students.

As the seasons go on, the series creates a "next generation" of karate rivalry between the characters' children. Plots follow Daniel's daughter, Sam, Johnny's estranged son, Robby, Johnny's star karate student, Miguel,

ple, and hurt people. Characters in the show may come in and switch sides, changing which morals they're aligned with. Or better yet, they create their own side. There is no totally right, or totally wrong, which allows the audience to participate in the rivalry—making your own call as to who was right, rather than the showrunners doing it for you. The creators bring back every character they can, whether it be for purely nostalgic purposes or for a reason that's more important to the story. I don't want to spoil the special guests in season three, but we get some special guests from the sequel films. Before the new season, we get reappearances from Daniel's mother, Lucille, and Johnny's Cobra Kai friends from the first film. They harp on the

Kreese became the cold person he is.

Another important thing to note is the long road Cobra Kai has taken to reach mainstream popularity. Cobra Kai made its first two seasons in partnership with YouTube Red, a "B-level" streaming service. While it grew a small following and was somewhat advertised, they struggled for viewers since the service is so limited. After season two, YouTube decided not to renew them for a third season. The production company, Sony Pictures Entertainment, allowed for a third season to be filmed regardless, and following months of "shopping around," the creators finally struck a deal with Netflix. This allowed the series to have a new home to release season 3, and be renewed for a fourth season. Since the

series's installation on Netflix, it has grown in popularity and is more of a household name than it was before.

It's no coincidence that Cobra Kai has reached its success when it has. The Netflix release of the series came at the end of the summer, a time where we were unsure of what the future holds (as we still are now) with the Coronavirus, politics, and everything else going on in the world. The Karate Kid, like most 80s movies, is the product of a simpler time, and though it showcases serious conflicts, it still is seen as a positive, inspirational film to many. This series



Parallels between Cobra Kai and the 1984's The Karate Kid's "wax on" scenes are planted for loyal fans of the series.

escapades. In Part II, he travels with Mr. Miyagi to visit the family Miyagi left behind in Okinawa, Japan—unintentionally getting involved in another karate battle for honor, and another romance. Part III picks up with Daniel and Miyagi returning to Reseda and trying to move on from their prior karate battles. A down-and-out John Kreese, the former sensei of Cobra Kai, is struggling with no students and with the help of his friend, Terry Silver, forces Daniel to participate in the All-Valley to "defend his title" against a new, more brutal Cobra Kai.

Cobra Kai comes in to play 35 years after the All-Valley tournament and starts from the perspective of a down-and-out Johnny Lawrence. In the years since his defeat in the

and the other students in their dojos, in the process blurring the lines between good and evil and building intensity in their battle for morality.

Though seen on the surface as purely entertaining films and an action-packed series, The Karate Kid's universe has a far larger story to tell in its themes. Each film in the trilogy centers on a basic conflict between good and evil, or right and wrong—Daniel always being the side of good or right. But since Cobra Kai has entered the mix, it turns these once-straightforward themes on their head.

In the series, both Johnny and Daniel are seen as villains by different people. We see them both do good and bad things, help peo-

ple, and hurt people. Characters in the show may come in and switch sides, changing which morals they're aligned with. Or better yet, they create their own side. There is no totally right, or totally wrong, which allows the audience to participate in the rivalry—making your own call as to who was right, rather than the showrunners doing it for you.

An interesting thing Cobra Kai does is it delves into the backstory of several characters from the original films. We get to understand why the characters are who they are—whether they have changed for better or worse. In season one, we get flashbacks to Johnny's childhood—learning it wasn't just a walk in the park. In season two, we learn about what happened to Daniel's father and how this has affected his life, as well as how Kreese, Johnny's former sensei, came to be down on his luck. And finally, in season three, we come to understand how

is a more honest look at life than the films, but carries on the message of how being a good person can get you farther in life, and that sometimes you need to fight to get what you want.

Watching a series like Cobra Kai is an amazing experience. It has managed to bring a franchise that was thought to be dead after two poorly-received spin-offs (The Next Karate Kid (1994), a sequel, and The Karate Kid (2010), a remake) back to life. While Cobra Kai may not be the most appealing to teenagers, I encourage more teens to give it a try. It's a good model for how a sequel series should be done, and it provides something for everyone with its 80s nostalgia, comedy, action, and drama.

