

## NJROTC Students Combat Cyber Attacks in Cyber Patriot

By Hilltop Staff

When the Chinese government recently denied the cyber-attacks of American corporations and government agencies for the purpose of gaining leverage in negotiations, many Americans have now become aware of the threat from abroad. America needs a new breed of protector who can defend against this new threat from abroad and even from domestic attack.

2012 - 2013 is the inaugural year of the Passaic High School Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Cyber Patriot Team. PHS students in the NJROTC program are answering the call for a new generation of intelligent patriots to protect American interests. Cyber Patriot is the premiere national high school cyber defense competition created by the Air Force Association to inspire high school students toward careers in cyber security or other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics



Photo by staff

Left to right: Glend Lopez, Jesus Reyes, Mario Gurrero, Gabriela Hernandez, Leandro Villar, Leonardo Martinez, Rafy Reyes, Mariana Cotzomi, Christopher Cancel, Team mentor Mr. Frank

(STEM) disciplines critical to our nation's future.

Schools from around the world compete. During competition, the teams could be solving up to three computer images during one six-hour period. PHS cadet corps upperclassmen Glend Lopez, Jesus

Reyes, Mario Gurrero, Gabriela Hernandez, Leandro Villar, Leonardo Martinez, Rafy Reyes, Mariana Cotzomi, and Christopher Cancel, accepted the challenge. They were mentored by math teacher Mr. Frank and coached by NJROTC teacher Pet-

ty Officer Nuyen.

Although the team just missed qualifying for the semi-final round, they did qualify for the consolation round. During this round, they were required to find all vulnerabilities in three different images with three different operating systems within one six-hour period.

In the consolation round the PHS NJROTC Cyber Patriot's finished in 2nd place among NJROTC schools, 4th among all JROTC and Civil Air Patrol schools, and 12th among the 300 total schools competing.

These young patriots are proud of their achievements in this competition. "I really liked participating in this competition," said Senior Gabriela Hernandez, "I learned a lot."

The successful representation by PHS in Cyber Patriot V this year can be built upon in Cyber Patriot VI next year. PHS is certainly proud of these cadets, and thankful for the guidance of Mr. Nuyen and Mr. Frank.

## DECA Competes in Regional Competition

By Lisaura Garcia

PHS DECA students attended the regional principles of marketing competition for DECA at Ramapo College. Over a thousand students from schools located throughout northern New Jersey participated in this event. The purpose of this event was to incorporate the principles of marketing into the role of business success. A role playing activity concerning the role that email will play in future business success was just one of the interesting topics that students discussed and debated during this event.

Before the event began PHS students were afforded the opportunity to meet with the other student competitors in the Ramapo College Cafeteria. "Meeting students from all around northern New Jersey and talking about key business principles was really special. I'll remember it always," said senior Lisaura Garcia.

Senior Niyati Patel scored so well at this competition that she will be moving on to statewide competition. "I am proud to be representing PHS in the state competition," said Niyati, "I hope I do well."

## Health Occupations Gets a 'Bee'

By Jasmine Reynoso

Mrs. Cilento's Health Occupations Class held a spelling bee on medical terminology in which the winner would be granted a new stethoscope. The two winners, one from each class section, were seniors, Robert Sanchez and Merixti Andujar.

The competition was fierce and it was clear that these students worked very hard to win this competition. Robert Sanchez said, "I self-tested an hour or two daily," to prepare for the challenges by other really smart students in this class. The winning word was "ectogenesis," which is just one of the hundreds of words that Sanchez learned for this competition. "It means to develop outside the body, by the way," said Sanchez. He will use his new stethoscope to practice measuring blood pressure and beats per minute at Eastwick College.

Senior Vidhi Gandhi, was Sanchez's chief competition. Even though she lost, Gandhi was glad to see Robert win. "He deserved it," Gandhi said, "He is a hard worker." Gandhi said that her anatomy class helped her greatly, to prepare for this competition. She also made flash cards and studied them for fifteen minutes a day. Gandhi has been gaining experience by taking an introduction to nursing program at William Paterson University, where she stud-



Staff photo

Merixti Andujar and Robert Sanchez try out their new prize stethoscopes.

ied anatomy and physiology for three weeks.

Merixti Andujar won from the second section of Health Occupations. She was glad to be the winner and acknowledged the tough competition from her classmates. She also thanked Mrs. Cilento for quizzing the class daily before the contest. "Everyone did a good job. We all should have gotten a prize for the hard work we put in," said Andujar of her class. As for the stethoscope, she plans to show it off at home and test it on her cat. Andujar plans to go to PCCC to contin-

ue her medical education and then transfer to UMDNJ.

"Medical terminology is an important skill for all students who want to pursue a health career," commented Mrs. Cilento about her inspiration for creating this contest, "but the skills that I observed in my two winners is their kindness and concern for others. Without these qualities they will not be a health professional that understands the needs of their patients." These PHS students certainly will have a bright future in their chosen medical fields. They are off to a great start.

Please follow all the latest important PHS news at our new website - [hilltopstar.com](http://hilltopstar.com)



**PHS Chess Club meets every Tuesday in Cafeteria B**

*Don't like chess?*

**You can now play Yu-Gi-Oh and Pokemon too!**



*Bring your deck and challenge yourself.*



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# PHS Bucket Lists

What would you LOVE to do with your life? Is there something that you must do with your time here on earth?

Compiled by Daisy Cortes

### Kyara N Pinedo

1. Go to Paris, France
2. Finish paying off my mom's house
3. Help someone who truly needs it

### Ariana Velez

1. Obtain a doctorate in physical therapy
2. Travel to Ecuador
3. Go to Disney ©

### Gaurav H. Rana

1. Drive on the autobahn in Germany
2. Marry my high school girlfriend
3. Become a successful & well known Engineer

### Margaret Miskowicz

1. Become a Nurse
2. Live in New York City
3. Get married

### Elizabeth Taltelpa

1. Graduate from College
2. Say "Yes," to the right guy
3. Make my parents proud

### Anonymous student in the hall

1. Find someone I can't live without and marry him
2. Travel the world's different cultures and beliefs
3. Change the world in significant way

### Anonymous Junior Class Student

1. Have a beautiful wife and kids
2. Live in a big house
3. Go to Europe

### Random student eating lunch

1. Finish a career
2. Jump from an airplane
3. Visit Rio de Janeiro

### Vice Principal Estrick

1. Have a loving and enduring marriage.
2. Have healthy successful children.
3. Make my positive mark on the student body at PHS.

### Mr. Z, English Teacher

1. Own a dream garage fully stocked with various classic automobiles that I personally restored, and a fully stocked library with real books, then select a car to take leisurely tours and picnic through the countryside with my wife.
2. Enjoy a long retirement traveling wherever the wind takes my wife and me, in a nice R.V.
3. See my youngest son become a man, point our rocking chairs to the west, and watch our grandchildren and great-grandchildren love to visit granny and grampy's farm.

