

THE PERFORMER

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Philadelphia Area Budget Cuts and Catholic School Closings

By: Sarah V. Grapek

Very recently, many budget cuts have been made in the state of Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, this means major loss in the educational funds for Philadelphia's School District. As of mid February, the budget gap stands at about 38.8 million dollars. When the government removes millions of dollars from educational budgets, a large portion of schools must be closed.

Many Catholic schools in the Philadelphia area plan on closing because of budget cuts. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia recently announced the closing and/or merging of 49 schools; but the numbers change frequently. Students, teachers, and parents gradually become more active in the fight to keep their schools open. 24 different schools

filed appeals, and continue to try to raise money, rally, and fight in the hopes of defying the pressing dilemma.

Kids, who have been together as a class for years, are now being broken apart for their senior year because their schools must shut down. Closing these Catholic schools will have a ripple effect on not only the students, but also the community as a whole. A majority of the students will be funneled into already overcrowded public schools, causing overpopulated, unsafe schools with no sense of an individualized learning environment. With the absence of many schools, the buildings and lots will be used for other recreations. It is still to be announced if some lots will be sold, or buildings reused for other schools. One thing is certain,

there will be a huge change affecting the surrounding communities.

School closings cause uncertain and worried feelings in communities, and give people the drive to try to make a change. Students and parents have begun to rally for a school voucher bill, giving parents the power to choose where to spend educational funds. Philadelphia Archbishop, Charles Chaput, has said, "Vouchers . . . return the power of educational choice to parents, where it belongs." Although he has made this statement, and has let parents and students decide what school to enroll their children in previously,



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Senior Projects: Preview

By: Aly Wolf

Senior projects, a requirement to graduate from high school in the state of Pennsylvania, came about to stimulate behavioral development of high school students, and to reflect over four years worth of invaluable experience. While past projects spanned a wide range of community service efforts and artistic performances, focus needed to be applied to the cultivation of the senior thesis. Thus, a new approach came to be. Created by the English department and the artistic directors of each major, unique projects solidified, specifically for the graduating artist, complete with appropriate research possibilities and room for reflection.

Creating projects specifically designed for a major can cause discrepancy.

Theater majors, who have found their passion in technical design or stage management, found fault in the pigeonholing topic of choosing an acting method and relating it to their personal acting technique. "Mrs. Wagner has been very accommodating for us in the Theatre Department who consider ourselves 'theatre' majors and not 'acting' majors, allowing us to research topics relevant to our interests in the greater realm of our art," explained senior theater major Alec Lafavore. Figure skaters received a great depth of options in pursuing a topic for their senior thesis. With unlimited possibilities laid out for her, Joanna Foos chose to focus on synchronized skating, for which she holds great interest and has previously participated in. Art majors have chosen

artistic movements that influence and inspire their work, and will utilize their research to produce a reflection of their development at LVPA.

Instrumental and vocal majors joined forces, as the Music Department, to explore composers and perform a piece from that specific artist. However, like the Theater Department, room has been made for accommodation. Senior percussion major, Grace Wall faced a problem because percussion composers are few and far between. Instead, she designed a unique concept. "I am writing my own percussion piece, using only sounds that can be made on a playground, and recording it. I'm writing my paper on how cultures throughout history have used whatever resources were available to them to make musical instruments (mostly percussive ones)."

One major simply tailored an existing

Cont. on page 3 (Senior)

Budget (Continued from page 1)

he now contradicts this very notion. Chaput assigns schools to students and merging schools, leaving the students with no choice. They either go to another Catholic school or attend a public school.

However, closing the schools might actually have a temporary benefit. Money no longer budgeted for education can be used elsewhere. Positive long lasting results remain unlikely, according to David O' Reilly, a writer at the official website of Philadelphia: "These economically driven closings come at a time when many American Catholics are drifting away from traditional practices of their faith." Catholic Schools introduce children and teens to the Catholic Faith. Many people who are Catholic Christians find great importance in keeping their religion alive in this day and age, where humans rely on technology rather than the church. Only 24 percent of Philadelphia's registered Catholic population attends mass on any given weekend. Attendance, which declines every year, will continue to do so after these school closings.