Top 8 Worst People You Meet at Disney World



By Haylen Irvan

If you have ever been to a theme park, such as Disney, you know that thousands of people inhabit the park daily. At Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL, you are sure to see many different people. Here are some of the worst people you will find lurking through the “most magical place on Earth”.

1. The Photographer

Yes, Disney World has hired photographers that are willing to snap a quick photo of you at any moment thanks to the PhotoPass program, however, most people don't know that there are other photographers around the park. They can be spotted leaning out of rides trying to get an up-close shot of the animatronics or sitting on someone's shoulders to get that perfect picture of the castle. Just be careful with these guys, because it is likely you will end up in the background of at least 90% of their photos. I think I'll PhotoPASS on these folks.

2. The Karen

The stereotypical “Karen” makes appearances everywhere, but at Disney, Karen is in her prime. You will most likely see her at guest relations demanding a refund or arguing with the workers about the overpriced chicken tenders. Karens are very easy to spot. They are quickly cutting through crowds and they are on a mission. Be sure to step out of her way to insure your safety and the other safety of guests. Much like Cruella DeVile, if she doesn't scare you, no evil thing will.

3. The Matching Shirt Family

The amount of times I have seen this is insane. It never fails, every time I go to Disney, there is a family of at least 34 people and they all have matching shirts. As if that isn't bad enough, they make sure you know who they are. Glittery letters usually display “Favorite Grandson” or “Second Cousin Greg Twice Removed”. Believe it or not, it can get worse. There are also the wedding parties with “Bridesmaid To Be” shirts. Who asked? I don't think a soul asked. Literally no one asked. Did I mention, no one asked? It truly is a small world after all because these families are so big that they basically make up 80% of the population.



4. The Regulars

THE ACTUAL WORST. These people are the reason Disney is not always the happiest place on Earth. These are the annual pass holders that feel entitled to everything the parks have to offer. Somehow they have every fast pass, they're always at the front of food lines, and they're always selected to participate in the shows. Seriously, how do they do it? They're at the park as soon as it opens and they leave right when it closes. I guess the seaweed is always greener in somebody else's lake.

5. The Birthday Pin People

Happy Birthday! NOT! Disney gives out free pins for guests visiting Disney that are having an “extra-magical” trip. This includes but is not limited to birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, weddings, and even first timers. It wasn't long before people began figuring out that the pins hold a special ‘power’ at the parks. When I went with my sister, as soon as the workers



saw her birthday pin, we were given the opportunity to ride in the front row on roller coasters and sit in optimal seating at the live shows. It wasn't long before people began figuring this out and now there are people who either save the pins or just straight up lie to get them. I know the Mad Hatter said you have 364 unbirthdays, but this seems a bit extreme.

6. The View Obstructors

You sat down at the Festival of The Lion King show and you just got the best seat in the house. You're in the second row with a clear view of center stage, then a lady sits in the row in front of you. No big deal, right? Tell that to the heaping pile of glitter, ribbons, and synthetic fur sitting on top of her head. I'm talking about her mickey ears. I'm telling you they become more and more elaborate each year. Whether it's mickey ears, a hat, or a headband, there are ALWAYS guests walking around with something guaranteed to block your view.



7. The Tippy Tourists

Believe it or not, the Disney Parks franchise does in fact sell alcoholic beverages on the grounds. Guests who are 21 years of age or older are allowed to purchase various alcoholic beverages such as their famous Orange Mango Fire Margarita at EPCOT or perhaps a frozen Rum & Coke at Hollywood Studios. For the most part, alcohol can be purchased almost anywhere in Disney. Sometimes, guests have a bit too much fun and end up drinking at the parks all day. These tipsy tourists truly begin appearing when Disney World hosts their Food and Wine Festival. One time, I was walking past Gaston's Tavern in Magic Kingdom and I saw a group of men all gathered in a circle outside of the restaurant. They were all singing the infamous song ‘Gaston’ from Disney's Beauty and the Beast. It was truly a sight to see. Most of them were barely able to stand up as they were leaning on each other. Oh and the worst part, Gaston's Tavern doesn't ac-

tually sell any alcoholic beverages. This means that these grown men WALKED to the area after buying drinks somewhere else. No one drinks like Gaston!