## HISTORY

# Valentine Dies for Hearts

By Maria Ramos

When red hearts, chocolates and flowers are on all the store's shelves, it must be Valentine's Day. Most Americans participate in this holiday, but where did Valentine's Day come from? While most of our classmates love to celebrate love, showing care and appreciation to those that are special to them, many do not really know what they are celebrating.



The history of Valentine's Day dates all the way back to 270 AD, when Roman Emperor Claudius II didn't want soldiers who were married, during wartime, because he believed single men made better soldiers. A soldier who did not have someone to fight for and live for would fight harder and take more chances with his own life.

A Christian Priest Valentinus, known today as St. Valentine, is widely recognized as the man who disobeyed the Emperor's edict by

performing wedding ceremonies in secret. Valentine was discovered and then jailed and executed. While incarcerated, as the story goes, he wrote a note to the jailor's daughter signing it, "From your Valentine". The Emperor had Valentine executed on, you guessed it, February 14.

The celebration of Valentine's Day as a holiday came about after the fall of the Roman Empire during the Middle Ages, when courtly love came into vogue. The date has remained a day of love ever since.

Today, Valentine's Day serves as a reminder to let those emotionally close to us know how much we love them. St. Valentine's Day was not created by giant greeting card and candy corporations to sell cards and chocolates. While many cards and candies are sold, money can't buy love. The day is about emotional connections and showing others how much we care about them.

# LOVE IS...

By Jasmine Reynoso

PHS students have definite thoughts about love and how it affects our lives. Following is a collection of quotes by PHS students, letting us know just what love is.

- ...when two people truly care for each other and put their differences aside to come together for happiness.
- ...when two people trust each other enough to get past their ups and downs.
- ...when you're with someone and your feelings for that individual are unexplainable, maybe even bitter-sweet.
- ...when you can see through a person's flaws and be able to stay next to them no matter what happens.
- ...when communication comes easy enough to never get boring.
- ...when two people can be totally truthful with each other, have no regrets or doubts and still be together.
- ...when two people can create enough excitement in a relationship to last a life time.
- ...when you care about someone deeply enough to make sure that they are always alright.
- ...when no secrets are kept between a couple that care deeply about each other.
- ...a bond between two souls that allows a person to give their everything for another person.
- ...when your lover is just best friend and just thinking about them makes you excited.
- ...an annoying, boring, dull, uninteresting feeling that you just can't shake off.
- ...being accepted by another, without having to hide behind a barrier of shells.
- ...when being with a person makes your reality better than your dreams.
- ...patient and kind, hateful and graceful, unintentional and surprising, the best feeling of all.
- ...a bond between two hearts that make the owners have strong feelings between themselves.
- ...an unconditional, overbearing, protective feeling for another person that cannot be explained half of the time.
- ...when forever isn't long enough.
- ...not perfect.

## Scene in the Hall Courtesy of Ashley Casarrubias



To Ana From Kelvin

### In my Arms, In my Heart

I was lonely and somewhat lost  
I wanted a companion and friend, nothing more  
I took the plunge, in I stepped  
Nervous and unsure, I waded in

Unexperienced and quite unsure  
Feeling trepidation, I wondered if I did right  
Feeling shy but needing a ladies company  
I took a chance, to see what would occur

Surprise, shock and so much joy  
I found the women of my dreams, I won first prize  
Gentle, caring, trusting and sensuous, along you came  
Into my life, you brought happiness, fulfillment  
And everything I had secretly yearned for

Not sure how I would cope and react  
From that first meeting I was complete  
Such emotions flowed through me  
That I believed I would never feel

Beauty, tenderness, faith, desire and love came fast  
All my hidden dreams were answered  
By your marvellous presence

From that first meeting, who would believe  
Such a strong romance would start  
When we are together all I need  
Is in my arms, in my heart.

## THE HILLTOP STAR

Student Newspaper of Passaic High School, Passaic, NJ

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# Writer's Block

## LOOKS FORWARD TO GRADUATION

### Graduation Day — By Shelyne Velez

Graduation day is finally here,  
now ends your high school career.  
Always remember the friends you hold dear,  
And look toward your future without fear.

This is the day you have been preparing for  
Since the day you walked through that classroom door.  
Now it is time to say good-bye,  
spread your wings – you're ready to fly.

So shed a tear and share a smile,  
be sure to remember all the while,  
Time moves on, ends with a song,  
PHS memories last your whole life long.

### Graduation Day

— By Khadijah Malloy

Why must you go? Please don't go. It is  
not time for you to leave. I will miss the  
sound of your sneakers on my face.  
The boots that used to squeak like wet  
rubber ducks. While I was not always  
clean and neat all the time, I sure did  
shine up nice every September. Since I  
was the first thing made after the founda-  
tion, I have seen all types of people come  
and go. When I shine you can look at me,  
and we can see a reflection of a teenager  
growing up, now ready to leave PHS.  
Even though I'm not ready, I know you  
will be. I wish you could stay, but you  
have a life to lead. No go on, leave. I  
wish you could stay. I have to let your  
dreams and ambitions take you away.  
Goodbye. It is now your graduation day.

### Graduation Poem

— By Christopher Aguilar

The field is filled with a swirl of emotions  
Anxiousness is on everyone's face  
It is time for all of us to graduate  
Why are we crying when we should be happy?  
Are we not moving on to something better?  
Why do we hold back the tears?  
Don't you realize we might not see each other again?  
Everything is so confusing and I would rather not cry  
I am afraid of what is waiting for me  
But I'd rather not hear them  
There are many people crying  
But I'd rather not see their tears  
Life gets tougher now  
I want to stand strong today  
And show everyone in this place  
That I deserve to walk the grass  
That I have matured and that most of all  
From now on, I am an adult.

*Congratulations!*

### Saying Au Revoir — By Jahana Caba

See you later and goodbye, to my home, for a while, I'll come back.  
At some point I must return to the place that saw me grow.  
Not too soon, but in time.  
Time will speak only for itself and I must make the best of it.

In time I will shine, and I will remember where it all began  
Where I grew from shy, desperate, unprepared, and fearful, to confident, patient, and passionate.  
I don't care what you say, what matters is what's in my heart.

If I believe in myself, I will succeed.  
If I love my goals, I will shine.  
If I remember my roots, I will be humble.  
No don't brag that's wrong, I don't care if it sounds like fun,  
I'll bet that after you turn around you will cry.

Saying au revoir such a happy, scared, nervous, fearful, and touching moment.  
You believed in me, so thank you.  
You pushed me forward, so thank you.  
I don't care what they say about you, you were not ominous and dangerous,  
you were inspiring and compassionate.

Without you I would not be who I am today.  
Without you I would not have had such an amazing family of friends.  
I cry when I think that leaving you means leaving it all behind,  
but for what it is worth when I'm done exploring  
I will come back and tell you all about it.

