

Engineering Society Aims to Help Young Hispanics Succeed in STEM Careers

By Ariadni Aguilar

The Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) has created high school chapters, exclusively for high school students who have an interest in engineering and other technical interests. This group funds programs to provide scholarships, mentors, tutors and other resources to overcome persistent educational barriers to Hispanic students.

They also encourage students to pursue science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) for possible

career goals. SHPE encourages and facilitates opportunities to attend to local science fairs and other engineering competitions.

The ultimate goal of SHPE is to increase the presence of Hispanics studying science and engineering.

There are a lot of benefits to joining this society and becoming involved with their programs such as:

- Eligible to apply to SHPE Foundation (Seniors only)
- Complimentary SHPE JR. Newsletter
- Eligible for national SHPE and SHPE Foundation

awards

- Eligible to nominate SHPE Chapters for national awards
- Eligible to receive SHPE graduation stole
- Complementary SHPE Magazine
- Leadership training and career awareness opportunities

However there are a few membership and eligibility requirements, including:

- Middle and high school students who have an established SHPE Jr. Chapter at their school. If there is not chapter at the school there is no way to get into these programs. However, PHS does have an active chapter.
- Must be enrolled in an accredited high school in the United States or Puerto Rico. Yes, PHS is in the United States.
- Must have a minimum 2.5 overall GPA. Students should be doing this anyway. But, smart students need to be involved. Math, science, technology and engineering is pretty hard.

The Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) aims to change lives by empowering the Hispan-

ic community to realize their fullest potential, by opening the world of STEM awareness, access, support, and development. What better way to fulfill this mission than by impacting students in high schools at a young age?

The SHPE Jr. Chapter Program develops the pipeline of future STEM leaders and innovators while also increasing the ability of the youth, their families, and their communities to reach their fullest potential by giving them options that they might have thought were out of their reach.

SHPE Jr. Chapters are established by local SHPE Student and Professional Chapters in partnership with school administrators. SHPE Jr. Chapter members receive mentoring and develop leadership skills through the active involvement of SHPE Chapter members, corporate sponsors and community volunteers.

Upon graduating from high school, SHPE Jr. Chapter members are encouraged to continue their involvement in SHPE by joining SHPE Student Chapters in college and then SHPE Professional Chapters as working professionals.

This SHPE membership pathway provides a supportive, lasting network of STEM



PHOTOS BY ARIADNI AGUILAR

Top: The PHS chapter of SHPE, work together to make a brighter future. Bottom: Djanique Moore and Solange Casiano create their hovercraft racer.

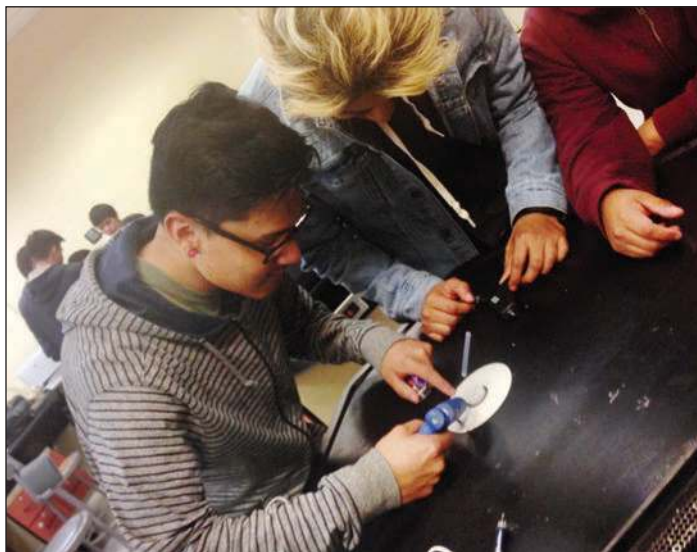


PHOTO BY ARIADNI AGUILAR

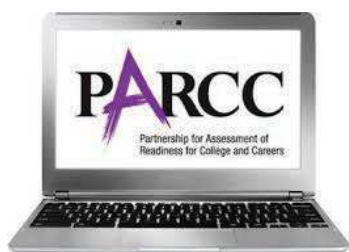
Rafael Enriquez and Antonio Bello putting the finishing touches on their project.

PHS Successfully Completes Another Year of PARCC Testing

By Abigail Villa

State testing has always been a struggle for both students and staff. This year has been no different. Much of the difficulty comes from the entire school testing during the same day. PHS is space limited, therefore having the entire school testing during the same days, and having all students log onto the computers to take the test at the same time, is a logistical nightmare. The short practice during homeroom was an aid to alleviating some of the chaos of all students going to various testing locations. In the end it all works, which is a testament to the hard work of the staff who organized the test, and the students who patiently follow directions and do their best to complete a successful test.

This year was also hindered by a technical glitch that affected the entire state, forcing a wasted day of testing. On Wednesday of test week, all New Jersey schools testing from grades 3 to 11 were forced to postpone the test for a day, because a technical glitch that affected the entire state. The problem was later found to be an issue with the testing platform provided by the Pearson company, the company that created the exam. David Hesse, the New Jersey Educa-



tion Commissioner said, "This is not a problem on our end. This is a problem on Pearson's end."