In this economy, it is hard to say what Congress will cut out of the budget next. Philadelphia exemplifies the positive and negative effects of schools losing funding. The possibility of schools closing permanently has brought communities together, but not all schools can be saved. Who knows what impact the loss of these schools can have on the surrounding communities and the Catholic Faith?

February Holidays

Origins of St. Patrick's Day

By: Devon Zilinek

Many people around the world have celebrated St. Patrick's Day for thousands of years. However, over the years, the reason for celebrating St. Patrick's has slowly faded. Thus, most people do not know the real story of this famous holiday.

St. Patrick is known as the patron saint of Ireland. He was born during the 4th century in Roman Britain. At the age of 16, Irish raiders kidnapped him from Wales and took him to Ireland as a slave. During his time as a slave, St. Patrick claimed God told him to flee from captivity and return to Britain. When he returned to Britain, he joined a church and studied to become a priest. In 432 AD, St. Patrick returned to Ireland to Christianize the Irish. His methods of teaching included using the shamrock to explain the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) to the Irish. After almost 30 years of teaching, he died on March 17, 461 AD.

The earliest known celebrations of Saint Patrick's Day originated in the 9th century. The Irish would celebrate by having a feast every March 17. In the early 1600's, St. Patrick's feast day became an official Catholic holiday. In 1903, it became an official public holiday in Ireland thanks to the Bank Holiday (Ireland) Act. In the mid 1990's, the government of Ireland began a campaign to use St. Patrick's Day to showcase Ireland and its culture.

Today, people of all origins celebrate St. Patrick's Day with parades, festivals, and parties. New York City held the first St. Patrick's Day parade in 1762. Another popular parade location, Canada, has one of the longest-running St. Patrick's Day parades in North America, held every year since 1824. Downpatrick, where St. Patrick was said to be buried, holds one of the biggest St. Patrick's Day festivals. In 2004, the weeklong festival had more than 30,000 people in attendance.

St. Patrick's Day is a holiday with rich tradition and history and celebrates not only St. Patrick, but also the Irish spirit.



Black History Gallery

By: Gina Lerman

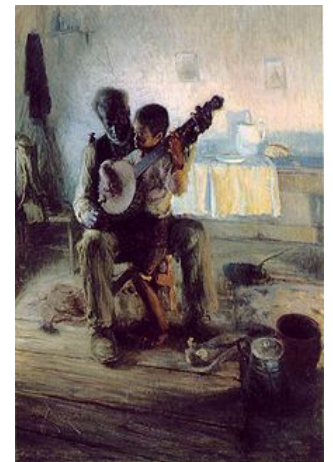
Black History Month may be over, but LVPA's Black History Celebration is still going strong. Every year, a different artistic department, with the help of Mr. Shuman, is tasked with putting together the February celebration. Past students may remember the theatre department's fun, yearly performances about Black History in America, but this year, the Visual Art department put on the show.

For students who have not noticed, the Fowler Gallery, the hallway by the back entrance, has showcased photographs, drawings, and information about famous black Americans. The Art Department reserved walls for those influential figures in theatre, politics, art, literature, music, and other fields.

One of these notable African American visual artists, Henry Ossawa Tanner, grew up in Pennsylvania and created the bulk of his work, biblical paintings, in the late 18th century. In 1960, well-known and renowned Brooklyn native Jean-Michael Basquiat collaborated frequently with his good friend and colleague, Andy Warhol. Basquiat's untimely death resulted from a 1988 drug overdose, but he remains remembered as one of the most popular artists working in the 80's.

Around the same time, Kehinde Wiley painted young, black Americans. He says of his work, "You're looking not only at art history, but [also] social history and anthropology; the ways that people have solved essential questions as to who we are and what are our passions."

Artists engrain many solutions to these "essential questions" in their work, and the same solutions can be found in higher thought of all kinds. To find out more about these and other influential African Americans, take a walk through the Fowler Gallery. The Black History Month exhibit will stay up until the middle of March, so come appreciate the lives and works of amazing black



project into a comprehensive graduation project. Dance majors have been creating their own pieces as a cumulative project in senior composition classes for years, and now, the pieces hold even more importance to graduating dance majors. Stacy Collado says, "I admire the direction in which the dance faculty has gone in with the graduation projects. We're forced to not only practice in our art, but also to think about it. Purpose is ever-existent and there is a reason for everything - now, graduation-bound, we're asked to really use the tools we've adopted in the last four years in our projects." Her project, which examines the psychological relationship between body and mind, perfectly melds together a researchable topic and artistic reflection and creates the quintessential graduation project.

