

Home of the Braves

Miscoe Hill Middle School

Spring 2019 | Vol. 4, Issue 3



Best Wishes to Mrs. Rhodes!

By: Kayla Vallecillo, Grade 6

7th grade geography teacher Mrs. Rhodes is retiring after her 37th year at Miscoe. Her vibrant and fun personality make class with her fun and enjoyable, even for the dry and difficult topic, geography.

"She is the perfect combination of smart, enthusiastic, fun, and caring." Says Mrs. Kahler, a science teacher in 7th grade, "Mrs. Rhodes is a lot of fun in class and is able to explain things in a way that helps her students better understand. She interacts and gets to know her students, so she has a great relationship with her students. Mrs. Rhodes is also incredibly dedicated, always trying new things and learning new activities herself." Mrs. Rhodes always makes learning for her students understandable and innovative.

Her love for the subject will be greatly missed next year, as well as her bright personality. She has taught in all subjects in grades 5-7, which has definitely given her a reputation to know everything, which she kind of does.

"Mrs. Rhodes is extremely creative. Even now, when she only has a couple months to go, she is innovating and creating new approaches to her craft of teaching," says Mr. Clark, a geography teacher on the other team. Mrs. Rhodes'

personality makes learning for students so much easier! She uses so many types of tools to teach her classes that may be hands-on, or things like maps and articles. "My favorite thing about Mrs. Rhodes is the way she teaches. I like that she gives us different ways [for us] to absorb information..." Says Peyton Parrino, a student in 7th grade. "Mrs. Rhodes is such a great teacher because she has a great personality and the way she talks to the class, it encourages us to contribute to the conversation and ask more questions."

"She is remembered by many of her students for her humor, fairness, and enjoyable classes. I will personally miss hearing her loud voice coming down the halls and her infectious laugh. I will also miss her support and advice, but I know she's only a phone call away! I am so lucky to have spent this year teaching under the same roof as her; she has always been my role model." Says Miss Rhodes, Mrs. Rhodes' daughter, a science teacher in 8th grade.

Mrs. Rhodes will be missed by her students and fellow teachers and after 37 years of teaching, she is her happy and exciting self, still creating new ways of teaching and innovative new ideas. All teachers and students will miss her and we all wish her the best in her retirement.

Home of the Braves

Contributing Staff

Writers:

Kaitlyn Allington
Mark Calabrese
Sarah Flynn
Rachatawan Greenwald
Max Grisanti
Jacob Jiang
Emma Langner
Maggie Lewinsky
Emma Lynch
Harmony Meléndez-Torres
Peyton Parrino
Ishani Saha
Kiara Simpson
Kayla Vallecillo
Tyler Vance
Cecelia Van Norman
Luke Venable
Kate Watchmaker

Ad Design:

Jorge Gamboni
Finn Lozeau
Jack Oleksyk
Ethan Porciello

Editors:

Rachatawan Greenwald
Cecelia Van Norman
Luke Venable
Kate Watchmaker

Advisor:

Karen Arnold

This issue of *Home of the Braves* is dedicated to Mrs. Kathy Rhodes.

Taking on Rachel's Challenge!

By: Peyton Parrino, Grade 4

Rachel's Challenge is a non-profit organization across North America in honor of Rachel Scott and her amazing acts of kindness. Rachel Scott was the first person killed in the Columbine High School tragedy on April 20, 1999. Rachel's goal is making schools safer, more connected places where bullying and violence are replaced with kindness and respect, and where learning and teaching are awakened to their fullest. Rachel's Challenge has affected more than 24 million people across North America in a positive way.

I talked to Mr. McInnis and seventh grader Leah Morrell about Rachel's Challenge and how Miscoe Hill is participating in it. Mr. McInnis and Mrs. Gervais are the leaders of Rachel's challenge in our school. When asked to describe what Rachel's Challenge means to him, Mr. McInnis says it, "create(s) a(n) atmosphere where kindness and compassion thrives." Leah Morrell says, "Rachel's Challenge is creating small acts of kindness to start a chain reaction." As Rachel



Photo by Mr. McInnis.

Scott once wrote, "If one person will go out of their way to show compassion, then it will start a chain reaction of the same. People will never know how far a little kindness can go." The Friends of Rachel have meetings during project block, to plan and come up with ideas to help our community and make Miscoe a better place. So far the friends of Rachel have collected Christmas presents for Milford Regional Hospital, had a yard sale for Buzzcuts for Kids With Cancer, Stuff the Truck for kids in poverty, and have many more fundraisers to come.

To take on Rachel's Challenge in Miscoe Hill you would need to sign the Rachel's Challenge banner at the start of the program next year. All grades will be able to be part of Friends of Rachel next year. As Leah said, "I really enjoy being a part of Rachel's Challenge because it teaches you a lot of life lessons and what you can do to help people in need."

To support the friends of Rachel in Miscoe Hill you can follow their Instagram @friendsofrachel_mhms, or their Twitter @MiscoeFriends.

Coming Attractions

Moving Up in Miscoe

By: Max Grisanti, Grade 6

Moving up to a new grade can be scary. You might be worried about projects, tests, and sometimes even teachers. But no need to worry, this article will inform you about the highlights for each grade level, and I can assure you that there are no bad teachers at Miscoe.

Fifth grade is the first year in Miscoe, for some students it can be hard moving up to a new school. While some students look forward to attending Miscoe, others may feel uncomfortable or scared. To those of you feeling that way, I can assure you, there's nothing to worry about. A big project in the fifth grade that students love is The Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame is a project towards the end of the year where students pick a person.

They must prove that their person is the most influential to become part of the Miscoe Hall of Fame. They will research the person's life, and what their impact was on history and decide on a category of interest. There will be different categories for students to choose. I interviewed Mrs. Keenan, one of the fifth grade teachers, and she said, "We are thinking something like, inspired racial equality, perseverance, maybe music and arts."

Students will then write a persuasive speech and the present to the parents, followed up by some sort of vote. Another thing fifth graders love is Nature's Classroom. Nature's classroom is a three day experience that has a lot of great activities that fifth graders get to do with their friends. "It's a great experience because it gives students a chance to get to know their classmates and teachers in a different way," says Mrs. Keenan. In Nature's Classroom there's many fun classes you can take like shelter building, rocket making, and even dissecting animals. Nature's Classroom is a great experience and I highly recommend it. One final thing fifth graders love is Colonial Day. Colonial day is a day where students visit different stations and do fun colonial projects.