### Graduation — By Selenne

Walking, walking far away from here  
It was nice, I admit  
Having you come into my life  
Four years sounds like a lot  
It was what I thought while walking through those doors.  
Freshman year I got lost in crowded halls,  
That scream, "Freshman!" in the gym,  
I never thought that there could be so much traffic in a school,  
I never thought that 5 minutes weren't enough to get to period 4.  
Sophomore year I felt like the boss.  
Doing sports, knowing how everything works,  
Not that much homework,  
Why do I hate Shakespeare so much?  
His name kills my mood.  
Uniforms, "Give me a break". They don't work  
What's wrong with the shoes I'm wearing?  
Mr. Estrick is tired of seeing my face.  
Why does Junior year seem so hard?  
Good thing I have art  
SAT's in March, What do I want to be?  
Forcing me to compete to go to college and get a degree.  
I don't want to grow up, let this moment last forever.  
Senior year, what is this?  
Thinking about all the things that I could have done better.  
SAT's, I still can't stand them.  
Procrastination  
The new rules for graduation  
Memories, memories, memories  
Lucky 13 – gets the weird schedule,  
Lucky 13 – fries have been banished,  
Lucky 13 – Gets the new turf.  
I will miss you Passaic High School,  
Although nothing makes any sense,  
I will miss your crowded halls, although  
I hate always asking for a pass.  
I will miss your lunch food, with your  
weird shapes and interesting smells.  
I will miss you, but four more years  
wait for me at another place.  
I will come to visit you, but this time  
with a visitor pass.



### Today's My Day

— By Karina Garcia

Today's the day  
The future is looking my way  
I can't believe we're actually done  
Say goodbye to all the fun  
Today's the last day of my childhood  
I never thought I actually would,  
But I am, I'm graduating  
The feeling is so anticipating  
As my parents look out in the crowd  
I hope they can finally say, "I'm proud."



# The Debate on Gun Control vs

## Let's Eliminate the Gun Problem

By Jose Gauche

Recent events show just how violent America has become. The sound of gunfire has become a common occurrence in many urban neighborhoods across the United States. Something must be done to stop this slaughter happening in front of our eyes every evening on the news. Guns should be controlled by the government to prevent or reduce crime. The people demand it and it is time the government did something about this serious problem.

Having access to modern weapons makes killing so easy. Guns shoot so fast and each shot is another murder of an innocent person. How many children must die before the government takes control of guns and limits their access? The American Journal of Public Health holds that the United States tops the list of countries for firearms deaths. Guns are so easy to get in the U.S. that it is no wonder why so many deaths are caused by these arms.

The ready availability of guns means that many deaths by minors getting guns happens every year. A new gun control act

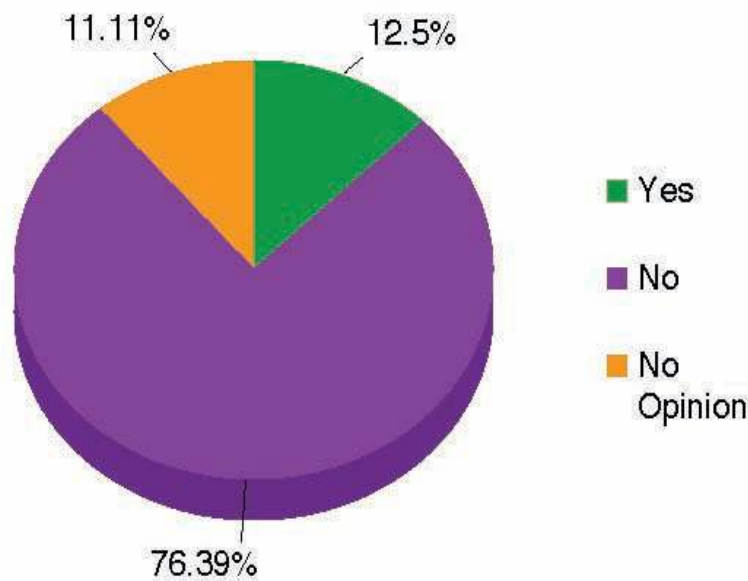
would mean that the transfer of guns to minors would be reduced and therefore reduce the number of deaths caused by minors against other minors. Seeing a child die is the worst thing imaginable for a parent and no one should see their own child die before they do.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has just had legislation passed to limit the number of bullets that can be held in a clip to seven. Even if a clip can hold ten bullets the law states that only seven can be placed in that weapon. "You don't need ten bullets to kill a deer," Cuomo said in the state of the state address this year. There are those who say that three bullets will not make a difference and that someone can just reload the gun. However, those three bullets represent three children not being murdered and the time it takes to reload give proper authorities time to stop this crime.

The reduction of crime is a good enough reason for the government to take action to control guns. As Vice President Joe Biden recently said, "if even one life can be saved, then this law should be passed." I agree.