8. The Park Nerds

This is PRESTLEY IRVAN! Prestley is definitely a park nerd. Imagine sitting on a rollercoaster and as soon as the big drop comes, the person next to you says, “Did you know that if you put your arms up for the picture, the crossing track above could chop your arms off? It actually happened to a man in the early 2000s.” These people are a different breed. They know everything about the rides, attractions, shows, and even the food. I live with a park nerd and every day I hear about the history of Disney World. Sometimes, traveling with a human encyclopedia can be great, but it can also ruin some of the magic. My sister loves telling me about hidden wires and cables that help create the magic at Disney. Needless to say, I stopped believing that anything was real at age 4. Did you know that you can ride Space Mountain with the lights on? This means that the track, beams, and cables are all visible. The whole point of the ride is to feel like you are floating in space, not like you're in a bright, stark room. Going to Disney World with a park nerd truly makes it a whole new world.



How has TikTok Affected Fashion Trends?

By Isabella Portu

TikTok was first launched in September of 2017, and since then has gained a total of 800 million users. Originally, TikTok was known as Musical.ly, but the name was changed in order to have a fresh new start and better represent the people on the app. TikTok has created a place where niche communities can spread their messages, and speak to be heard by the greater population. This has caused quite an impact on the music industry, and more importantly, the fashion industry.

Thrifting

Goodwill, upcycling, and on-line shops like Depop have become a more common, sustainable, and cheaper way to find unique clothing. How has the rise in thrifting affected the environment? Well, almost 10% of global emissions come from the clothing industry, but with thrifting on the rise, people are being more open to buying second hand clothing, as well as selling some of their own. With some of the more popular tiktokers, such as Charli D'Amelio, making videos showing their thrifting trips. This has greatly helped to relieve social stigmas that surrounded thrifting.



An example of some trending outfits.

E-boy/girl/person

Darker, more edgy clothing has come into popularity, with chokers, chains, and piercings becoming a necessary asset in many people's wardrobes. They are often unique, with several trademarks being winged liner, chain jewelry, and often a pair of Dr. Martens thrown in as well. -Kick-starting Sustainable Brands

small businesses to reach a whole new type of audience, and more customers than ever before. Several small businesses such as Ellecreate have had their sales increase substantially shortly after joining TikTok and taking their advertisements to the "for you" page.

Spreading Culture

Smaller minorities are coming forward and showing off their culture, in new and inventive ways. As well as becoming a more body positive and accepting space for people of all shapes and sizes. Popular Tiktokers such as Liz-

zo, Xobrooklynne, Ambar Driscoll, and Flo Simpson have a range of followers from 59,000 to 5.6 million. TikTok has also been an incredibly important part of teaching the younger generations, about different parts of the world, and speaking up about different issues minorities face.

Vintage Clothing

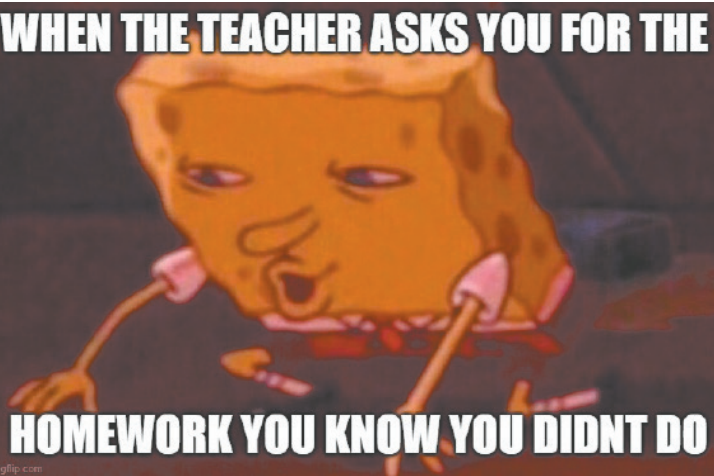
Vintage clothing and accessories are coming back in full force. Going between different eras, from the 90's to the 70's, depending on the day, and bringing back some of the most striking and inventive styles. Vintage styles are also becoming more readily available with thrifting on the rise.

TikTok has only been around for 4 years, versus other popular apps like Facebook which has been out for 17 years. Considering the impact TikTok has had on various movements, like Black Lives Matter or Protect the Arctic, TikTok has allowed these organizations to get off of their feet, when it comes to funding, petitions, and helping organize protests. Imagine what kind of social and economic reform that could be achieved in the future with TikTok on the rise.