A big project that sixth graders enjoy is Greek Day. For Greek Day sixth graders select a Greek god or goddess that they research and write a paper on. On Greek day they dress up as the god or goddess they chose and give a presentation to their class. After the presentations, the whole sixth grade meets in the upper gym for a big Greek banquet, "There are Greek foods to try along with juices and water to drink. It is a fun time!" describes Mrs. Frary, one of the sixth grade

teachers. Another highlight of the sixth grade is when students get to go to a ropes course and climb on it. It's definitely one of the highlights of the sixth grade year. Lastly, something you might not know about sixth grade is later on in the year students get to go to the Boston Science Museum and make a sample of rocket fuel.

In seventh grade students do a project called the Parade of Countries where groups of students are assigned a country they research. Students research things like physical geography, economics, trade, products they grow and sell, traditions and culture, and the food eaten there. They then present their project to the rest of the school committee and their parents. Another thing in the seventh grade you might have heard about is the persuasive speeches, "Students get to choose their topic; something they feel passionate about and care about," describes Mr. Clark. Students then research that topic and develop an opinion for their chosen topic, and start writing about it. Seventh graders then present it to their class to, hopefully persuade their classmates that they are correct. In seventh grade there are also smaller projects that the students love, "In English they do a poetry unit, in science there's a unit where they look on cells and a project where they create and edible cell, they dissect owl pellets, in math they look at a lot of real world concepts," says Mr. Clark.

Lastly, we have eighth grade where students get to do things like Engineering Day, an end of the year Six Flags trip, and the new Civics Action project replacing the renaissance fair. For the Civics Action Project each class is going to have their own unique actionable project that they work on. This project works on the pro democratic process, so students will present different proposals for their class to pursue. Each class will then debate over which project they want to pursue, come to a consensus about it, and work on making the change. At the end of the year the eighth grade has an Engineering Day. For Engineering Day students are placed into groups and are given a challenge. "There are specific tasks that they have to complete and parameters they have to stay within, and they go through the design process, and it's really cool there's a lot of design, there's a lot of testing, there's a lot of revising. It really helps builds students' collaborative skills and students' scientific method," says Mr. Charest, one of the eighth grade teachers. One last thing eighth graders love is the trip to Six Flags at the end of the year.

Summer Reading

Summer reading is near. Be ready to get your books and read! Don't forget you can always go to the library. They have audiobooks, prizes for reading, and lots of great programs.



Current Events

Ain't That Marvelous: A Review of "Captain Marvel"

By: Emma Lynch, Grade 6

On March 8th, Captain Marvel was released in cinemas worldwide. It is the twenty-first installment of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) and the first film in the MCU universe to star a female lead. It stars Brie Larson as the titular Captain Marvel and is directed and written by Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck, as well as Geneva Robertson-Dworet. The film is set in 1995 and chronicles the origin of Captain Marvel/Carol Danvers, an ex-U.S. air force fighter pilot and member of Starforce, a Kree elite military task force. The movie centers around her journey becoming Captain Marvel during a Galactic war between the Krees and Skrulls, two alien races in the MCU as it puts Danvers and a number of allies at the center of it.

Before I saw the movie, I saw some of the trailers and disliked it. It felt like feminist propaganda where the female lead is a manly and powerful Mary-Sue (a seemingly perfect character), who beats everyone with no effort or struggle and is an all around boring character. Besides, it seemed to be like any other Marvel movie. That's one thing about it that doesn't work. Danvers does seem like an all around boring character with no effort or struggle. There aren't many moments in the film that make you feel for her character or watch her struggle or care about her journey at all.

In my opinion, I think that Danvers was a boring character, but as shown by people who also saw the movie like Ms. Clarke, there are others who have different viewpoints than me. "I think they did a great job. I feel like in action movies, girls usually get some part. just there tiful or to prize to a damsel and I that's ing. So that she main and had some really great action scenes made me very happy since it was unusual for an action movie, so I loved it."



While Mrs. Lajoie says that, "I think this movie depicted Captain Marvel as a strong female character. The movie shows a female, hero character that young or older girls could look up to.

Mr. Charest had very low expectations going into this Marvel movie. He felt that the advertising for the film did a bad job selling the movie and felt the film as a whole was much better. "I was really pleased with how they portrayed Danvers because she still had these feminine aspects to her and I also thought she was really independent and strong." He says. "I liked how she did what she thought was right

and had her own idea of what strength was and didn't base it on what Yon-Rogg (Jude Law) thought because Yon-Rogg had this own separate idea of what strength meant and it was very different from Brie Larson's and I loved how Brie Larson's Captain Marvel didn't base her opinion of herself on what other people thought." He says he puts the film in his list of his top five favorite Marvel movies.

All in all, the movie was okay at best, but it wasn't in any way a must-watch movie for any casual superhero fans or movie buffs by any means. But for those who do have a interest to watch it, I recommend it to any Marvel fan who wants to see a quick Marvel flick before Avengers: Endgame, the most recent installment of the MCU that just hit theaters on April 22, 2019, or to any superhero fans who are in the mood to watch a superhero movie.

I give this film a three out of five and has pretty lackluster moments and characters and isn't anything special compared to other Marvel films like Marvel makes it out to be. On the other hand, Ms. Clarke thinks this film is superb and gives it a five out of five, while Mrs. Lajoie and Mr. Charest give the film a rating of four out of five and three and a half out of five respectively.

So next time you plan to go to the theater or just want to watch a film at home, I suggest you either watch the highly-anticipated Endgame or DC's Wonder Woman, since in the end, Captain Marvel just ain't that marvelous.

Miscoe Gets a Makeover!

By: Cecelia Van Norman, Grade 8

Let's face it; Miscoe isn't a very attractive school. The building is turning 60 next year, and it's age is showing. Between plumbing issues, dirty floors and bare brick walls, this school needs some serious help. Recently, however, Mrs. Diane Duncan, a member of the school committee, decided that something had to change, and she took action.

Last year, the school sent out a survey to students, parents, and staff asking them how they felt about the current state of our school. "They all conveyed how dissatisfied they were with the physical condition of their middle school, inside and outside." She says. "Their comments were very specific about certain spaces, however, many just indicated that they felt "sad" about their environment and were asking 'why we couldn't do something to improve the school.'" She that, reading their responses, she "didn't want to ignore how students and staff felt about their learning environment and I believed that they deserved something more from a place they spent so much time at!" So, she went

to Mrs. Mannion to see if she could start a committee of some sort to make the school a better place.