David Buenofina, a junior who was taking the test said, "This is crazy. I can't believe that they wasted a whole day of testing." He commented on the fact that so much of the testing relies on technology which is unreliable sometimes.

Whether the test experience was smooth or complicated, it is a graduation requirement, so it must be taken seriously. It is odd to see a few students put their heads down after 40 minutes into the math sections. Mrs. Romero has stated that this is a graduation requirement and therefore must be taken seriously. No student can graduate unless they satisfy the testing graduation requirement.

One student who did take the test seriously was Kevin Espinoza. "The test was okay. While there was some stuff on there I haven't seen before. I knew most of it," said Kevin Espino-

za. Other students stated much the same sentiment. While the test was difficult, it was something that teachers had prepared students to take.

The language portion of the PARCC exam was also rigorous. There were selections to read, essays and short responses to write, videos to watch and multiple choice questions to answer. The language section is also long and time consuming. Josephine Comano, a junior, said, "I can't believe how long the selections were. I just kept going and working because I knew that I needed to do my best to pass this test."

The last day of PARCC testing was extended due to two additional math sections that were added, so periods 3 and 4 were cut. Students who had lunch those periods needed to eat, so they reported the gym for sandwiches which tasted really good after such a long day of testing.

After all the testing was done, the entire school community seemed to relax a bit. Like a pressure being released knowing that testing would be over for a while. Even though this testing experience is exhausting for everyone involved, PARCC is a requirement to graduation. The whole experience is stressful and a little painful, but it is worth it in the end.



PHOTO BY JALEN MASPONO

Stuart Rabner, New Jersey's chief justice and a PHS graduate, discusses his fond memories of school with former classmate Sheila Graham Woodson at the "Friend in Youth" dinner.

Optimist Message Returns To PHS

By Henry Hernandez

At the annual "Friend of Youth" appreciation dinner, held at the Sevilla Restaurant, many PHS students were recognized for going above and beyond the expectations placed on all students. The sponsor of the dinner was the Optimist Club of Passaic.

Mr. Sheridan, member of the Optimist Club and advisor of Club Octagon, organized the dinner to honor PHS students who uphold the Optimist Youth Code and Creed. The code includes truths such as "To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best."

This year students that upheld this high standard for themselves and the school were, Kashim Cooks, Isaac Guzman, Briana Calderon, Dayanara Manan, Amari Gawthney, Salvador Brocado, Aljanna Wilson, Lenny Polance, Andrea Muniz, Oscar Olalde, Emily Javier, Stephanie Vazquez, Luis Ortega, Saira Garcia, Natalie Gaspar, Mitul Asawla, Mary Siri, Dominique Barksdale, Kameron Malloy, Christopher Velez, Ashley Cody, Ambrosia Monroe, Kiana Larson, Joshua Zuniga, and Jonathan Rodriguez.

These students were treated to the recognition they well deserve, a wonderful meal, and even a special guest keynote speaker and

continued on page 2

Is TV Dead?

By Judith Hernandez

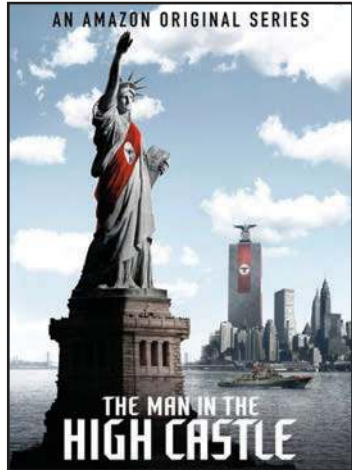
The picture of the role that television will play in the future is fuzzy. Much of what is on television today is out of step with the technology that has emerged with respect to digital media. There are many new sources that use this technology to take over what has always been ruled by television.

Social media and other applications have been popular over the last few years, and are still growing at an incredible rate. Also with Netflix and Hulu Plus it's easier to watch recent television episodes or movies. Subscribers can watch this material at home on a television set or computer, or on the go with a mobile device.

Shows can be watched whenever, and people no longer have to wait and plan their lives around when a show is on. They can watch it whenever they have the chance. Some of these shows are addictive especially when episodes can be shared and discussed over social media.

Television has been around since the 1940's, the old black and white days. The future of television is now within our grasp. It is not just color, but it is portable and personal.

The amount of people who use the internet and their mobile devices as tv's instead of using real tv, has been steadily growing. Studies in the United Kingdom show that mobile devices have risen from 25% to 47%, in just the last few years. Old school



GOOGLE IMAGES

Now that you can stream episodes of your favorite series on a computer or to your smart phone, the days of sitting in front of a TV set in your living room may soon be a thing of the past.

television providers have been losing viewers to broadband internet instead. Since basically everyone has a phone or tablet it's easy to watch your favorite shows that you missed, or continuing a favorite show you haven't seen in months. Some people say that tv is dying or it's evolving into mobile devices.