Ms. Kelly, the driving force behind the project's English requirement, went on a year long hiatus to take care of her newborn. With this switch (and the five person English teacher cycle which followed), students embarking on the project became dismayed. Finally, order became clear and the project began, although off to a late start. Much success stems from the installation of new English teacher, Mr. Walsh. Lafavore says, "With [Mr. Walsh's] 'throw-out-the-rule-book' attitude and laid back demeanor, he has managed to break this project down into smaller, more manageable pieces." While the project still lacks the acute focus that comes with years of trial, error, and development, each major's students and faculty continue to put forth effort to further the progress of the projects. In the English department, students have written research paper outlines, and the paper itself has begun to materialize.

Radio 104.5 Winter Jam 2012

By: Devon Zilinek

On January 28, Radio 104.5 held their second annual Winter Jam concert at The Piazza at Schmidt's in Philadelphia. The free concert featured the bands Rivers Monroe, fun., and headliner New Found Glory.

Because of the beautiful day on which the concert happened, the piazza flooded with people. The 60 degree weather enticed fans to come to the event just as much as the bands. The residents of the apartment complex around the stage even sat on their balconies to enjoy the show. Unfortunately, the weather did not suit the half pipe snowboarding that was planned, as the sun made it too warm for the manufacturing of snow. Instead, the station swapped the half pipe for a giant bouncy slide that both kids and adults enjoyed.

Rivers Monroe, a band local to Philadelphia, performed first. Their pop-punk sound warmed up the crowd for the coming bands. Moreover, 45-minute DJing filled the break between bands. fun. performed next. Their catchy pop songs had everyone singing along with them. Finally, New Found Glory hit the stage. It was clear from the second the band started playing who everyone was there to see. The lead singer's lively stage presence became infectious. The huge crowd sang, moshed, and crowd surfed. The band played all of their hits during the one hour set. Few people found disappointment in the band's performance.

Overall, Winter Jam marked a huge success as a great day filled with music and winter fun. Winter Jam is not the only free show Radio 104.5 puts on. Every summer they hold the Block Party. Block Party appears about four times every summer at the Piazza at Schmidt's, so come on out to support Radio 104.5 with some fun in the sun!



Featured Artist: Connie Edinger

By: Jackie Bastidas

Vocalist and songwriter, Connie Edinger, has been performing in the Lehigh Valley for over twenty years. Edinger's music consists of a blend of popular ballads and dance rock.

Connie Edinger spent her entire childhood surrounded by the arts. As a little girl in her hometown of Vandercook Lake, MI, Edinger encountered her first and most influential inspiration, her grandmother, Alice V. Edinger. Connie remembered watching her grandmother play piano and sing for her and the other grandchildren. Following in her footsteps, Connie took up piano and singing. Edinger, as well as her parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and siblings, carried on the performing gene in becoming either amateur or professional musicians and dancers. With a rich history of music in her early life and exposure to AM GOLD Radio, Connie set out to be a musician and gathered inspiration everywhere she could.

In her quest to learn from the best, Connie Edinger began collecting albums of exquisite artists ranging in genres. After the lasting impression of her grandmother rooted itself in her, Connie found her next love: Classic Rock. Today, Edinger draws influence from several groups of this genre, including: Heart, Pat Benatar, Linda Ronstadt, The Eagles, and last, but certainly not least, Fleetwood Mac.

Edinger performs and writes her own music. However, she has also written some songs with her fellow performer, Mike Mindler. Connie writes her music with the help of her piano, a gift from her grandmother and fellow artist. She imagines the accompaniment to her lyrics, guitar, drums, and other instruments. Various songs include: "Galoshes and Wings," "Kiss You All The Time," "Learn To Fly," "Listen (Scream)," "Take The Place Of You," and "Tense." Her most popular and well-known songs are "Give A Little," "Justify The Means," "Woah's Me," and "You're Not Mine." Connie's songs' meanings range from love to heartbreak, and from carefree to fed-up with life. She sings about everything she feels, which makes Edinger refreshing to listen to because she clearly does not fake her emotions.