As of now, over 100 people have volunteered their time to help out. They have several projects they will be working on over the summer, ranging from painting walls to construction projects. "We are asking staff and students for their input as to what improvements they would like to see in their school that would have a positive effect." "The bathrooms and locker rooms were high on the list, as was the staff room!" Says Mrs. Mannion. "I also know the importance of school pride and felt that Miscoe does not give visitors of our school community members an understanding of who we are as a school." This committee has become a part of the PTO and they plan to take on many tasks in coming years through volunteer work and fundraising.

Mrs. Mannion and Mrs. Duncan encourage all students to get involved and help us make the school beautiful. If you are interested in helping out, email Mrs. Mannion at jmannion@mursd.org or Mrs. Duncan at dianemarkandboys@gmail.com.

Honey Bees: Horrible or Helpful?

By: Jacob Jiang, Grade 6

When you first think of honeybees, what do you think of? You might think of a scary, annoying bug that flies around and stings people or of a sweet creature that helps us live. But the truth is, honeybees are phenomenal creatures! You probably know that they pollinate our flowers and make sweet honey, but there are many other benefits of having these little critters around.

You probably know that honeybees make honey, but here's how they make it. First, the bee collects nectar from a flower and stores it in a special stomach, and when it's stomach is filled, it flies back to the hive where it spews out the nectar and gives it to the honeybees working there. If there is too much water in the nectar, they fan the nectar so some of the water evaporates and after the nectar is ready they seal it into a honeycomb.

One of the biggest benefits of honeybees is that they pollinate lots of our flowers and crops. While gathering nectar from flowers, they usually rub up against the pollen and some sticks to their body. Then, when they go to another flower, some of the pollen rubs off, thus pollinating the flower. "A third, or maybe more of our crops are pollinated by honeybees," says science teacher Ms. Lambert. Because of this, you can probably thank them for the fruits and veggies you eat everyday. Maybe the meat too, since lots of our crops are feeding the animals that are raised to be eaten.

There also aren't many disadvantages about having honey bees around. One of the only disadvantages is getting stung, but usually this is uncommon and isn't that big of a deal unless your allergic. Every year, there are around fifteen people that die from bee stings (in the U.S.), which is a problem but the benefits mostly make up for it.

Honeybees can also help the environment. Like they do for our crops, they also pollinate many wild plants which are food for small insects, mammals, and birds, which are in turn prey for larger animals. For this reason, honeybees are quite important in the ecosystem since they pollinate the plants that are at the bottom of the food chain.

These benefits aren't small things either. If all honey bees died out, tons of people would go hungry due to crops not being pollinated. Without honeybees, it would be a lot harder to produce enough food for the growing population.

So next time you see a honeybee, instead thinking of it as a pesky flying insect with painful stings, think of it as a great bug that helps supply you with the food that keeps



Pollen sticking to a honeybee while it gathers nectar. Photo by Ms. Lambert.

Unplug to Reconnect

By: Maggie Lewinsky, Grade 6

How many hours a day do you use technology? Two? Three? The recommended amount that is healthy for a middle schooler's brain is two hours a day at most. But you would be surprised at how fast time can slip away when you are seemingly consumed in your device. Think about it, you spend half an hour watching one YouTube video, then get caught up in the next video as it auto plays. Quickly, one hour turns to two as your friend calls you, or you put a new game into your Xbox. For some, this is a daily routine.

Technology is beneficial in many ways, like helping teachers assign things to their students, or to communicate with your relatives who live far away. I also think that technology can be overused, and there are mental and physical consequences to that. When I asked Mrs. Higgins about it, she said, "A lot of people, kids and adults, are spending lots of time on their phone, usually when they are sitting and not physically active." She also said she has found girls spend more time on their phones than boys do. This amount of technology use could lead to cyberbullying and body image issues. Others could become addicted to different video games, and many popular games are violent.

Whether it be an iPad, iPhone, Xbox, or PlayStation, everyone admits that the time adds up quickly. In a recent update, Apple put in a Screen Time feature, allowing users to set time limits for certain apps, or to shut down all apps

after a certain time. This feature has been great for many people, but it takes a lot of self-control to not automatically press the 'ignore limit for today' button when the notification for your limit pops up. Self-control that most iPhone users don't have. This week I have been keeping track of my average screen time, and I have found that I spend, on average, 3 hours and 4 minutes a day on my phone. That amount is shocking to me, and I didn't even realize that I was on my phone that much. That time is also added on top of the time that I spend on my iPad at school.

You may be thinking, "What? But I'm so bored without my phone!" That isn't just a coincidence. Another harmful part of technology is people develop a smaller attention span. Next time, before going straight for your device, try and think of some things other than technology that you could do. Things like playing with your pet, cooking something, going on a walk, spending time with your family, or even reading a book. You might even inspire your parents to get off of their devices. All of this new technology has only been around for about 10 years, and there are still many learning curves to come before we can regulate the technology usage at a rate that is more healthy for our brains. Think of it like cars. At first, they didn't have seatbelts, but then, after some accidents happened and people got hurt by not having them, they made it a law to have them. Since technology is so new, we don't really know what the negative effects may be on your brain. So, before you automatically reach for your iPhone or Xbox, try to make an effort to unplug and reconnect with those around you.



Trash at Miscoe and Why it Matters

By: Kiara Simpson, Grade 5

Trash at Miscoe and in the U.S.

Trash is a major difficulty at Miscoe and all around the world. We dispose lots of trash and it's becoming a problem, but the worst part is what we do with it — like burning trash in incinerators and putting the waste to rot in a landfill. Also, it costs money for schools and households to throw away all the trash that's produced. For a school the trash would be produced in classroom and during classroom hours. If schools and everybody recycled the correct materials, we wouldn't have to pay as much money because it would be less quantities of waste to throw out. The trash Miscoe makes each year is an extremely large amount. So is the amount the whole entire world does too!

"Last school year we spent \$10,589.45 in total for trash removal for Miscoe," said Mr. Jay Byer, director of finance at Miscoe. In the USA, we produced around 508 billion pounds (254 million tons) of waste in one year! In Massachusetts we produced about 11 billion pounds (5.5 million tons) of waste in one year!

Trash Bills Change It All

Your parents/guardians probably get a trash bill every month or two, depending on the area. When your parents/guardians get this bill, they pay a fee for their trash to be thrown away. Though it might not cost as much for a

household to throw trash away it costs a lot for a school to throw trash away. The less trash we make the less money we spend and the more money Miscoe has for making our school even better. Every year, the cost goes up 4% to remove our trash. Even 4% can make a large impact!