Not only is watching shows easier and more portable on a mobile device, but it also has greater content. There are many shows that can ONLY be watched on Netflix, such as *Daredevil*, and now *Jessica Jones*, and movies like *The Ridiculous 6*, and comedy event shows as well.

Many carriers are getting into the act. Amazon has its own media, its own shows as well as movies and shows from elsewhere. One of the most popular is *The Man in the High Castle*.

David Buonafina, a junior said, "That's my show. I don't even order from Amazon. I just love that show."

He is just one of a new generation of viewers that choose to select the shows they want to watch, and when they want to watch them, having television revolve around the consumer, and not the other way around. Perhaps television is not dying, but it is just growing up.

Hazards of School Over-Crowdedness

By Thania Rubio

One issue that many teachers and students agree on is the over-crowdedness of the hallways around the school. There are areas that are just jammed with students trying to make their way to class, hopefully on time.

Many would argue that any number of students that exceed the planned capacity of a classroom or a school building impacts the quality of instruction and learning because of the stresses that it places on access to teachers and services. Some classes are filled with many students, usually with more than 20 students in a class.

Most students agree that this seems to be one of the most over-crowded school years PHS ever had. Passaic is considered a medium sized city, with a population of 70,868 people and 14 constituent neighborhoods, Passaic is the 12th largest community in the state New Jersey. There are a lot of people in this city, and most have children. Those children go to school and PHS is the only high school in this city.

Overcrowding is a real, day-to-day issue in PHS, but also in a significant number of other school districts. School boards and administrators, down to principals and teachers, are affected by this issue too. Statistics show

that crowded schools have a negative impact on reading achievement. But what can be done? The school is only so big, there is no way to expand the school that exists. And every year the student population increases.

It seems as though the crowds are here to stay, because there is no immediate way to change the population of this school. However, there are some ways to make this issue better, if we all participate. Students should not just hang around talking to friends in the hallways. They should go straight to class. We are here to learn, let's get to class and learn. Also, using the correct staircase and not blocking busy areas will help the traffic problems.

Lastly, working hard and passing classes will help. How will passing help the crowded problems? Senior Anthony Sanchez said, "This school is overpopulated, especially when students are retaking classes that they should have passed." Retaking a class makes a normal sized class larger because that student is taking a seat in the failed class as well as a new class.

There are some aspects of the crowded hallways that cannot be changed by anyone at this time. However, if we, as students, all work together we can have a positive impact on how things run in this school.

THE HILLTOP STAR

The Student Newspaper
of Passaic High School

Student Editors

News Editor
Dayanara Manon
Sports Editor
David Buonafina

Assistant Sports Editor
Ariadni Aguilar

Reviews
Emanuel Velez
Reporting
Jesenia Paramo

Editorial
Guadalupe Prado

Staff Writers

Sarah Basauri
Valerie Beingolea
David Buonafina
Josephine Camano
Jaylene Canning
Yesenia Garcia
Karina Gonzalez
Liset Gutierrez
Eduardo Hernandez
Henry Hernandez
Judith Hernandez
Paola Lopez
Jalen Maspono
Marlene Mendez
Ricardo Ortega
Thania Rubio
Freddy Sanchez
Jaqueline Sanchez
Nicholas Santos
Dorian Stewart
Christal Veras
Abigail Villa

Adviser

Harris Zeiler

www.hilltopstar.com

Layout and Printing by
Media Trends LLC
732-548-7088

STEM

continued from page 1

peers throughout their academic and career journeys.

The main goals of the SHPE Jr. Chapter Programs are to:

- Increase the number of students who graduate high school and pursue STEM degree programs through college preparedness workshop and activities
- Increase confidence and leadership skills
- Convey a positive attitude towards academic excellence
- Encourage and support parental commitment to education
- Increase access to college for students
- Increase cultural awareness of contributions to STEM

This is a worthwhile and fun group. If any student has any interest they should join. Not only is this a rewarding group, but there is fun and it may just change the lives of PHS students who want to use science and technology to make the world a better place.

Optimist

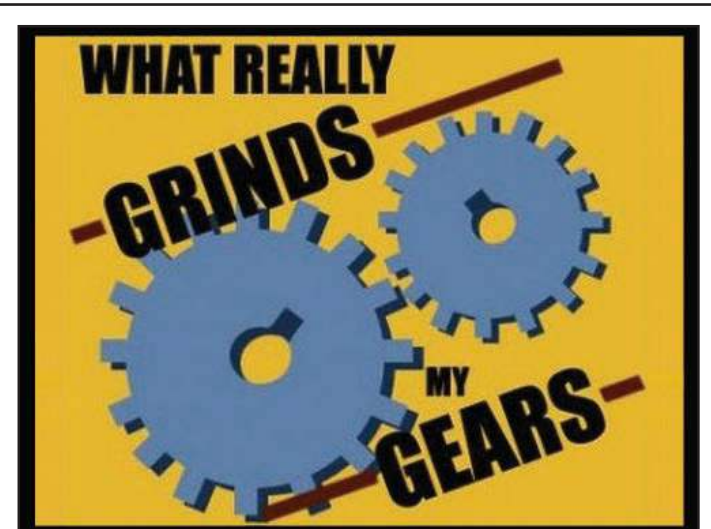
continued from page 1

PHS graduate, N.J. Chief Justice Stuart Rabner. The 1978 valedictorian, Rabner went on to attend Princeton and then on to a career in law. However it was not the students who were inspired by the speaker, but rather it was Rabner who was inspired by the stories of personal struggle from Optimist Club honorees.