Memes



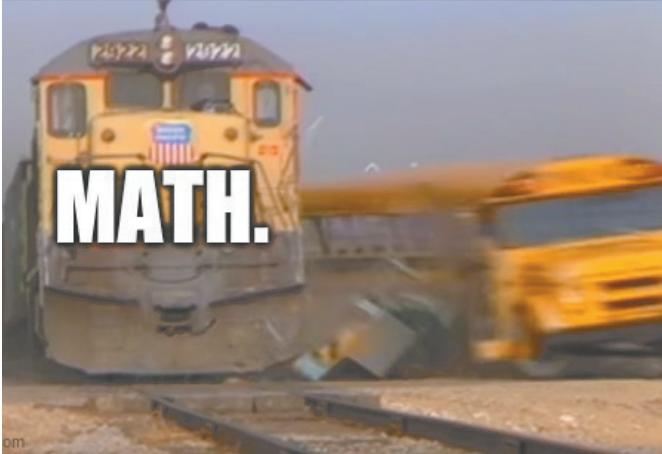
By: Reese Pawlowski



By: Arlette Villela-Hernandez



By: Laura Alvarado



By: Michelle Armas

Southern Suspects



Samantha Davies is the 25-year-old head detective for Jezebel Island Police Department. The island, a small and close-knit community known for it's safety, is rocked by the murder of star quarterback Daniel Warsaw- descending into a frenzy. As the island enters into full-out chaos, it is up to Sam to figure out who did it, working against adversities presented by her standing in the police department, her inexperience, age, and gender. As the pieces fall together nearly too perfectly, one must be left to wonder- is the island more dangerous than meets the eye?



View more
memes here:



The Run to Success: MIA Track Team

 By Emily Reisinger

The race to success, the toss to success, or the jump to success. From running, shot put, discus, long jump, high jump, and more, track has something for everyone. Marco Island Academy's track team has made incredible progress throughout the past season. This year, the coaches are Coach Watt and Coach Jones, both college students who have shown great leadership in managing and planning trips, practices, and meets. Coach Jones is an MIA graduate in 2020 and is now a freshman in college. Coach Watt graduated in 2018 and is now attending the University of Florida. Coach Watt and Coach Jones both participated in track and cross country, running long distance, when they attended MIA and were offered their coaching positions by the Athletics Director, Mrs. Roberts. When Coach Watt was asked what her biggest takeaway from the previous season she stated, "For me as a coach, the biggest takeaway was how important it is for me to accept help from others.... Coaching track especially has so many moving parts and I really learned this season how valuable it is to have and accept that help." The track team practiced at Mackle Park 5 days a week with optional Saturday practices. At practice this year, there were a variety of different activities and

exercises normally consisting of doing circuits, speed days, or figure eights. For students interested in joining track in future years or those who are curious, circuits are a series of pushups, burpees, situps, lunges, squats, and laps, there are also speed days that change depending on the severity of the day or what was done that day prior; speed days normally consist of multiple 400-meters, 200-meters, and sometimes 800-meters runs. Often, on the days before meets, there are pasta dinners where the runners meet up at the school and run down San Marco Road, then they eat pasta to prepare for the meet the next day. This may change depending on the new coaches next year. The track athletes at MIA mostly participate in running events, but a small percentage of athletes participate in field events, more specifically the long jump and triple jump. Coach Jones and Coach Watt worked to place runners in events that they may have never tried to see if they enjoy the event or not. They always help encourage the runner to do their best and to PR (personal record) every race. For the majority of runners, districts are the last meet of the season unless they advance to regionals, which one runner, Johnathan Watt, Coach Watt's younger brother, did. Watt made second place in the triple jump, advancing him to the regionals where he then placed 9th. This is a large feat for such a small school.



Grayson Jones, Gabriel Tschida, Ryan Sweeney, Coach Olivia Watt, Coach Camden Jones, Megan Sweeney, Bridget Sweeney, Yessenia Martinez, Iran Zarate-Centeno, Angel Bartlett, and Johnathan Watt.

There were also other fantastic athletes who got to truly test their limits both mentally and physically. With more students coming to MIA next year the track team will most likely grow and be able to welcome new competitors. With the new building coming, new opportunities arise. Marco Island Academy's sports department continues to make the future look bright. This season has been a phenomenal learning experience for many runners

Marco Island Academy's Sports 2020-2021