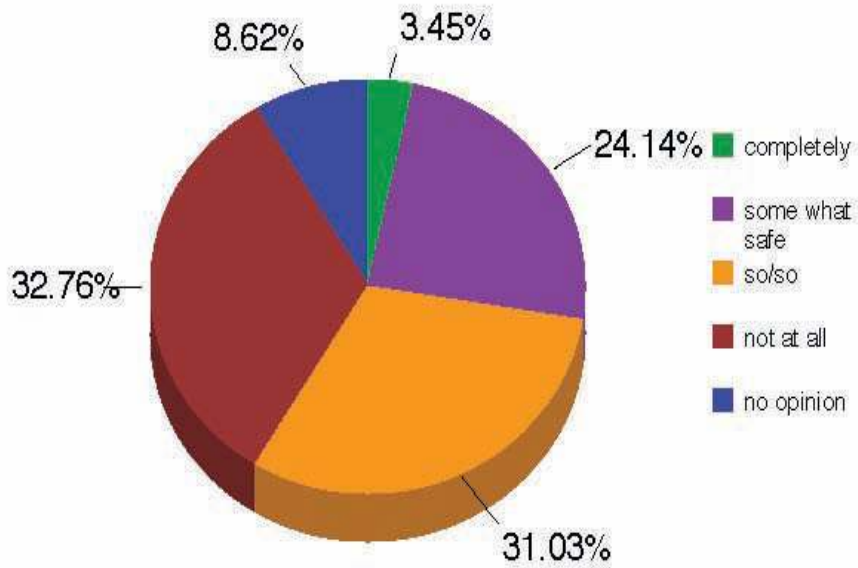


### Should the government make all Guns illegal?

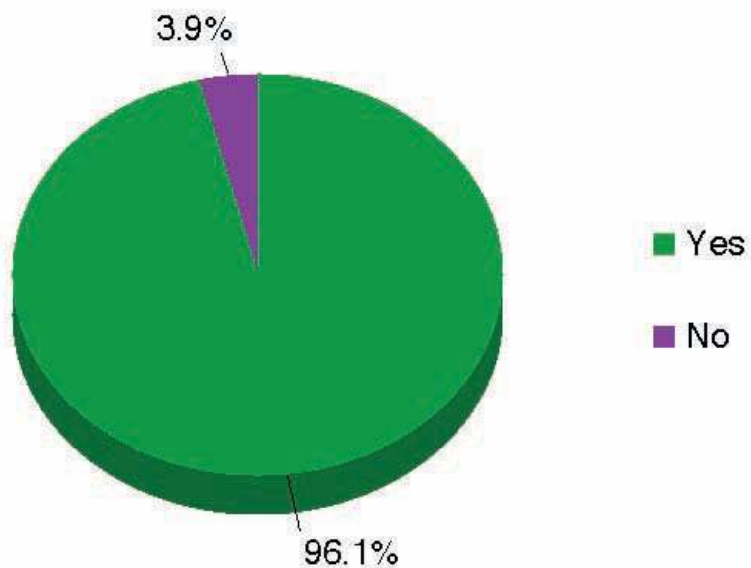


All graphs by Henry Hernandez. The staff surveyed one hundred PHS students.

### How safe are we at PHS?



### Should schools have armed guards?



## How safe is PHS?

By Daisy Cortes

In the wake of the horrific events that have taken place at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Connecticut, school districts around the country are re-evaluating their own procedures and safety. How safe are we in PHS? "We are safe, but we can always find ways to be safer," said Mr. DeNaples, Vice Principal of building and teachers.

PHS does have procedures in place to help protect us. First there are ten police officers in our school. These officers are trained and armed to stop any intruder coming into PHS. We also have a series of security codes that were put in place for emergencies. These security codes are reported to the main office, and very quickly administrators, school resource police officers, and other security personnel.

There are five codes, organized by color, and each has a specific level or alert. Code Red is the most severe situation. Called by the administration, it is a complete lock down of the school. Code Orange is also called by the administration and means that there is some kind of hazardous condition in the school, like a bomb threat or fire. Of course the building will be evacuated.

Code Yellow is an elevated alert and means that there is an intruder in the building. Students are kept in classes and no hall passes will be issued until the situation is secured by security personnel. The lowest level of alert is Code Blue. When there is an isolated incident like a fight, any observing party can report it and administration and security personnel will respond accordingly. Code Green means that the situation is clear.

Having these security codes is a good beginning, but they are useless unless administration, teachers, security personnel and students all know and adhere to the rules and plans. They have been sent to all school staff. We have also had many drills for both code red and orange.

"These security codes are to only be used for emergencies," said Mr. Estrick, Senior Class Vice Principal. He added that when a security code is reported to the main office, "administrators, school resource officers and security personnel will report to the area that is in need of assistance, thus interrupting the normal flow of the school day."

The best thing we can all do to keep ourselves safe is to not let an intruder into the building in the first place. There are designated entry points with security guarding those doors. That will not stop an intruder if someone on the inside of the building opens a locked door for someone trying to get in. "The key thing to stay safe and keep ourselves safe is to not open doors to anyone, if they are a stranger or even if they are our friend or a family member," said Mr. DeNaples. It is one thing we can all do to maintain a safe environment for all of us in school.



Passaic High School

Staff photo



Tribute to the victims by PHS student Mon...



# vs. Second Amendment Rights

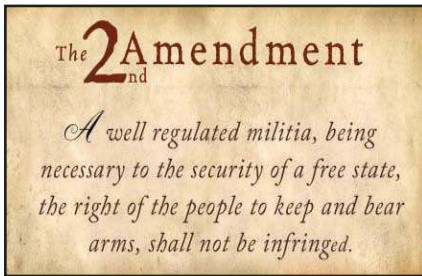
## Guns are not the problem

By Harry Droiter

Gun control activists are given new ammunition every time there is a horrible shooting somewhere in America, which they can exploit to gain political victory. While everyone can agree that the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School was a horrible gut wrenching event, and tears well up in anyone with a soul seeing little children asking for the help of adults so that this cannot happen again, we must as the adults take a look at this topic rationally and not emotionally.

America was born out of the enlightenment. Our founding fathers, using reasoned thought, have given us certain inalienable rights, given to us by our creator, not by our government. The government cannot take away the right of gun ownership because it is not their right, it is ours.

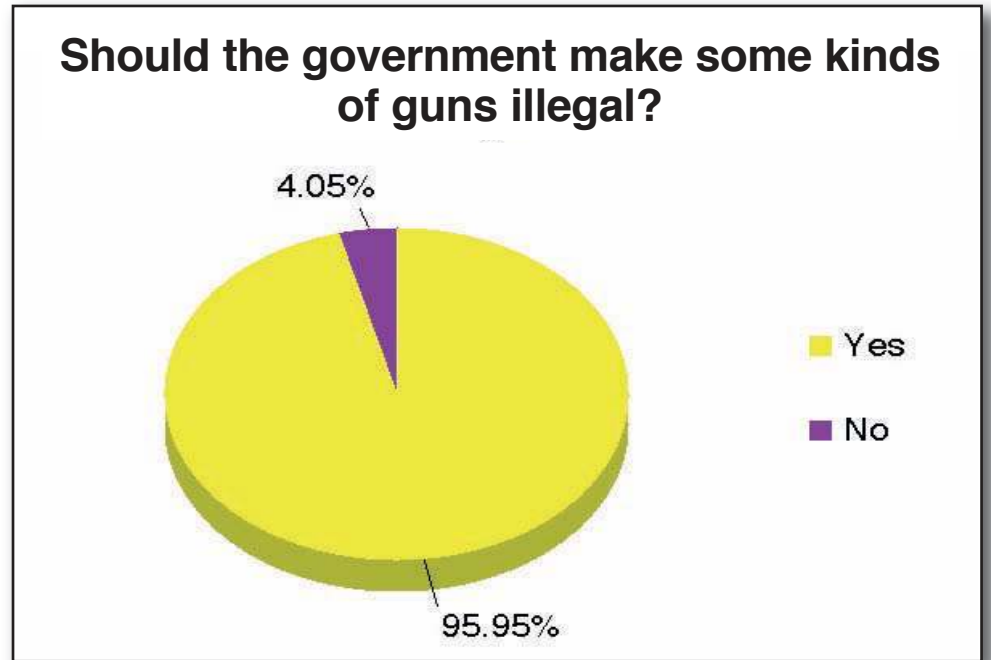
The government is not trying to take away all guns just the "assault weapons" and there is a wellspring of support for the government to do something so that this horror will never happen again. It is quite understandable for the general citizenry to expect our government to protect us.



What is an assault weapon? The average American, who does not own a weapon, would reasonably look at the pictures of scary looking military style weapons that the governing officials present as assault weapons, and think that any citizen can walk into a shop and purchase a military weapon. This is just not the case. Machine guns are already illegal and have been for a long time. The scary looking guns are just that, scary looking. They shoot the same as a hunting rifle. They shoot one round every time the trigger is pulled.