Chief Justice Rabner told students that they can measure up and that they should just take it, "one assignment at a time."

The dinner was a representation of the best that Passaic has to offer, past, present, and future. Perhaps the part of the creed that everyone can stand to learn from is, "To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble."

Congratulations to all involved and especially those honored.



Getting to Class

By David Buonafina

Do you know what really grinds my gears...?

When students are trying to get to class and they are always late, because other students are either confused with where they're going, just being annoying on purpose, or they want to stand around and talk.

Come on guys? We all have somewhere to be!!! I mean blocking the hallway is just not cool! Sure it seems lame to say we should all just walk quickly and quietly from class to class, but feel my position for a moment. Student A (all names have been withheld to protect the guilty) is always on time, has excellent grades and has perfect attendance.

Now, student B is a chatter box, failing every class and chooses not to attend many classes, since the first day of school. Student B likes to cause trouble, cuts classes regularly. Since B has nothing to lose and nowhere to go, he can just linger in the hallway and go where he wants.

So like life, there are some of us who are going places and have things to do and people to see, but let us not be burdened by those who will stand in our way, both literally and figuratively. Blocking the halls, walking slowly and basically just hindering all motion in the school is not cool.

Let's face it, if this is going to be "the best urban school in New Jersey" then we all need to be where we are supposed to be, in class learning and participating. But first, we need to get there. Let's not be a student B on his phone texting while walking through the hallways and always making other students late to class.

The real question is how do we get B to class on time? Well, aside from cattle prods or having the security staff duct tape him to the wall, we can all just personal responsibility and do what we need to do. How about that?

Thank you for listening to my rant and please look forward to future columns about things that just "Grind My Gears."

Get Scared Presents Alternative to View Inner Demons

By Judith Hernandez

While many might be turned off by the powerful screams and heavy sound of the American post rock/alternative band Get Scared, they are worth a listen as they are more meaningful

than most of the other music that most teens listen to today. Get Scared's sound features clear vocals set off by powerful screams. Their songs are also very meaningful and cover very heavy meaningful subjects in their lyrics.

Their latest album, *Demons* is about facing inner demons and how it affects the lives of those all around. Everyone makes mistakes and some of those mistakes will follow all the way until the grave. People take revenge on others, people who hurt and most want to make them suffer as well. This makes people turn into someone that they would not want to be.

Revenge should not change us. People change throughout the course of their lives, and the subject of many of these songs is that in changing we should not turn into someone who we do not want to be. Truth should reign above feeling good for the moment.

This is not pop music. Most people will not listen to this type of music because they would call it emo. However, if given the chance many would appreciate, if not actually like, it. The lyrics are mostly based on things that



PHOTO COURTESY OF GET SCARED BAND
Nicholas Matthews, Johnny Braddock, Bradley Iverson and Warren Wilcock are the members of Get Scared, an American band from Layton, Utah.

happen to people and how they get through it. The songs talk about suicide, revenge, sadness, and how to deal with problems that everyone has, but most feel like only happens to them.

Many songs deal with the how to hold on to your own mind when everyone around tells you that you are not worth anything. How do people deal with their own loved ones making them feel like they are worthless?

The song "What if I'm Right" deals with the idea of holding true to one's own mind when everyone else is saying to do some-

thing else. Making you think you're crazy when they are the crazy ones.

The one criticism of this band is that they cover every human emotion except happiness. Perhaps it would ruin their persona, but it would be nice to see a song that has a happier ending, that when the ordeal is over the survivor will have a life afterwards.

The best part of this band is that their message is to not give up on what you think is right. After all the messaging, the actual music is melodic, yet also has a heavy sound at the same time.

Pokemon Go is Promising New Gaming App

By Abigail Villa

Pokemon has been around for a while now. The first Pokemon game was released way back in 1996 in Japan. Now, twenty years later, in 2016 these games are still coming out and believe it or not there are still a few new ideas! It seems like those creative Nintendo folks, the creators of Pokemon games, never run out new ideas.

This time Nintendo has teamed up with Niantic and have given gamers an exciting new way to enjoy the world of Pokemon! They announced the new game recently and this time gamers

will not need to plug in their Nintendo device, but will be able to Pokemon duel on their smartphones. For the first time ever, Pokemon will be available as an app for both Android and Ios users.

That means whether gamers prefer an Iphone or a droid, both can battle for Pokemon bragging rights.