Not to mention recycling also costs money! According to Mr. Byer, the first year the recycling contract is signed the recycling cost is \$165.00 per month. Compared to the third year of recycling when it would cost \$175.00 a month.

For the first year we had the trash contract, the trash cost was \$216.30 per month for rental fee. It cost \$150.00 for the haul fee, and finally, it cost \$88.00 per 2,000 pounds for the disposal fee. Compared to year three, when the costs are \$216.30 per month for the rental fee, \$162.00 for the haul fee, and lastly, \$96.00 per 2,000 pounds for the disposal fee.

How Can We Help?

Here at Miscoe we can do many things to help make less waste. Instead of buying the hot lunch plus extra, you could buy your lunch and then you could tell if you would still want more. This would make less trash because you wouldn't be wasting any food. When you buy your lunch, I hope you'll think to yourself, "Maybe I should wait to get an extra snack."

Why Does it Affect the Earth?

Putting trash in the world affects it, some effects of waste carelessness leads to global warming, constant lit-

ter, and a unclean outdoor environment! First, I'm going to talk about global warming. Global warming is when the planet warms up. No, I'm not talking about when the Earth faces the Sun and it is like a summer day. Global warming is when too much Greenhouse gas is released into the air. Greenhouse gas is made in landfills mostly, and we have a lot of landfills so, we have a lot of Greenhouse gas.

According to National Geographic, some effects of global warming have already started, "glaciers are melting, sea levels are rising, cloud forests are dying, and wildlife is scrambling to keep pace" (Article by Christina Nunez). In conclusion, we need to recycle a lot more and try to make less trash, we can help save the earth! Let's help to make that big impact on the world of overflowing seas and glaciers melting well, let's make it a little bit smaller.



Good food going to waste.
Photo by Kiara Simpson.

JOIN NEWSPAPER CLUB!

Want to write an article or comic, design an ad, or write a story? Then Home of the Braves newspaper club is for you! We have snacks, and it is a really awesome experience!



Flip the Switch

The Girl Scout Troop #64628 went on a journey to save energy to reduce pollution and save energy and electricity. In total they saved \$2,806.03 on the Upper Floor, Lower Floor, Ground Floor Gym, Ground Floor Cafeteria, Lobby and Library and Tech Rooms.



How to Accidentally Become Immortal

By: Ishani Saha, Grade 7

In another universe, in which two worlds exist harmoniously and without any knowledge of each other, there was a lonely elf — me. My small family consisted only of myself, my mother, and my father. We were always working to stay above the poverty line, and though our efforts were constant, we couldn't always manage it. Due to these complications, I never had the time to make friends. I was actually a bit depressed for the better part of my life until I was fourteen... You might be wondering why the depression ended when it did. Well, that's the story I'm about to tell you, so pay attention.

I was nearly fourteen, only two days before my birthday when I had taken up an odd job at a tavern. It was late at night, and my working hours were nearly over. I was serving a man in a strange outfit that hid his face. He had a bulky build and was speaking to another, thinner man with a similar outfit that hung on his frame loosely. Probably bounty hunters of some sort, assassins or another kind of hired killers. He ordered two drinks, and when I came back with them, they were talking a bit louder, though some bits still slipped away from my ears. "...one wish per person. And if you send someone else with your wish, it's invalid." The other person spoke, "...complete BLASPHEMY!insane. You expect me to believe this?" Again, the portly man spoke, "Under the mountain range.... you'll find it."

Interested, I tuned in with my elven hearing which was really handy in situations like these, and eavesdropped. I could hear the skinny man's breathing. "I'm telling you, the only way to bring your dead wife back is to go to the well! And if it's your deepest desire! There's no other way to raise the dead!" The portly man continued. Then he lowered his voice to a whisper: "It does work, I've tried it myself.... Mind you, I wasn't trying to raise the dead. I'm not just a gullible human who believes everything he hears," he convinced (or rather, tried to convince) his companion. The other man seemed to be slightly swayed. "Fine. How do you do it?" Portly Man produced a piece of paper from the folds of his cloak.

"Chant this once. As you say the second line, drop an offering into the well under the mountain range. Something of personal value, I suggest. Remember, you might not know your deepest desire, and that is what this grants," he warned him as he handed over the spell. The man took it, but as he read over it, doubt marred his features, and he glared at Portly Man. "I shouldn't have trusted you," and with that, he left. The spell fluttered out of his hands, landing on his seat. Portly Man sighed and did the same after a few seconds of contemplation. I hurried over. The small piece of yellowed paper read:

*Dewch, bodau o'r byd arall, a chyflawni fy nymuniad
Cymerwch y cynnig hwn, anrheg i'ch pobl
Pethau yn y gorffennol
Pethau yn y dyfodol
Pethau yn bresennol
A fydd pawb yn dod at ei gilydd*

I let out a short, giddy laugh. Though I didn't understand it, I did recognize the language. It's name was Cymraeg, though usually was just referred to as 'the Ancient Language'. No one really understood it any more — in fact, the few who did were powerful wizards and witches like Merlin or the enchantress Morgan le Fay. It was powerful magic. I doubt even the Portly Man knew what it was. Two days after eavesdropping on those two men, I may or may not have opened my unfiltered mouth to comment on a particularly annoying customer's eating habits and gotten myself fired. This gave me an opportunity to travel to the mountains. It didn't take me long to get out of town. I took the narrow, dusty, pale-yellow path that led to the mountain range of clouds. I'd been there once before, and I'd seen the well, but I hadn't known it had a greater purpose other than. I'd brought a feather that I used to think gave you good luck. It was a phoenix feather that still emitted warmth. I began to chant the spell. I took the feather from the small bag at my side, and pause before I drop it into the well while chanting the second line. I watched the feather as it dampens, leaving a trail of sparks behind itself. The spell was an odd one, but the words rolled naturally off my tongue. At last, I muttered the

final line.

Almost immediately, a blinding flash of white light obscured everything in sight. I remember a short, high-pitched shriek after which a girl who looked my age descended from the skies. I took back all my previous doubts that the mountain range was a gateway to another world. I had half-expected her to be dead. A fall from that height would have killed any human or elf. *She was wearing a white lace dress, which to me looked very expensive. "You're alive!"*

"Of course, why wouldn't I be?" She returned, confused. She looked at me, and stood up. I hadn't realized how tall she was — nearly half a foot more than my measly height of five feet and two inches. However, that doesn't mean I let her intimidate me. "Maybe because you just fell from the SKY?" I told her, shouting the last part. "It's no wonder you have no friends if you're so rude!" She shouted back. "Hey- what?!?! How do you know that?" I replied. The other girl suddenly took on a distanced look. "I felt your loneliness the moment I came here... it radiates from you in waves..." she revealed.