What does anyone need an assault rifle? No one goes hunting with an assault rifle. First it is the Bill of Rights and not the bill of needs. The rights of the citizens of the U.S. are not up for debate. However, if the people of the U.S. want to make guns illegal, then there is a perfectly acceptable way to go about doing that. It is called the amendment process.

Secondly, the second amendment was not written for hunters, or sportsmen, or target shooters, or gun collectors. It was written for the people to protect themselves. Who they need to protect themselves from is not to be questioned. Whether it is to protect them-



selves from a tyrannical government or an intruder is irrelevant. The truth of the matter is the overwhelming majority of gun owners do respect the laws and live their lives in peace.

If someone is going to break the law by killing, then why would they hesitate to break the law of gun ownership? Therefore, any

new law would be irrelevant and ineffective.

The horror of mass killings is incontrovertible. No one wants to ever see another Sandy Hook. But, the restriction of weapons that law abiding citizens use to protect themselves will not save a single life. In fact, it will put more people at risk.

## PHS prayers and snowflakes for children of Newtown

By Harry Droiter

As the nation heals from the horrible tragedy of Sandy Hook Elementary School, a call was made to help those students heal and feel welcomed at their new school. The Connecticut PTSA had the great idea to fill the hallways and classrooms with snowflakes, created by people from across the nation, each containing prayers, well wishes, and other notes. These snowflake prayers would help the students feel like they were not alone to make the best of a horrible situation.

Mr. Zeiler's English classes participated by creating snowflakes as a bell work, to send to Connecticut. "My students really appreciated the opportunity to show these children how much PHS students care," said Zeiler. He added, "I hope this process of prayer is cathartic and brings all Americans together."

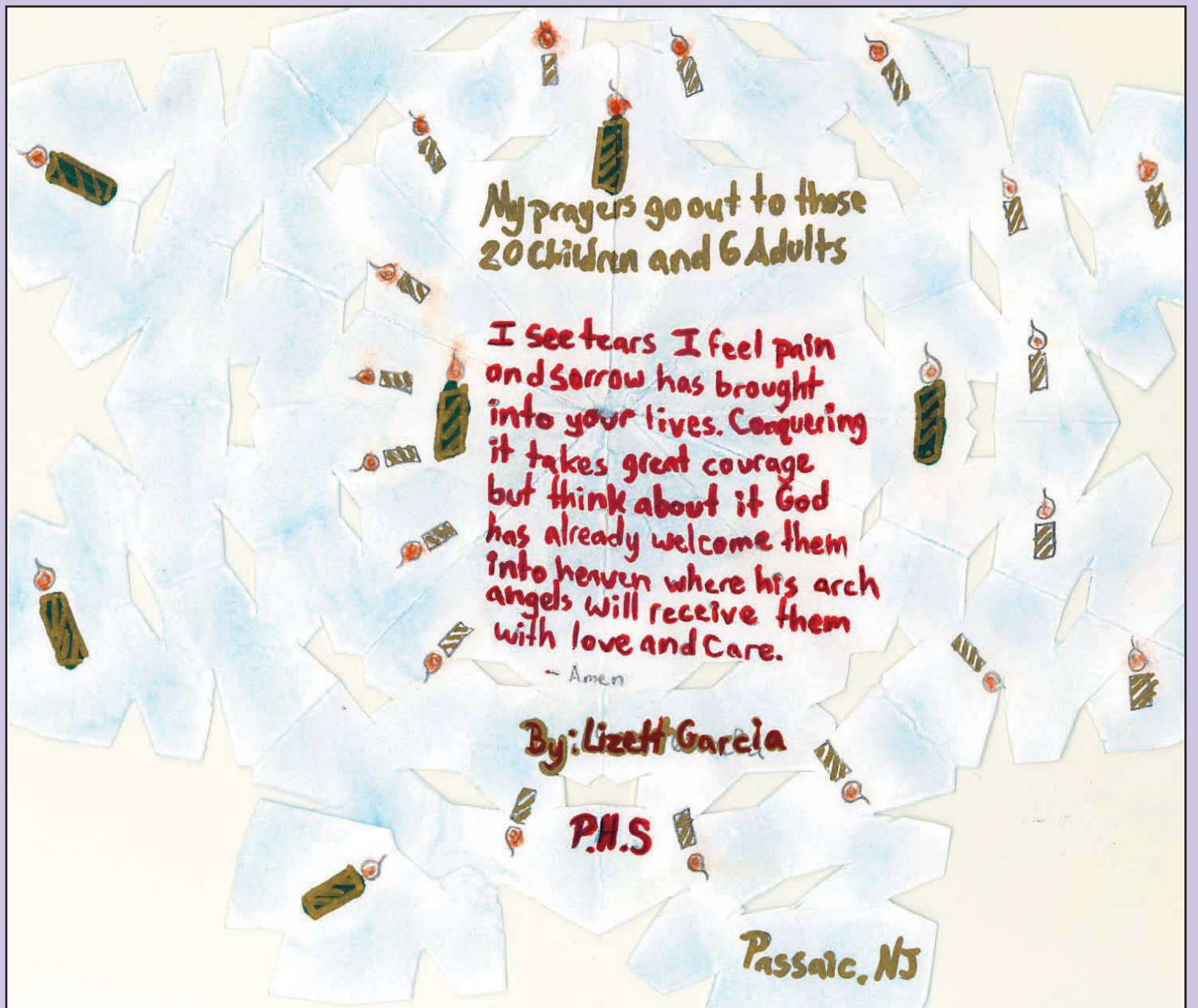
Students also expressed their gratitude, being able to send their prayers. "These words are from my heart," said senior Susan Malpartida. She added that she hoped that these young students can

forget all the bad that had come their way, and "look forward to a brighter future".

PHS students answered the call for support. As this country heals, let us not forget the little children who were most affected by this tragedy.



victims Monasterio



Poem and Illustration by Lizett Garcia



# Star Wars: A new hope for fans

By Estaban Febles

A long time ago, in a theatre not too far away, the Star Wars films infused themselves into American pop culture. Thirty-six years ago the first film (Episode IV: A New Hope) began an epic saga of films that have spanned almost four decades and six feature films, a television series and countless books and comics. With the recent announcement that Lucasfilm has been purchased by Disney fans the world over are anticipating a series of new films in the Star Wars Universe.

Disney is wasting no time, already planning on releasing a new Star Wars movie in 2015. Mr. Barbara, PHS resident Star Wars expert and one of our sophomore English teachers is very excited about the purchase and new film. "Star Wars? I love Star Wars!" said Mr. Barbara, with eyes sparkling in anticipation. While many fans are not enamored with the idea that Disney will be making Star Wars films, he is very excited about the Disney acquisition. Barbara pointed out that many people don't like the second series of films (Episodes I, II, and III) at all, but he does, and has confidence that Disney is going to do it right. Mr. Barbara has embraced all of the Star Wars Expanded Universe, which includes cartoons, books, comic books, movies, etc. and enjoys all of it. If it has Star Wars on the cover Mr. Barbara will love it. He said, "I am glad that I will have Star Wars



insidepulse.com

Merger brings all our favorites characters together.

for the rest of my life. I am happy!"