The precise release date has not been finalized, but this game is set to be released during 2016, hopefully sooner rather than later. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of



this game is that players will be required to purchase a special Pokemon bracelet in order to play the app. This game will allow players to catch Pokemon in the real world. That is correct, to be able to play this game, players will be

immersed in a Pokemon world in which they will have to travel around to catch Pokemon. Once a team is assembled players can battle, trade and catch and earn more Pokemons. This will help people communicate better with one another. Helping friends out and developing new friendships. This game promises to bring Pokemon enthusiasts from all



GOOGLE IMAGES
The new Pokemon app will show Pokemon in the real world for collection.

over together to play and trade Pokemon.

Though the game has not been released yet, the "Poke-world" has been abuzz with anticipation. Perhaps greater than cards and

precious games, this iteration of Pokemon, has the possibility to become the greatest format for enjoying Pokemon ever. The internet is full of those who cannot wait for this to be released.

BLOOD DRIVE



PHOTO BY JACKIE SANCHEZ

Seniors were given the opportunity to serve centrals at the same time as doing something good for others. By donating blood 20 centrals were removed, allowing many seniors to still participate in activities and even "walk the grass."

ART CLUB HELPS STUDENTS CELEBRATE MOTHER'S DAY



The PHS art club, advised by Mr. Schmitz, sponsored a fun activity for students to express their creative side. The club aided any student who wished to participate, for free, the opportunity to make a unique work of art for their mother, for Mother's Day. A tile mosaic, suitable to be a trivet or just a nice work of art, top, or a handpainted card, in watercolors, bottom, were just two of the various projects that were created for happy Moms this Mother's Day. Thank you to the PHS art club, for helping students make their moms feel special.

PHOTOS BY EMMANUEL VELEZ



1. Captain America: Civil War



By Emmanuel Velez

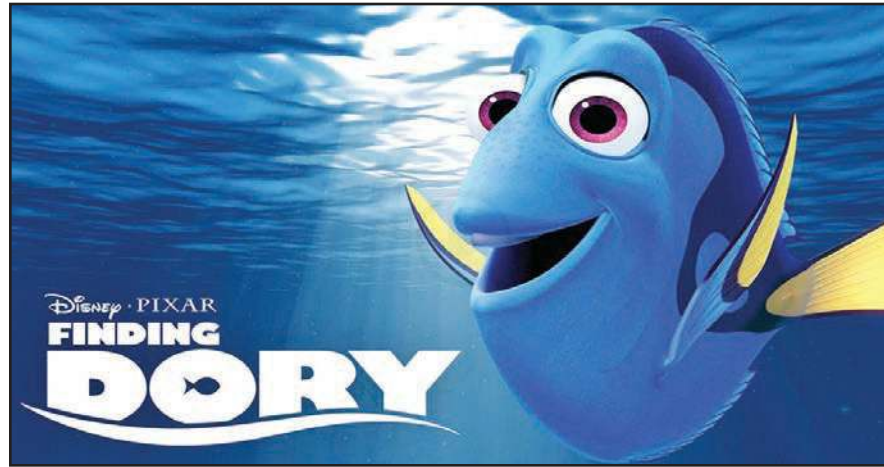
1. Captain America: Civil War – To kick off the summer movie season, Steve Rogers and Tony Stark are under rules that require them to reveal their superhero identities. It features newer heroes in the Marvel Cinematic Universe like Ant-Man, Black Panther, and, of course, “your friendly neighborhood, Spider-Man!” *Captain America: Civil War* serves just enough action and suspense without overstuffing the movie (*cough* *Batman v Superman* *cough*) - not to mention that a portion of the movie is filmed with IMAX cameras. Opens May 6, 2016. It is well worth the price of admission for its nonstop action and even plot development.