Connie first performed at the age of five in an elementary school musical. She sang, acted, and played drums and other percussion instruments throughout junior high and high school, while participating in Chorus, Stage Choir, Musicals, and Marching and Stage bands. Edinger has performed at Musikfest on numerous occasions. She also sang the National Anthem for the Iron Pigs, as well as Service Electric Cable TV. If you want to see Connie Edinger perform, come to the TD Bank Community Stage on the Capital Blue Cross Creativity Commons at the Steel Stacks this March 10th from 8 till 11 for a free performance. Connie Edinger lives and works in the Lehigh Valley. To learn more about her, visit her MySpace page at www.myspace.com/connieedinger/music/.



Fact or Fake?

By: Kat Mellman

***Can you tell which story is fact.....or fake?
In the February issue How Old is to Old was
indeed true.***

Alligator Hero

Most kids stay out of trouble, but not six year old Jimmy McOugh, who resides in Florida, near Key West. McOugh was out in the marsh, trying to collect tadpoles, when Jimmy stepped out too far. The mud where Jimmy was standing fell out from underneath him. Jimmy said, "I tired to swim, but my leg got caught." Luckily for Jimmy, an alligator was hunting near the boy. Instead of hurting Jimmy, however, the alligator bit him free.

Loving the Golden Arches

Have you ever had such a love for a certain type of food that it was all you ate? Have you eaten that same food for 15 years? Well, Stacey Irvine, age 17, has. Irvine is said to have eaten nothing but chicken nuggets since the age of two. The troubled teen collapsed from lack of breath, and paramedics had to rush her to the hospital. On the 25th of January, while recovering at home, she continued on an urgent course of vitamins, which the hospital started injecting upon admission. Stacey said to thesun.co.uk "I am starting to realize this is really bad for me. McDonald's chicken nuggets are my favorite. I share 20 with my boyfriend, plus chips. However, I also like KFC and supermarket brands. My main meal is always chicken nuggets every day." Time will only tell if this troubled teen will break her McNuggets addiction.

Spring Fashion

By: Lana Brucker

Whether students want winter to end or wish for at least one snow day to free up the busy school week, spring is creeping just around the corner. With the new season, come new fashion trends: stylish blends of vintage, as well as contemporary flair. Some department stores, as well as broadcast media, reveal previews of their upcoming spring 2012 selection.

According to CNN, classic femininity is coming back in style this spring. In recent seasons, famous trends have included girls dressing in boyish ensembles or tougher, gothic apparel. However, “the catch-all phrase of the season is femininity. It is floral-inspired, tropical-inspired, ethnic-inspired, artist-inspired and scarf-inspired and usually is seen in a dress, a pair of pants, [and] an underscore skirt,” Bloomingdale’s fashion director Stephanie Solomon exclaims. Floral prints, the foxy princess look, as well as pastels emerge into the spring collection. More of an old-fashioned “pretty” appeal returns to the runway.

While this spring’s collection features girls in chic dresses, it introduces a laid-back, baggy look for the men. Fashionising.com previews a new trend in tailoring called “relaxed tailoring.” No longer do men of any age need to worry about the exact snug fit of their suit. “Seamless shoulders,” “loose pants,” “pleated pants,” and “loose cut jackets” are going in style! Guys are beginning to employ a relaxed persona through the outfits they wear, not only in formalwear, but also in casual attire.

Many stores throughout local malls introduce a crazy selection of patterns, colors, and carefree styles for teenagers, both male and female, for spring 2012. For instance, American Eagle, a popular teenage clothing store, premieres a “splash of vitamin colors,” as John Simon Daily, an online fashion updater, reveals. The store will be selling brightly colored pants, as well as other brightly colored patterned garments. American Eagle also advocates the floral trend, not only through their dresses, but also on the frames of the store’s aviators. Just like other big brand stores and department stores this spring, the male collection provides an abundance of plaid and casual vintage labels. American Eagle will even sell rock ‘n roll inspired garments for both girls’ and guys’ enjoyment.