Feeling uncomfortable after hearing about her strange ability, I asked, "What's your name?" (Finally. Something somewhat normal in this conversation.) Her answer came less than a second later. "I'm Loraine. And you?" she said. "Evelyn," I responded. "Well, Evelyn, let me tell you a secret." She paused and looked me straight in the eyes, but on friendlier terms this time. "I don't have any friends either."

"That's why I'm here, I guess," she went on, "I did have a friend. And then he had to go and die, so I came here, I guess, to... I don't know." Suddenly, a random voice sounded from the formation of clouds above us, calling Loraine's name. Then, Loraine looked at me. "You've been kind to me. I will come back for you one day. I promise to make you immortal, to give you power beyond your greatest dreams." Then, she disappeared in a poof of pink and galaxy blue smoke speckled with sparkles. For days afterward, I wondered if immortality and powers was my greatest desire. Later, I realized I was looking for a purpose in life, and over the course of seven years, I made it my point in life to show kindness to everyone. At the end of those seven years, on my twenty-first birthday, Loraine came back, and this time, it was both of us who disappeared.

Library Cleanup

Mrs. Arnold needs some help/assistance in the library on June 17 -28 from 9 a.m— 1 p.m. each day. She needs help cleaning the library, ordering books, making billboards, and much more. This can help make the library better for the entire school community. THERES'S ALWAYS FOOD! Ask Mrs. Arnold for more details at karnold@mursd.org.

P.S.: She is excepting book donations, too.



Theatre: Why it Matters

By: Harmony Meléndez-Torres, Grade 6

I think that theatre and Broadway don't get enough credit. Whenever I begin to talk about Hamilton or sing songs from Dear Evan Hansen, people usually roll their eyes and sigh. Sometimes they'll say things like, "there she goes again" or "that's so annoying, who cares?". I've never been given the opportunity to actually explain why I love musicals so much. I could've written this article about my opinion, and attempted to get my peers to understand my side. But I doubted that anyone would pay attention unless I got a second opinion from someone they would take more seriously, so I did.

I started by asking Mrs. Appleby some questions on why she enjoys theatre and why she decided to get involved in middle school theatre. She said that she likes theatre because of the creativity and interaction that she gets with students. "I had already been sewing costumes and helping out with props in another theatre", said Mrs. Appleby when asked about her past experiences in theater. Mrs. Appleby started teaching theater at Miscoe Hill because the drama program wasn't doing well, due to budget cuts and the need for a new drama

teacher. "I just felt bad for the eighth graders because they were so excited for the one act plays, which they had been looking forward to for four years," she said, "so I decided to step in and volunteer for the job."

After a while, drama became what she



did 24/7, since she directs all the productions at Miscoe and helps with the costumes, props, and more. She enjoys what she does. Since I figured that "Hamilton" is a really easy and fun way of learning about the American Revolution, and "Dear Evan Hansen" is an inspiring way to help you accept who you are (and embrace it), I wondered whether Mrs. Appleby would feel the same way. Turns out, she does! "Yes, absolutely!" She said.

Complain if you will, but I personally think that you can learn a lot from musicals and plays. Not just from the characters mistakes, but their emotions, thoughts,

and how they decide to overcome everything life throws at them as well. I also like how realistic and lifelike plays are, especially when the endings aren't always perfect.

Sometimes in plays there will be happy endings, and sometimes there won't be. The ending of a play might be more emotional than cheerful or exciting as well. In life there won't always be a happy ending where everything works out. With this in mind, I asked what her favorite musical was, "Cinderella." She replied. "I just love the music. And I also like the message that anything is possible." And I have to say, I agree.

If you are interested in going to see a musical production, but can't afford to go, there are other things you could do. For one, you can attend musicals that are closer to your home. You can also go to some of Miscoe's productions. You can also easily go on YouTube, Amazon Music, Spotify, or whatever you choose to use and search up a Broadway cast recording of the musical. Then you could have the original cast recording to listen to. All in all, I think theatre is really fun and people who think otherwise just don't know what they're missing out on.

Swim

By: Kaitlyn Allington, Grade 5

Kit sighed, her hair speckled with salty dew. She couldn't believe that the local aquarium was releasing Micah, their killer whale today. They said it was because the public was urging them that it wasn't healthy for animals to be held and 'tortured' in captivity. Kit payed attention in science, unlike these other people, and knew that since Micah was brought up in captivity, he was used to humans and things they taught him, like that feeding time was at 5:00 PM sharp and he'd always have 3 big, delicious fish. Kit didn't want to think about it, but she knew Micah might not make it out there in the ocean. The employees were all rushing around, shouting orders and sweating. A girl with a name tag labeled "Leah" tapped Kit on the shoulder and told her she had to leave. Kit couldn't just get up and go. She had to think quick. The first thing that came to mind? Jump in with Micah. Kit soared through the air gracefully. SLOSH! She landed in the tank. The water was freezing. Kit was scared. She hadn't ever swam with any animals before. She only knew Micah from behind the glass or more than 100 feet away, sitting on a creaky old bleacher for a show. Kids began banging on the glass and pointing. Parents freaked

out. Kit looked at Micah, who was swimming towards her. She suddenly became petrified. This was a KILLER whale. But Micah was too close to Kit for her to get away. She squeezed her eyes shut. Suddenly, she was back in the warm, humid Florida air. She looked down and saw that Micah had put her onto his back and brought her to the surface. Words were swirling around her.

"Are you okay?"

"Do you need medical attention?"

Kit didn't know about herself. But she knew about Micah. "All I ask...Micah...won't survive in the open ocean.." she wheezed.

She explained to the crowd, which also happened to have the aquarium's owner in it, her scientific knowledge on why Micah couldn't go into the dangerous sea. When she finished, people were astonished. His release was delayed for further research, which led people to learn what she said was completely true. Kit always smiles at the thought of that day she found her voice.

"Ready for the show, bud?" she whispered to Micah as she stepped into the pool, 5 years later.



Gun Laws

By: Kate Watchmaker, Grade 8

With the epidemic of school shootings being a troubling event to all across the world it has occurred people to talk about the idea of stricter gun laws or to make guns completely illegal, but will that really help? Should gun laws be stricter, or should people's mental health be more taken care of? Today, a lot of people decide that the root of why school shootings take place is completely black and white and do not put into consideration that are multiple factors in why school shootings happen or shootings in general happen. After looking at the different sides of the argument and reading many articles, I consistently heard the following statement, "Guns Kill."