2. X-Men: Apocalypse



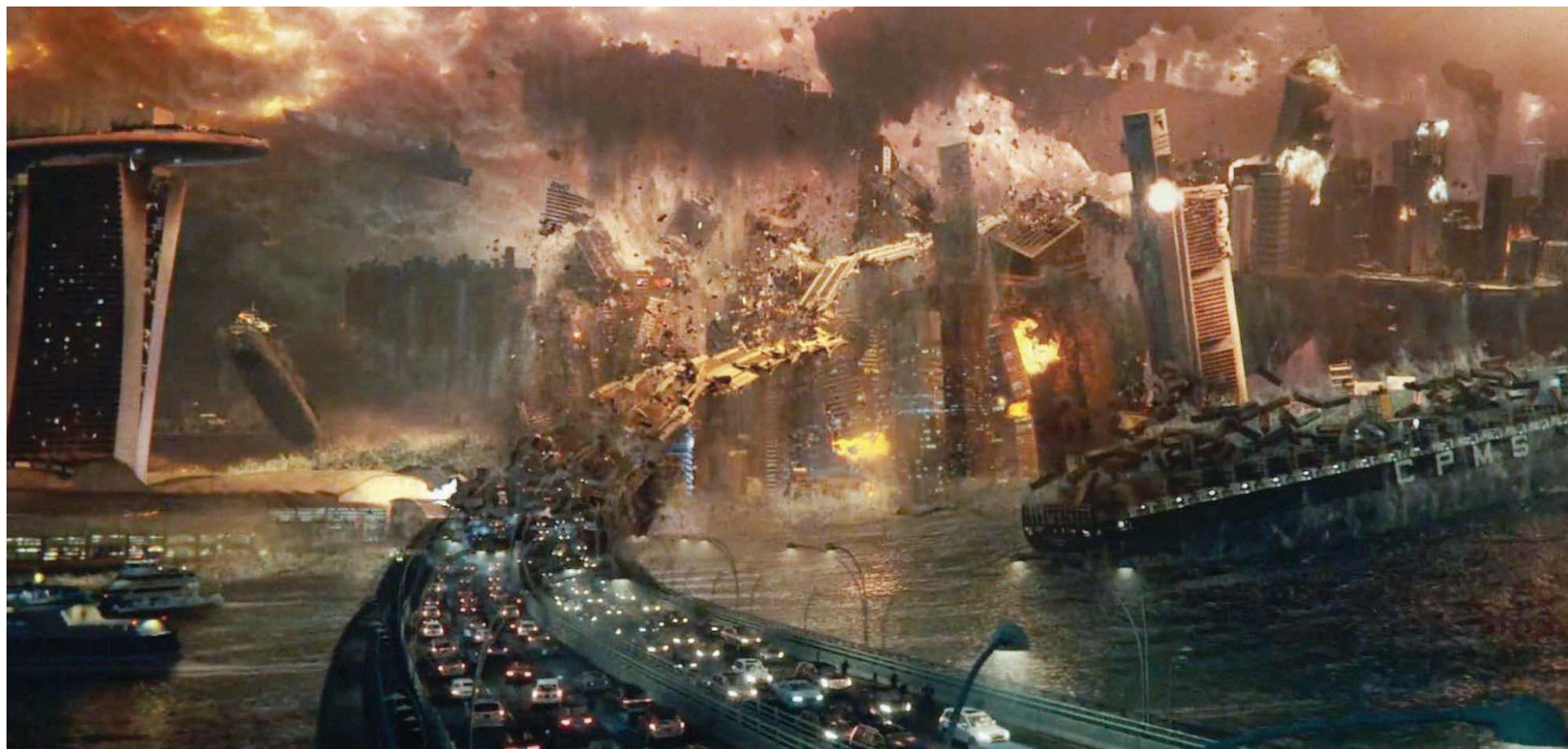
2. X-Men: Apocalypse – This 16-year movie franchise returns to the big screen once again featuring Marvel’s mutants. This addition is in the rebooted universe, which began after *First Class* and then continued with *Days of Future Past*. After the events of *Days of Future Past*, the X-Men’s most powerful enemy, Apocalypse, wakes up in this movie’s setting, the 1980s, and he wants to destroy it. With the return of Professor X, Magneto, Mystique – along with the younger versions of Cyclops, Storm, and Jean Grey – and new characters like Psylocke, Angel, and Nightcrawler, *X-Men: Apocalypse* brings the best of the X-Men to reboot the franchise (without actually rebooting it) into a new “Future Present” of the mutants. Opens May 27, 2016.

3. Finding Dory



3. Finding Dory – You know how Pixar is with releasing films nearly every year and they’re really good.

4. Independence Day: Resurgence



10 Anticipated Movies to See This Summer

But after a long 13 years, 2003’s *Finding Nemo* finally gets its sequel, *Finding Dory*. Dory now sets off to find her family across the ocean. Featuring returns of the original cast, the movie also features newer lovable characters. A comparison with the original and it becomes apparent how far animation technology, especially with Pixar, has come. Remember how amazing the animation looked in *Finding Nemo*? This film blows it away. Opens June 17, 2016.

4. Independence Day: Resurgence – Another sequel that has been a long time in coming is the *Independence Day* sequel. It takes place 20 years after the events of the original *Independence Day* movie, which is actually now. The original film was released in 1996! The aliens return to Earth with a vengeance. But this time, the humans have salvaged the extra-terrestrial technology, but the aliens have also developed their technology. Can the humans once again retain their independence? Opens June 24, 2016.

5. The Secret Life of Pets – Want a taste of something a little different from Illumination Entertainment? The creators of *Despicable Me* have decided to show what pets do when their owners are not at home. It seems *Toy Story*-inspired (or ripped off), but it should keep audiences pacified until the upcoming *Despicable Me 3* in 2017. Opens July 8, 2016.

6. Ghostbusters (2016) – Who you gonna call? The all new, all rebooted, all female lead cast, GHOSTBUSTERS! Yes, rebooted – *Ghostbusters*, which means

this probably does not tie in to the original two films. Set here in the present, four women open a paranormal-investigating business in New York and must put a stop to a threat releasing many figures of ghosts. If the visuals from *Independence Day*, which opened in the 90s, and *Finding Nemo*, which opened in the 2000s, looks amazing next to their 2016 sequels, then imagine how the *Ghostbusters* sequel will look next to the original from 1984! Opens July 15, 2016.