Another booming trend for Spring 2012 is the revival of the 1920s, ’30s and ’60s! In several past years, the 1970s has snuck its way into various items on the runway and in stores. However, this upcoming season advocates a tailored, beach-inspired “classic” vibe. Polka dots, stripes, lace, pastels, and strictly feminine or “girly” arrangements flood malls’ and runways’ spring collections. Forever 21, a huge advocate of the trend, has even previewed glamorous renditions of the historic revival in The

Budget Babe’s online fashion archives.

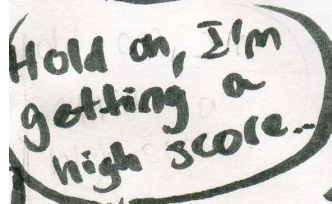
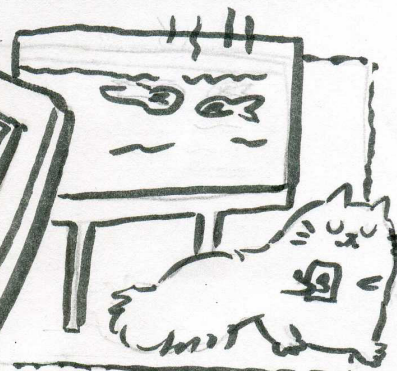
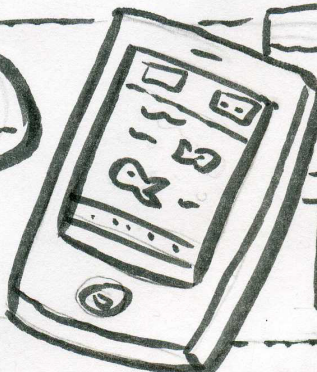
From flowy dresses to tailored or label-inspired vintage attire, Spring 2012 booms with a vast variety of opportunity to dress for the warmer weather. Several department stores are now beginning to preview some of their spring collections. Check out the stores near you because some even have sales to kick off the new season! Although winter may put many in a grumpy, sluggish mood, spring is approaching and with it, relaxed, freeing, fresh, and energized fashion.

Happy shopping!



PERCY the PERSIAN Performer

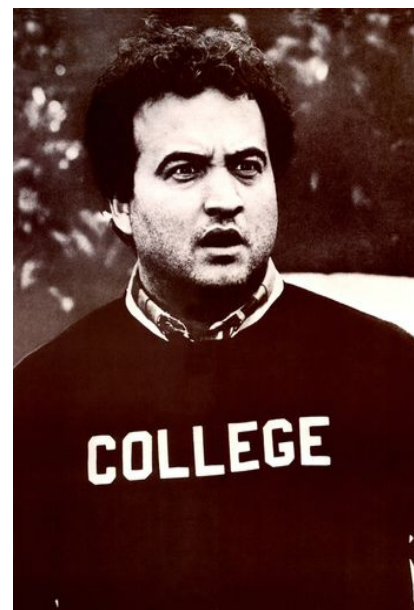
Percy gets an iPhone



END.

Tips for the College Process

By: Erynn Molettieri



Beginning your college search and don't know where to start? The best place to start is the Collegeboard website, www.collegeboard.com. There, you can enter in your desired major, (even if it's undecided), your SAT scores, your GPA, how big of a campus you're looking for, what state you'd like to go to college in, and many more specifications. Then, the search engine gives you a list of colleges, based on your answers and interests.

After researching the colleges that draw your interest, choose approximately four schools to absolutely apply to:

1. A "reach school": This is the school most difficult to gain acceptance to. Entry requires a higher GPA and a higher SAT score than you have. It's always good to test yourself.
2. First choice: This college is your favorite. For whatever reason, this is the college you really want to attend.
3. Back-up: This school is your second favorite; if you don't get into your first choice, you would most likely choose this college.
4. Safety: This college is the one you are most likely to gain acceptance. Your test scores and grades are either the same as the requirement or higher. If you don't get in to the first two or three schools you apply to, you can always count on this school.

Of course, you don't have to apply to only four schools; you can apply to more and keep your options open or you could apply to less; it's your decision. This is a basis to keep in mind so you don't overwhelm yourself.