Mr. Lockwood, science teacher and Star Wars fan, has fallen in love with Star Wars ever since he saw the first film when he was three years old. He has a good memory. He too is embracing the entire Star Wars expanded universe, but has mixed emotions about Disney buying Lucasfilm, because it might get "Disneyfied" being more "kid friendly" than he would like. He mentions that the graphics will obviously be great, since it is Disney, but he's more worried about the type of audience Disney will be focusing on attracting.

The "Disney-fication" of this American pop culture icon is a concern that may be put to rest now that J.J. Abrams has been named as director for this project. Abrams, of *Lost* and *Star Trek*

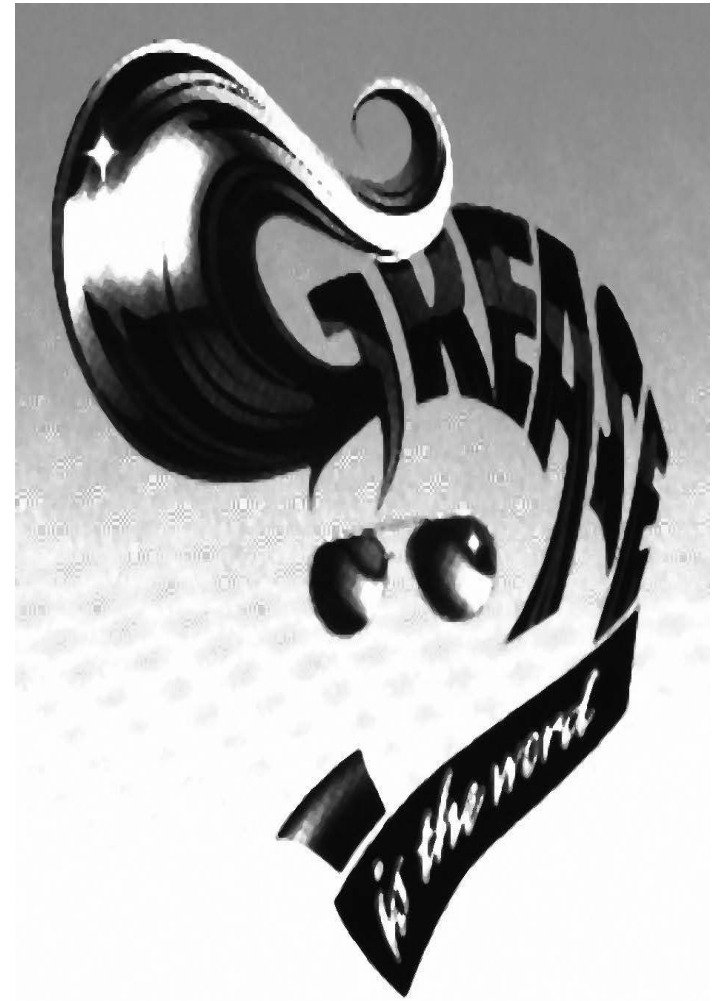
fame, is one of the hottest young directors today. However, there is a rift between the Star Wars and Star Trek camps and never should the two camps meet. "Blasphemy!" said Mr. Barbara, "that's one of our vocabulary words. Actually, Abrams is a visionary director and should do well."

This sentiment was largely echoed by Mr. Kida, English teacher and fan of anything put to cellulose, who thinks that "everything Abrams does is great! He brings a new vision to everything he tackles."

However, Mr. Barbara is not so sure. He has mixed feelings about Abrams, saying "Star Trek was great! *Lost* was not."

One thing is certain. Much of the faculty and students of PHS will be in the theaters in 2015 to see the latest addition to the Star Wars saga.

## See PHS Drama Club Presentation



# April 11, 12 and 13!

## MOVIE REVIEW

### 'Django Unchained'

By Henry Hernandez

The film *Django* unchained was a great movie, even though it was not a holiday film it dominated over most holiday films in rating. The movie had some negative feedback because of it containing high racial content. Yet I decided to watch the film and see for myself. I will not spoil the movie but will go through the basic storyline. The movie begins in 1858 with several male slaves are chained up. They are about to be sold in a slave trade. This is when the main character is first seen.

The main character of the film is named Django. Django is played by famous actor Jamie Foxx. Django is rescued from the slave trade by a bounty hunter named Dr. King Schultz. Dr. King Schultz is a very caring and understanding man so he chooses to save Django. Dr. King Schultz needs Django's help to find and capture the Brittle brothers. This is how Django begins his newly found freedom and bounty hunting.

Around the conclusion of the movie Django goes off to find his enslaved wife with Dr. Schultz. Django's wife's name is Broomhilda she is played by actress Kerry Washington. They invent a very dangerous plan. They pretend to be slave fighting experts. They do this in order to win



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the trust and hospitality of Broomhilda's new owner. The new owner is the famous Calvin Candie. Yet once they enter Candie's plantation in deep Mississippi they seem to have a tougher time than expected. In the so called "Candy land" things do not go as smoothly as originally planned for Django and Dr. Schultz.

I had no complaints about the actors. They all performed very well and made their roles believable. Jamie Foxx is so amazing at playing his roles in movies. He commits himself to the role and makes you feel as if this was really his life story. I know I enjoyed the movie very much. It also taught me a little more of our country's history. It also installed a sense of happiness that the world has changed for the better. So if you have spare time on your hands and want to see an utterly stupendous film you will not regret watching *Django unchained!*

## CONTROVERSY

### 'Django Unchained,' Racial Language Unrestrained

By Guadalupe Carmona

There is a lot of controversy surrounding the movie *Django Unchained* directed by Quentin Tarantino. Tarantino is no stranger to controversy; his films are brash and violent. That is why his fans see them. In this film, the heart of controversy is a complaint that there is an overuse of the "N" word.

As soon as this film was released many prominent figures in the African-American community began speaking up against the use of the "N" word. Director Spike Lee called the film "disrespectful." Quentin Tarantino has been criticized for insensitivity before; his portfolio includes many films that pay homage to 1970's Blaxploitation movies. These films were geared to urban African-Americans and usually contain many racial slurs towards white people. Tarantino is known for personally liking Blaxploitation films. He created *Django Unchained*, not as a racist movie, but as a film in which the protagonist is an escaped African slave. Once freed he is capable of being a hero and get revenge on the evil men who put him in chains, and rage against the system that gave them the power to do so.

While many people might argue that it wasn't necessary to use the "N" word, Tarantino is known for just this kind of raw cinema. The actors of this film had to get used to this ugly word but the



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With the help of a German bounty hunter (Christoph Waltz), a freed slave (Jamie Foxx) sets out to rescue his wife from a brutal Mississippi plantation owner (Leonardo DiCaprio).

word represents an ugly time.