7. Ice Age: Collision Course – The third animated movie to make the 10 most anticipated movies of this summer is the fifth *Ice Age* film. After exploring the ice age, its meltdown, the dinosaurs under it, and the continental drift, the next installment is more apocalyptic, representing the meteor shower that made the dinosaurs go extinct. Of course this was again all caused by that nut-loving prehistoric squirrel, Scrat. The fifth installment now has Manny, his friends, and family running to find a new home when meteor showers put them in danger. It should be fun to bring a little brother or sister to, anyway. Opens July 22, 2016.

8. Jason Bourne – After 9 years since the release of *The Bourne Ultimatum*, Matt Damon returns to reprise the role of an iconic American spy, Jason Bourne. Not much is known about the movie (even with a trailer released), but expect a ton of action from the man who

is still trying to remember who he is. Opens July 29, 2016.

9. Suicide Squad – Despite DC’s mediocre *Batman versus Superman: Dawn of Justice*, the push to compete with Marvel is not done in 2016. Supervillains are recruited to complete a mission only they can do, well actually if they fail, they were villains anyway, so no big loss, right? This movie looks more organized than the already mentioned *Dawn of Justice* and it’s about time DC released its supervillains! A little warning though, these are villains, so they are bad, this movie is definitely not for all audiences. This film was held to a PG-13 rating, to fit in with other films in the DC universe, but it definitely will include a much darker tone than other films in this universe. Opens August 5, 2016.

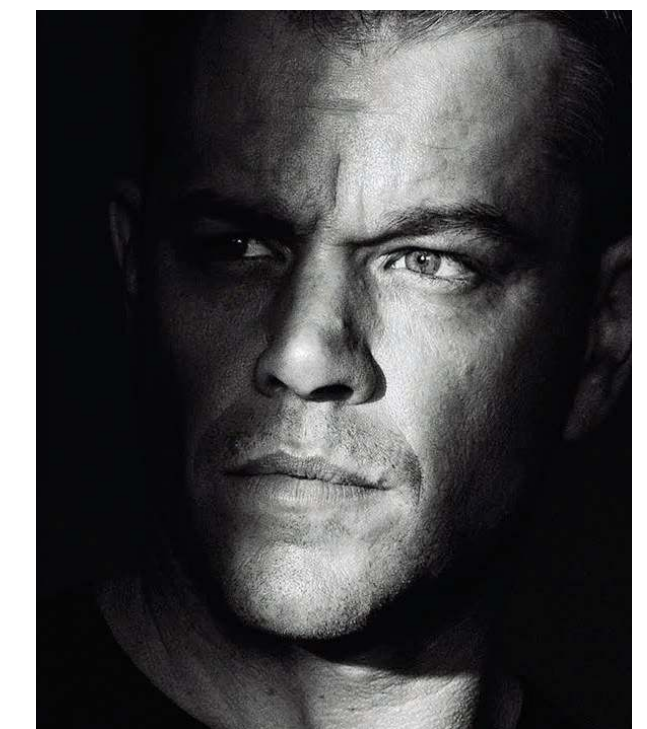
10. Sausage Party – A film that did go for the “R” rating is the animated movie *Sausage Party*. In this unlikely movie, foods that can talk, or at least can be seen to talk by audiences, must figure out a plan to escape a digestive system. They realize that their destiny is to be kicked by our teeth, jaws, tongues and digestive system. Not the typical CGI animated film, this is a creative storyline, and it opens August 12, 2016.

This summer is poised to be a good summer for the movie patron. Get your popcorn and enjoy!

7. Ice Age: Colission Course



8. Jason Bourne



9. Suicide Squad



10. Sausage Party



5. The Secret Life of Pets



6. Ghostbusters



ALL PHOTOS FROM GOOGLE IMAGES



GOOGLE IMAGES

Kung Fu Panda 3

By Emanuel Velez

Wow. It's been nearly eight years since the original *Kung Fu Panda*, and five years since *Kung Fu Panda 2*. I guess before I graduate high school, I'll need one last *Kung Fu Panda* to see.

Kung Fu Panda 3 now makes the franchise a trilogy. Po must now learn to teach kung fu and

master his chi when a former friend of Oogway, Kai, returns to take everyone's chi. Po also meets his long-lost biological father, Li Shan, who take him to a secret Panda village to meet new Panda characters.

While animated movies have always been pretty short, *Kung Fu Panda 3* once again does its show spectacularly. The animation is excellent. The way



GOOGLE IMAGES

Po, the Kung Fu Panda, trains to be the best at Kung Fu, but not humor in this attempt.

every frame is done makes the movie the best-looking out of the trilogy.

As for the story, this is the Kung Fu Panda where it has the most attempts at humor. Yes, some parts are funny, but I

wanted the seriousness to go on a little longer rather than have it closed with some humor.

On the better side of it, Po tries to rebuild his life to be a panda like his family. That's definitely where the humor

does its best.