Pay attention to the deadlines and keep in mind a good personal time frame for working on applications. There are four different kinds of application deadlines, but not all colleges offer all four. It's important to know the difference.

1. Rolling admission: There is no set deadline. You can send in your application at anytime and know in a matter of a few weeks if you are accepted or not.
2. Regular admission: There is a deadline, and you have to stay with it. You will know their decision anywhere from a few weeks to a few months.
3. Early decision: This is when you are accepted early to a college, and you have to go if you are accepted. Do not do this unless you know the college is the only one you want to go to.
4. Early action: This is when you are accepted early to a college and don't have to say yes if you decide you don't want to go to the school anymore.

From there, you can start planning college visits. Planning a college visit is pretty simple. You can either look up the open house dates the university offers and sign up for a campus informational tour, or you could get in touch with the admissions office and set up dates to sit in on classes and take a tour of the campus. The people running the admissions are not scary, and they want to help you. The more interest you show in their school, the better it looks for you when you actually send in your application.

Time is an important factor in this process. Your senior year is a busy one. Get applying out of the way, and start early. You don't want to stress about college your entire senior year. Here's a quick tip: Don't stress, don't even worry. The application process is not a difficult one; you just need time. Pick the teachers you want a recommendation letter from and get them whatever information they need. You can get these letters before you know what schools you'll be applying to. Here's where you need time: actually filling out the college application takes a lot of time and concentration. Before you finalize and send in anything, make sure someone goes over it with you and guarantees there are no mistakes. If there is a college essay they ask you to write, start on it right away. Your English teachers won't mind helping you through this part of the process and checking your papers before your guidance counselor sends them in. Take advantage of this opportunity, but be sure to give them time to work with you. Remember, your guidance counselors will send in your transcript release forms, SAT scores, college essay, recommendation letters, and whatever else the college you are applying to requires. This package can be sent into the colleges either before or after you send in your application.

Here are some tips from the seniors who have already gone through the process:

- "Lots of Red Bull and time; don't be worried if you cry." - Joey Barone
- "Know the teacher you ask for a recommendation letter from, so you can ensure your letter in a timely manner." - Kalina Mellman
- "Don't put off writing college essays!" - Michael Maniscalco
- "Set weekly goals for yourself." - Abby Corr
- "Start applications over the summer/early in the year, you'll stress out if you wait. Don't get freaked out if you don't know what you want to do yet, you can always apply 'undecided'." - Amanda Angelico
- "Meet the teachers of the colleges you apply to." - David Deiter
- "Don't slack and don't wait. Read applications carefully." - Nicole Watts
- "Don't be afraid to ask your guidance counselors for help!" - Michaela Smith
- "Deadlines come up sooner than you think! Get started early!" - Lexie Brown

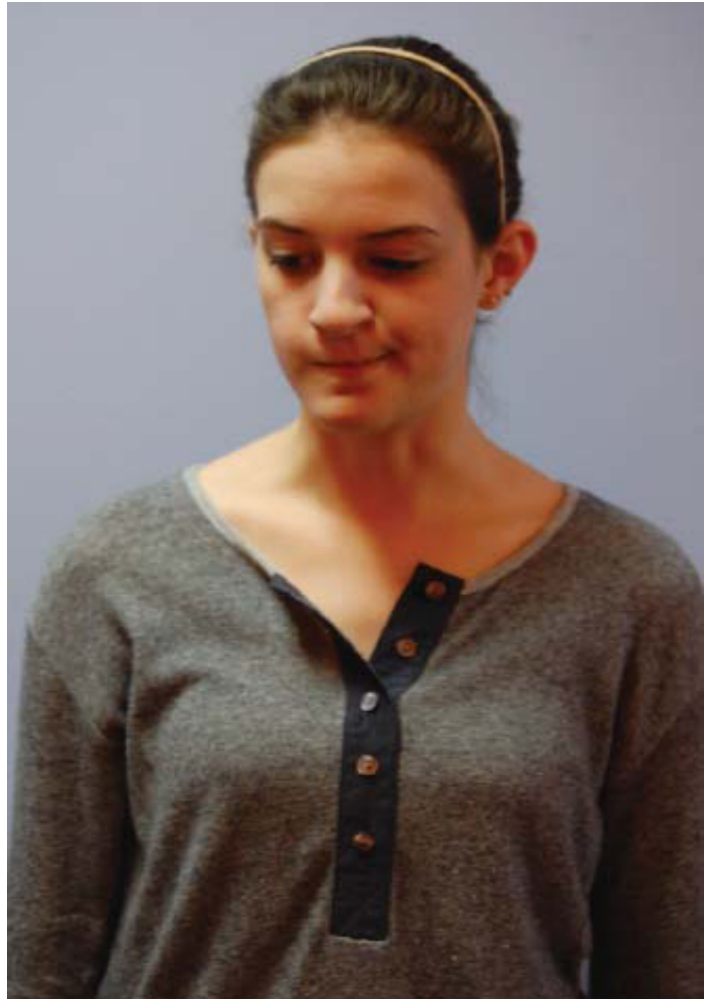
Now, you have tips from seniors, blue folders from the guidance counselors, and endless help throughout this process.