As an individual, I see the situation like this: the laws of killing should be enforced, but the weapon should not be made illegal. The weapon cannot walk on its own, it is those who physically pick up the weapon and use it that are at fault, so what will the making of guns illegal actually accomplish? Well, to start off, in the U.S. Constitution, the Second Amendment clearly states that, "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." This statement in the U.S. Constitution seems to be only protecting state Militias and not individuals but in reality, the constitution is defending an individual right. The only reason the Militia/U.S. government is being used in this having it be a justification clause (to explain why a right is being secured).

Technically, the statement of the second amendment is showing that gun ownership is a right, letting us cross out making guns all illegal right away. But these rules in the Constitution can be restricted to a certain point, many in

our world believe there should be more restrictions. This theory of gun control has been around since the 1960s and those who believe that these should be enforced theorized that the fewer guns we have less gun crime we will have overall. But let's put into mind that a gun ban has no broad popular support and the United States has roughly 325 million guns. And in many other states when they ban certain guns the death rate increases, because just because something is made a law, criminals aren't going to abide by it.

There is a lot to put into mind and after looking at both sides, and what I really think people have to put into mind is that those who are gun owners are mostly responsible, shootings mostly happen when others obtain a gun illegally and are underage. So what do these laws really do if people are going to break it anyway? To put it into a frame of reference let's look at the act of making certain drugs illegal. Though the government makes drugs illegal, bad people, addicts, and others would still reach unbelievable limits to obtain the same amount of drugs as well as the same type they would have if it was legal. Now obviously, there are differences to this example but the overall point I'm trying to make is that just because there are laws it won't stop bad things from happening. Guns aren't the bad guy. It's those who use them to kill that are. Because if you think about it those who have the motivation to kill, are going to use whatever they can to do it. So if we ban guns, bad people will use knives, the government will ban those until we have nothing but our hands, and the government can't take away our hands.

Awful people live in this world, but there is more good than bad. And we are all human, we are doing what we can to live in this world and protect our families, and I believe that all should have the opportunity to protect themselves.

Vaccines and Schools

By: Sarah Flynn, Grade 8

Every year about three million people die from diseases that could have been prevented by a vaccine. Vaccines have saved millions of lives and continue to do so, but some people chose not to be vaccinated, putting them at risk for catching an illness. Rare vaccine injuries, possible allergic reactions, religious reasons, and special health circumstances can deter people from getting vaccinated. There are also multiple untrue rumors about vaccines, for example some people believing they can cause autism. This false claim came from an untrue study that was done and has been proven wrong, but it is still believed to be true by some people. People choosing not to be vaccinated has lead to multiple diseases resurfacing as well. Parts of Massachusetts are currently struggling from a measles outbreak. In the year 2000 there were no reported cases of measles in the United States, now in 2019 the US is experiencing the largest outbreak in twenty five years.

I wanted to know how a child not getting vaccinated has

affected schools like Miscoe Hill. I decided to talk to the school nurse, Mrs. Checkoway, about vaccines to get her opinion on the controversial topic. Mrs. Checkoway started by saying, "There is something in Massachusetts called the religious or medical exemption. Families can opt to not be vaccinated, but they need a note from their doctor every year or note saying that they are not vaccinated for religious reason." Mrs. Checkoway explained further that a few students who attend Miscoe Hill Middle School are not vaccinated, and if someone in the school gets an illness that there is a vaccine for, they will be notified right away. She also mentioned her personal opinion by saying, "I think that in America we are really lucky to have vaccines, and I definitely support and recommend that people get them."

Vaccinations have and will continue to save millions of lives, people choosing to not be vaccinated can cause illnesses to resurface.



Does Female Privilege Exist?

By: Popia Greenwald and Luke Venable
Grade 8

Back in the day, women didn't have the same amount of rights as men had. Overtime, that stereotype changed drastically. Does that mean women and men are now equalized, or does one sex still have more privileges than one another?

The details of the work life are very often discussed when arguing sexism. One of the favored concepts brought up in this discussion is that of the wage gap. There are many different numbers that are brought up when the wage gap is discussed, which in itself is suspicious, but the two numbers that the government released relating to this matter were 24.1% and 5.4%. Without controls, looking at the entirety of male and female wages, females make 24.1% less, meaning that females are making 75.9 cents for every dollar that a male makes. The 5.4% refers to the wage gap after controls are placed, as to make it so only like jobs are compared to each other, as to not compare the wages of a doctor and a garbage truck driver. With this new number we can see that females make 94.6 cents for every dollar a male makes. This number is much more logical to use because, as stated before, it is illogical to compare the wages of a doctor to that of a garbage truck driver.

This having been stated, females making 5.4 cents less is still substantial. Because of this we must consider other factors of the workplace. This is where we get to a standard counter argument of the wage gap, the death gap. In recent government statistics it is stated that 92.4% of workplace death is male. This means that 12.1 males die in the workplace for every female that dies in the workplace. Now personally, and I think most people would agree with me on this, we think that five cents is a very small sacrifice for 12.1 times lower of a death rate.

When it comes to household management, women seem to have the upper hand. In various countries, people have been pressuring their peers into marrying a rich man to avoid the responsibility of having to work and provide for themselves. In no way am I saying men don't try to marry rich as well, but it just so happens that it's more common among females as opposed to males. For those of you who either don't understand or have never heard of marrying rich before, the term "marrying rich" is a verb for taking someone's hand in marriage, not for love, but for wealth and money.

When it comes to providing for a family, it's more often than not a man's responsibility to work hard and make a good living to provide for his family. There are rare cases when the male is unable to perform that task, therefore the female must take over that role. I hesitate to mention this topic, but for the sole purpose of our article, I must. Divorce is something that's quite common. Couples struggle with this issue commonly, but when minors are involved, that's a whole other story. Between the parents, they must figure out custody and financials among other

things. When discussing who's going to gain custody over the offspring(s), women are the ones who get the spotlight shown on them. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there's an estimated 13.7 million parents had custody over children whose other parent lives elsewhere. Of those custodial parents, only one in six were fathers, which in other terms is about 17.8%.

Those are two prime areas where females actually have it better off than males, but what about when they are children in school? Funnily enough, schools also appears to be in favor of the females. Males and females learn things in different ways, because as much as people pretend they are the same, they just aren't. The school system primarily focuses on memorization, a form of learning that females are better at than males. This is a commonly accepted belief, even by those who believe that males are better off than females. Besides this, there is a blatant prejudice in school against males. All the school faculty will deny this, but there are certain things that they just like to ignore. The vast majority of recent valedictorians at Nipmuc have been female, every single one that I could find in the past ten years, actually. Now a person could say that this is because females are smarter. This person would be an idiot.