"There were no African-Americans, negroes, people of color or colored people," said Samuel L. Jackson in an Access Hollywood interview. Jackson advised co-star Leonardo DiCaprio to just "man up," because that was what these people were called during that time.

To deny that this ugly time didn't happen, by changing its language, is also to deny how far we have progressed in America. This film is meant to entertain, to allow the audience to cheer for an underdog hero who overcomes the overwhelming history slavery. To see ugliness in this film is to pay homage to all those who sacrificed to end slavery.

If those people, who are so offended, by the perceived overuse

of the "N" word in this movie, do not recognize that it is used and even glorified by popular music, then they are hypocrites. The question is then, who gets to say this word and who does not? It is disgraceful and disrespectful that it is used so loosely and commonly in any circumstance.

Therefore, this should be asked, which is worse, the portrayal of a period of history with all of its attributes and language, not intended to be racist? Or is it worse that the music industry has popularized the usage of the same word, no matter how it is spelled? I would much rather hear this word in the context of a film set in an ugly time, and cheer the hero that rages against it, than hear people use it loosely in casual conversation or in a song.



## SEXUAL ASSAULT

## Don't blame the victim

By Guadalupe Carmona

In the terrible case of rape, after enduring the horror of that attack, some victims actually hear the words, "she deserved it." This is blaming the victim and it should be stopped. The term victim blaming means that after someone is the victim of a violent crime, she is then alleged to have a certain quality that triggered the act. They deserved it.

When someone is attacked and they have no way to defend themselves there is nothing that she did to "deserve it". If two people fight then the blame is split between them. However, if someone is attacked it is not her fault. No one does anything to deserve being attacked and raped.

A wave of victim blaming in rape cases has begun during the past few years and it seems to be spreading like wildfire being fanned by social media. Bullying and harassing many girls online after they have been the victim of a serious crime is an unfortunate phenomenon that should be ended before it gets out of control. The prevalence of social sites, and the ease in which information and misinformation can be spread through the internet, makes victim blaming very easy.

Christina Diamandopoulos, of the Rape Crisis Charity, says that victim blaming as a "myth that women are responsible for men's sexual behavior. What a woman wears, says, where she goes, or what she does can make her responsible for the crime committed against her." No one can be responsible for another's behavior. This myth fuels the prevalent misconception that most victims do not know their aggressor to which Diamandopoulos states; "most rape is committed by partners, ex-partners and men who are known to the woman."

One well known case involved the 2012 rape conviction of famous Welsh soccer player Ched Evans. He was convicted of rape because his victim was too intoxicated to give consent. Even though there is a law protecting the identity of rape victims in England, her name was leaked to twitter. She began to face angry, threatening and derogatory tweets

from fans of this popular soccer player. Some of the tweets accused her of being a "gold digger," achieving fame at the expense of the famous soccer player. The attacks became so brutal that the victim was forced to change her identity.

Some parts of society still have misconceptions about women. There is still, even in this modern world, those who are close-minded and misogynistic. Todd Akin, a Republican Senate candidate, claimed "legitimate rape" rarely causes pregnancy, and added that the female body has ways "to shut that down". As a candidate for a U.S. Senate seat, this was a high profile story and it led to a firestorm across the nation. Holly Dustin, director of the End Violence Against Women Coalition, commented on the misconceptions still held against women; "While the law on rape and sexual consent is clear, some of our politicians and other leaders seem to have failed to notice the progress that's been made."

Women's rights advances and the progress that has been made over the past decades are at risk from the spread of hate and misconceptions found in social media. Social media has become a weapon that facilitates hate and inappropriate jokes about domestic violence and victims of rape and desensitizes people to the seriousness of woman abuse. The pervasive nature of the internet means that people can find whatever misconception they wish to indulge. Sites like reddit profit from the degradation of women. They feature categories dedicated to "raping women" and "hot rape stories." Women's groups like Equality Now are fighting to show how these sites are dangerous to women. Jacqui Hunt of Equality Now, explained how; "We absorb messages from all around us every day, so what some might dismiss as harmless banter takes on a completely different quality when it forms part of a general culture of demeaning, pejorative and prejudicial reporting on women."

Women have faced this kind of prejudice for a long time. While the women's movement has come a long way, women still face horrible, demeaning, prejudice. It is undeserved and demoralizing.

## Z'S CORNER:

## Why do conservatives hate poor people?

By H.R. Zeiler

Common misconceptions about the nature of conservatism are pervasive because it has been defined by what it isn't, liberalism. At the core of modern conservatism is a belief in the U.S. Constitution and its limits on federal power, states' rights, property rights, and individual liberty. Conservatives believe in personal responsibility, a strong national defense and traditional American values.

The role of government is to protect freedom, so that individuals can pursue their own personal goals. Freedom is at the core of all that conservatism is about. On the national level, ensuring freedom for Americans requires a strong national defense. The Constitution provides that the federal government provide for the national defense, and therefore the U.S. military should be second to none in the world.

Federal power and its limitations, the relationship between the federal government and the state and the especially the individual, are critical to understanding the conservative. The founding fathers argued for severe limits on federal power. Actually, the only way the Constitution was able to be ratified by the states, was to include certain guarantees that the federal government would not be able to infringe on the rights of the people or the states. These guarantees are called the Bill of Rights and they are our rights. They cannot be taken away by the federal government because they were not granted by the government. The ninth and tenth amendments are as important today as they were in the 1700's.

Amendment IX states, "The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." The ninth amendment is key to the understanding of the entire document. It means that any right that is not given to the government is in fact retained by the people. The default of power is in

the hands of the people and not the government. The individual is the most important freedom granted by God and protected under the Constitution.

The tenth amendment is just as important as the ninth stating, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." This means that any power not given to the federal government defaults back to the states and we the people. Why should power be given to states when the federal government speaks for all of us? The framers of the Constitution knew that we the people would have more control over our state governments and that they would more directly represent the rights of individuals in the states.

The end goal of both of these rights is to ensure that the rights and freedoms of the individual be protected at all costs. The federal government is only to do what it was specifically enumerated. We the people are not supposed to feel the presence of the federal government in our daily lives.

When the modern federal government, under the control of either political party, infringes on the rights of the people by confiscating large amounts of personal property (wealth), mandating that all people must buy health insurance, must use a certain kind of light bulb or must purchase a certain kind of car, or mandates all manner of appliance, from a refrigerator to a toilet, to a desk chair, then the government is not innocuous, as the framers envisioned and granted through the ninth amendment. It is a prevalent force in every individual's daily life. When the federal government infringes on the rights of the people by infringing on the rights of the states, with overbear-

ing regulations, national standards for everything from education, the environment, and workplace standards, to mandating federal exchanges for health care, that will eventually be paid for by the states, the government is not abiding by the tenth amendment.