Go and get started as soon as possible. The earlier you get started, the earlier it's over with, and you're officially in college!

Ali's Advice Column

There's a horrible rumor going around about me. People even talk about it when I'm around, and it hurts my feelings so much. What can I do?

Ignore it all. You know the truth and your true friends will support whatever you do. If people say rude things, ignore that too. They're ignorant, and they won't get anywhere in life. Stay true to yourself, because if all else fails, you'll know who you are as a person. That's more valuable than any high school reputation. If someone comes face to face and confronts you, do what you want. No one says you have to tell him or her your life story. Simply tell them it is none of their business. However, to clear the air, be sure to say it in a calm way. Then, tell them to drop it and never ask about it again. Life goes on, whether or not you have a good day. Realize that the sun will come up tomorrow, the earth will continue to spin on its axis, and, most likely, the rumor about you will soon be forgotten.



Ali's Rant

For my entire high school career, I can remember one thing very vividly: senior privileges. When I put in my hard work, my teachers would recognize it and finally give me a break. It was the only thing that kept me going. I saw seniors of the past graduate and be ecstatic that they received the grades to be exempt from finals. Seniors could terminate their high school year before all the other grades, because they earned it. They had achieved admission to college and, for once in their lives, were granted the short break from a heavy workload, simply because they were seniors. Instead, I, along with all the other seniors, will be released from school at the same time as everyone else. No matter how hard we work in class or how great our grades are, we still have to take our finals. The only things we could have looked forward to, besides going off to college, were our senior privileges. Now, we have nothing in high school to look forward to besides graduating and leaving our old lives behind.

Short Story: Graduation

By: Erynn Molettieri

On my Graduation Day, I sit in the sea of black caps and gowns. I'm looking around at all of my friends with whom I've spent the past four years of my life. Some look sad, others look eager, and some excited. Then, I realize they all have one look in common. They look so much older. The thought takes me by surprise, as I remember their freshman faces. We were so small then. We thought this day would never come, and now, here we are, on the edge of adulthood, staring our futures in the face. This is the last time we will all sit together like this, the last time we will sit as one, as a class.

As I continue to look around, I recognize every face I see. I've had a conversation with every one of them. I have a memory with every student sitting here. Here we are, about to say goodbye; some only for now, and some for good. I will never see some of these faces again. The thought almost seems false and melodramatic, but I know it's the truth, and it makes me sad. We're all about to move on, to move into the future, alone.

They begin to call our names, and the applause is continuous. We stand to receive the document we covet most, our diplomas; the piece of paper we have spent our lives to see, the piece of paper that tells us we finally did it, we finally made it. Our elementary school teachers used to tell us about this document; how one day, we would receive it. I used to scoff at them in irritation. I thought the day would never actually arrive, but here it is, about to be mine.

I accept my diploma when my name is called. I am overcome by a sudden sadness, as I pause with my diploma in my hand. I look out at my class, my friends, and I realize again that we will never be how we are right now again, as one class.

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SECRET QUESTION!

E-mail the correct answer to

ThePerformer@lvpa.org

and win a *tasty treat*!

How would you define a “reach school”?