Both genders are extremely close in IQ, the only current semi-reliable measure of intelligence, and the small imbalance actually favors males. A person could also say that females are almost always valedictorian because the school system is in favor of the female. This person would be more logical, but there are certain things that suggest more than that is at play here. These issues are actually very common. There is a teacher in our school who has referred dismissively to important historical male figures stating that, "They are

guys." This behavior is not rare in the slightest, and from looking at certain teachers it appears as if it is also manifesting in their behavior.

Going into the justice system we can also see some sexism. The accusation of rape is a very interesting topic when discussing the rights of the genders. It has before been stated that people should believe people that say that they have been raped. Unfortunately for those who believe that, the United States justice system believes in innocent until proven guilty, so you can't just say you have been raped and expect prosecution without substantial evidence. The funny thing is, that is not even completely true. Just being accused of rape can ruin your reputation and make everyone hate you, even if you turn out to be innocent and there is no proof that you did anything wrong. Even if you aren't going to jail for it, it can have a massive negative impact on your life.

These are just a few ways that sexism has changed in recent times. If you disagree with any of this or would like to seek further enlightenment or engage in a hearty debate based on facts, not emotions, you can email us at politi-calhelper@gmail.com.



What's New

Middle School: The Good, But Mostly The Bad

By: Cecila Van Norman, Grade 8

Us eighth graders have less than two months left here at Miscoe. I'm definitely gonna miss it here, but, to be honest, there are plenty of things I won't miss. Of course I've learned so much these past 4 years, but it has it hasn't been the best. I'm here to give some advice to everyone who will be coming back to Miscoe next year. Because, trust me, it is *not easy* to get through middle school, but it certainly is possible.

Fake it 'Til You Make it.

Listen: no matter what, you're *not* going to be prepared for the next four years of your life. But it all comes down to science. This is the time in your life when you start to change. Most young adolescents develop mental illnesses such anxiety and depression at this stage in their lives, and that can really take a toll on some people. But don't worry, it'll get better. So put on a smile and get through it, it won't last forever. Just try to stay positive.

You Come First.

Speaking of mental health, make sure to keep a close eye on yours. Lots of people who have mental illnesses feel alone, as if they have no one to turn to. Know that there are options! Find friends that you can trust and that will listen

to you. Talk to your parent/guardian about getting professional help or just talk to the school counselors. Make sure your happiness comes before anyone else's. Do things that bring you joy.

Stay Away From The Drama.

This, in my opinion, is the most important thing to remember; drama. Is. Everywhere. You can't really avoid it entirely. Of course, you can always try and stay away by not talking about it or participating in it. Some people are over dramatic, some people are ignorant, some are are just straight up rude. But, as I said before, it doesn't actually matter. It might pass in a few weeks, but if not, it's not a huge deal.

Schoolwork Will Get Harder.

Yes, the work will get harder, put try not to let that put you down! Most kids in eighth grade can agree that the work can get insanely difficult at times, but there are plenty of ways you can manage it. And *never* procrastinate. It never helps. The teachers have your best interests at heart and want to see you succeed. I mean, get used to it now, the work load only gets worse.

And if all else fails, don't worry. Whatever you're going through, most other people are going through it too. It'll be over soon enough. ;)

Dogs Who Listen

By: Mark Calabrese, Grade 6

The therapy dogs Daisy and Callie are here to help. These dogs are also going to Nipmuc High School and belong to their owner, Don Foley. These dogs are trained to be therapy dogs by Dog B.O.N.E.S, which is an agency that can train the dogs. The person who came up with the idea to bring them over is Mrs. Mannion, who wanted are students to benefit from them. They come once a month to our school and have come several months so far.

This whole program, which as been implemented at Nipmuc as well, has got plenty of love. The two sixth grade students I interviewed along with the current fifth and sixth guidance counselor Mrs. Allen, they informed me that they believe therapy dogs are a good idea. "The therapy dogs visit all students, they bring smiles to students, they also help students relax and calm down and (be less) anxious, petting them can be therapeutic," said Mrs. Allen. Callie is a Cocker Spaniel and Daisy is a King Charles Cavalier. Daisy started training to be a therapy dog when she was two and Callie was training when she was eight weeks old. Daisy is currently eight and Callie is two. Callie is also not bathroom trained yet, so she wears a red diaper.

When I interviewed two students about the idea, 6th graders Abigail Gibbons and Aila Francis told me that

they believe the dogs were a very good idea. When I asked if they personally thought the dogs helped with stress Abigail confidently said, "They do because when I'm stressed, I'll go sit near my cat or my dog. I have the cat at my Dad's and the dog at my Mom's. I'll go sit with them and that calms me down." I also asked whether or not they hoped or wished that the therapy dogs would come sooner than there one month period and when asked, Aila said immediately, "Yes, maybe every two weeks."

Don Foley doesn't do it for money at all, all she asks is that if you want you make a donation to Dog B.O.N.E.S. who helped train the dogs. She is also willing to come in for emergency visits just in case of an emergency. Let's set our hopes high for this program and wager for success, and thank you once again Mrs. Foley and Mrs. Mannion for this wonderful opportunity.



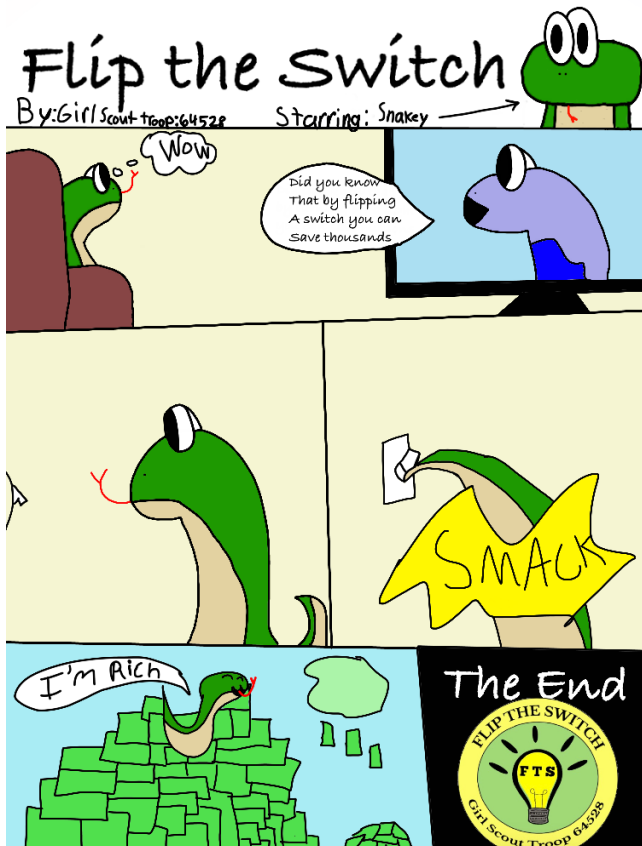
Cute photograph
of Callie.
Photo by Mrs.
Allen.