When fisherman are put out of business because they are unable to fish, because of ever more stringent regulations on fishing catches, their rights are being infringed upon by the federal government. When a student cannot get a student loan unless it

is held and mandated by the government, then their rights are being infringed upon. When a commuter cannot purchase an economical vehicle because of federal crash standards, or a safe vehicle because of federal C.A.F.E. standards, their rights are being infringed upon. These cases and countless others are not rich people taking advantage of the poor. They are average "middle class" and poor Americans not having the liberty to pursue happiness.

The conservative point of view is not that government should help everyone meet all of their needs, but to state that the only fair way to help people is for we the people to have the freedoms to succeed, and therefore the freedom to fail. Our rights are just that, our rights. They are also our responsibility and they will be gone the moment we do not cherish them. Conservatives do not hate poor people, they want all poor people to have the same opportunities that were granted to everyone by the Constitution. These freedoms are the greatest inheritance any people have ever received, anywhere in the history of our world, and they should be protected so that our progeny can share in the great American dream that we were given.



Photo by Harrison Zeiler  
Mr. Zeiler, English teacher, PHS

## The Blueberry Story: The teacher gives the businessman a lesson

"If I ran my business the way you people operate your schools, I wouldn't be in business very long!"

I stood before an auditorium filled with outraged teachers who were becoming angrier by the minute. My speech had entirely consumed their precious 90 minutes of inservice. Their initial icy glares had turned to restless agitation. You could cut the hostility with a knife.

I represented a group of business people dedicated to improving public schools. I was an executive at an ice cream company that had become famous in the middle 1980s when People magazine chose our blueberry as the "Best Ice Cream in America."

I was convinced of two things. First, public schools needed to change; they were archaic selecting and sorting mechanisms designed for the industrial age and out of step with the needs of our emerging "knowledge society." Second, educators were a major part of the problem: they resisted change, hunkered down in their feathered nests, protected by tenure, and shielded by a bureaucratic monopoly. They needed to look to business. We knew how to produce quality. Zero defects! TQM! Continuous improvement!

In retrospect, the speech was perfectly balanced — equal parts ignorance and arrogance.

As soon as I finished, a woman's hand shot up. She appeared polite, pleasant. She was, in fact, a razor-edged, veteran, high school English teacher who had been waiting to

unload.

She began quietly, "We are told, sir, that you manage a company that makes good ice cream."

I smugly replied, "Best ice cream in America, Ma'am."

"How nice," she said. "Is it rich and smooth?"

"Sixteen percent butterfat," I crowed.

"Premium ingredients?" she inquired.

"Super-premium! Nothing but triple A." I was on a roll.

I never saw the next line coming.

"Mr. Vollmer," she said, leaning forward with a wicked eyebrow raised to the sky, "when you are standing on your receiving dock and you see an inferior shipment of blueberries arrive, what do you do?"

In the silence of that room, I could hear the trap snap.... I was dead meat, but I wasn't going to lie.

"I send them back."

She jumped to her feet. "That's right!" she barked, "and we can never send back our blueberries. We take them big, small, rich, poor, gifted, exceptional, abused, frightened, confident, homeless, rude, and brilliant. We take them with ADHD, junior rheumatoid arthritis, and English as their second language. We take them all! Every one! And that, Mr. Vollmer, is why it's not a business. It's school!"

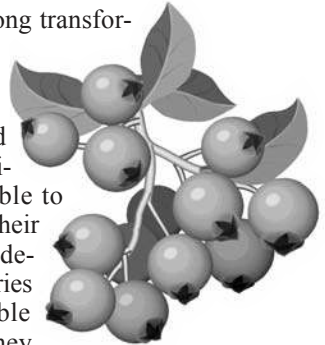
In an explosion, all 290 teachers, principals, bus drivers, aides, custodians, and secretaries jumped to their feet and yelled, "Yeah! Blueberries! Blueberries!"

And so began my long transformation.

Since then, I have visited hundreds of schools. I have learned that a school is not a business. Schools are unable to control the quality of their raw material, they are dependent upon the vagaries of politics for a reliable revenue stream, and they are constantly mauled by a howling horde of disparate, competing customer groups that would send the best CEO screaming into the night.

None of this negates the need for change. We must change what, when, and how we teach to give all children maximum opportunity to thrive in a post-industrial society. But educators cannot do this alone; these changes can occur only with the understanding, trust, permission, and active support of the surrounding community. For the most important thing I have learned is that schools reflect the attitudes, beliefs and health of the communities they serve, and therefore, to improve public education means more than changing our schools, it means changing America.

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**GIRLS WINTER TRACK**

**Channeling My Inner Greek**

By Yesenia Lopez

As a runner for the girl's track team I can only attempt to express the feeling of running a race. During every race I run with an intensity that comes from deep inside. As the race progresses I am dripping with sweat, but I am focused, eyes and mind, on the finish line.

My passion for competition is not a new idea. My desire to come in first has a long history routed in the ancient past. Greece is the birthplace of track competition. That drive to excel has been handed down through the ages to PHS seniors who live, eat and sleep track.

Being on the track team for three or four years has made me a better athlete. However, there are other lessons, learned from track, that are easily translated to life as

well. I have learned responsibility, determination and team work.

As a team the goal for the PHS Track Team is to always put forth the effort required to achieve goals, both individually and for the team, for every race. Every competition is another opportunity to demonstrate that hard work pays off.

Everyone on the team works hard and so everyone on the team encourages each other to reach their full potential both on and off the track. Together we demonstrate that PHS Track is a force to be reckoned with, that we are tough competition for any other school.

I would encourage any student to join the team. Any student who wants to represent PHS and themselves with pride should join, because the track team is an experience like no other.



PHS Winter Cross Country team

Photo by staff

**CROSS COUNTRY**

**A Sport Like No Other**

By Diana L. Rodriguez

Cross-country track is a sport where the athletes have the ability to obtain personal and individual victories as well as helping the team achieve a group victory. It is for this reason that it is unlike other sports where the team is part of every play. In track you have to rely on yourself. You cannot depend on anyone else.

The hard work and dedication that every track athlete brings to the sport is directly evident during a meet. Every track meet is an opportunity to achieve a new personal record, to feel pride at all the effort you have made.

During practices, the long distances of running allows student athlete to organize her thoughts as well as exercise. I enjoy the experience of watching the scenery change while running. Competitions are wholly a different experience. Athletes must be both physically and mentally prepared.

The greatest challenge during this season was keeping a strong mindset, and to constantly keep improving. The team this year improved with every meet and ended the season stronger than we began it. The Cross-country track team should be proud of the diligence they showed toward the sport and our school.

**PASSAIC TEAM PLAYERS**



Yesenia Lopez

Photo by staff



Jorge Savarino

Photo by staff



Nainesh Rana

Photo by staff



Michael Portorreal

Photo by staff



Zahtae Mouzone

Photo by staff

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