Flip the Switch

By: Girl Scout Troop 64628, Grade 5

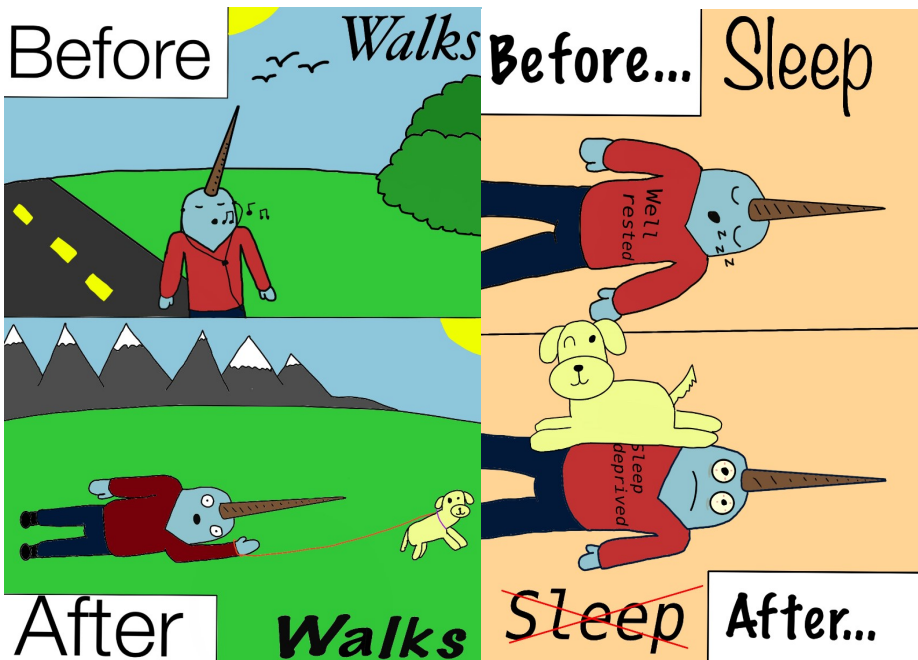
Hey Miscoe! Keep reading because Flip The Switch campaign is lighting up! Did you know that our school spends more than \$2,000 dollars on unused energy per year? Many of the classrooms in Miscoe still have the light switch on during unoccupied times, such as when the school day is over. That money could buy us new sports equipment, awesome field trips, and materials to make school even better! All you have to do is flip a switch when you leave the room. It can save us tons of money! Girl Scout Troop 64528 is ready to take action... are you with us? Pass this on to the new fifth graders! Eighth graders, bring this on to Nipmuc! Share this with your friends and family! Try this at home! This is a new opportunity for Miscoe, beginning now, and continuing in September! Remember, one small movement can do ALOT for our school!

You can help by TURNING OFF THE LIGHTS when you leave the room. Employ a student to turn off the lights at the last block of the day. This student can be the "Switch Flipper" for a certain period of time. Look for our logo, and remember that one small movement can do a lot for our school! FLIP THE SWITCH!



☒ CHOOSE YOUR
ELECTIVES! ☒

One of the best parts of Miscoe is getting to choose your electives! So don't forget to pick your's for next year!



Home of the Braves

Check out Home of
The Braves on the
Miscoe Hill website!

<http://miscoehillschoollibrary.weebly.com/home-of-the-braves-newspaper.html>

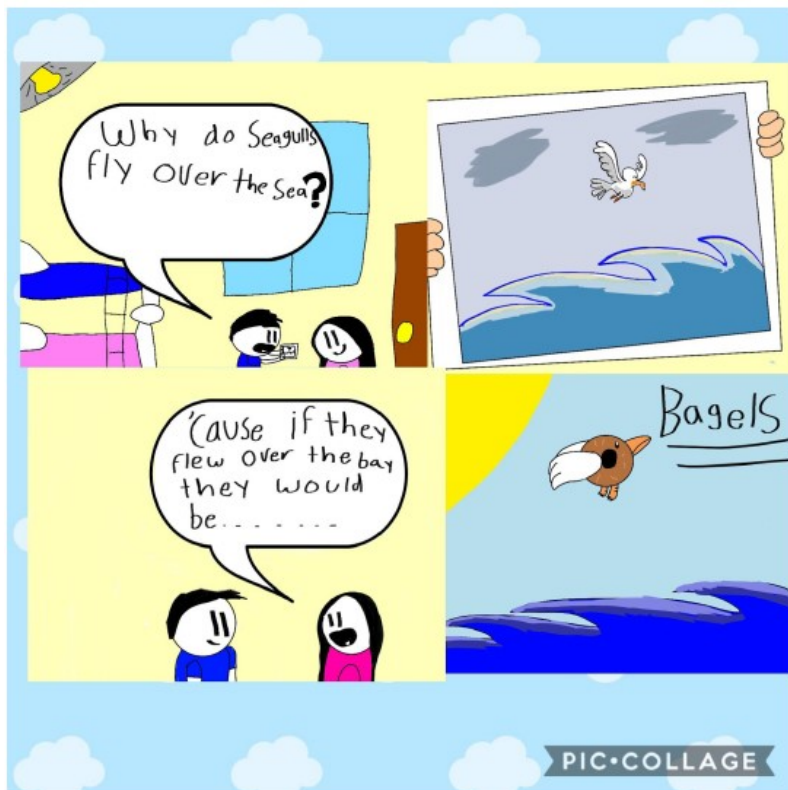


Printing: This program is supported in part by a grant from the Upton and Mendon Cultural Councils, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Smartfish Group, Waltham

Questions or comments?
Contact us! karnold@mursd.org

Want to be part
of our staff?

An email will be sent with
information about our next issue.



Happy Summer Vacation

Have Fun, get your summer reading done and of course think about the impending reality of going back to school under three months.