Kung Fu Panda 3 delivers great humor (for the kids) and a great story for those who've been around since the original. *Kung Fu Panda 3* is a more-silver-than-gold 8/10.

'Spectre' - Number 24 in Bond series

By Emanuel Velez

Three years after *Skyfall*, James Bond returns in his 24th film, *Spectre*. It once again stars Daniel Craig, his fourth time as Agent 007 with Sam Mendes returning as director for the second time.

In this movie, the cryptic organization known as SPECTRE is trying defeat Bond by destroying his past. It's also been a while since SPECTRE was mentioned in a Bond film due to copyright reasons. With the amazing success of 2012's *Skyfall*, *Spectre* now connects loose ends of *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall*.

First of all, it is amazingly to see the return of the gun barrel at the start of the movie. The



GOOGLE IMAGES

Daniel Craig returns, once again, as James Bond in "Spectre."

flow from the opening credits to the opening scene set in Mexico City is reminiscent of the older classic Bond films, and a welcome return. The vi-

sual effects in this movie are best yet for the Bond franchise. There aren't any shaky cameras at all!

Furthermore, *Spectre* now

holds the record for the largest explosion without CGI effects ever. As expected there are the traditional Bond rules: M gives Bond a mission to go to a foreign place, Bond meets (and gets to know) a girl that may give him information on the villain, Bond meets the villain and finds a way to stop him/her. These are not spoilers, these are the Bond rules in the movies.

However, despite the phenomenal performance Daniel Craig does as James Bond, the movie does tend to drag in some parts. This is aided by the fact that this is also the longest Bond film ever, with a length of 2 hours and 28 minutes. The longer duration does not translate into a more complex 21st century Bond.

The romance is still more funny than serious, like in the previous three Bond films. However, Monica Bellucci as Donna Lucia, is very impressive and convincing at age 50, making her the oldest Bond girl in history. But the villain, Oberhauser, isn't as memorable as Le Chiffre or Silva.

Despite this, Daniel Craig has still managed to be the best Bond since Sean Connery, the original James Bond. Craig has done well as a modern Bond in *Casino Royale* and *Skyfall*, and as a more classic Bond in *Spectre*.

Even with this crazy story, it's still better than the terrible *Quantum of Solace*. It's still a good Bond movie to enjoy, but not a great one. The final verdict for *Spectre* is a 7/10.

'Owari no Seraph'

By Nicholas Santos

Owari no Seraph is an anime adaptation of the ongoing Shounen manga series written by Takaya Kagami. The *Owari no Seraph* anime is licensed by Funimation for both video and streaming in North America. The source material has also spawned several other adaptations including two different light novel series, a voice comic, two video games and a spin-off manga.

This Seraph series is very complicated but simply it is about a

virus that kills everyone in the world over the age of 13.

With all the adults gone vampires emerge to subjugate society. They promise to protect all the survivors of the virus, but not for free. They require donations of blood. So, the human race becomes cattle to the vampires.

Owari no Seraph takes place years after the last episode. The protagonist, Yuuichirou (yes, this is spelled correctly), is a trained member of the Japanese Imperial Demon Army, whose purpose is to exterminate the

vampires in Japan. Yuuichirou is consumed by thoughts of revenge on the monsters who slaughtered his family, but will he lose his own humanity in the process?

The biggest drawback to *Owari no Seraph* is that the story attempts to be everything all at once. It is very difficult to consume all the information that is presented in the beginning, but then the story does go back to clarify what the plot. There is some plot elements that get left out with little or no explanation at all. For example, the Four Horsemen Johns just disappear and are not heard from again.

A saving element of this work is the artwork of the characters. They look good with traditional Manga colors and even the hairstyles that they have. All the parts of the characters help to identify who they are. The characters are round in nature and they change and learn over time.

This is an epic story for those who already are fans of Anime and Manga, but it should also draw in others who have not yet experienced this art form.



GOOGLE IMAGES

Japanese animation does not let fans down in this iteration of the Owari Manga series.



GOOGLE IMAGES

Once Upon A Time – A Review

By Christal Veras

Once Upon A Time is a show on ABC about famous fairytale characters from all the well-known stories of childhood who are actually real and living in the modern world. A curse has trapped these fairytale characters in the modern world, in a town called Storybrooke.

This fairytale land is not for youngsters though. The plot of the story goes between the fairytale lands of “Once Upon a Time” and the modern world fictional story land of Storybrooke.

While some characters have powers in the fairy tale land, others do not, and they all differ in strength. There are

powers like light magic dark magic or fairy tale magic. There were some dark magic people who later on changed to light magic such as the evil queen Regina. Some powers translate better to the modern world and offer, dark magic works in Storybrooke better than the light.

Good and evil is not so easy to differentiate in the real world of Storybrooke, just like in real life. There are other characters like Rumpelstiltskin, played by Robert Carlyle, who pretended to change to good, but in fact stayed evil. Many think that Rumpelstiltskin does actually care about others, but actually, he only cares about himself.

There is the first real antagonist, Regina Mills, played by Lana Parrilla, who is conflicted about the differences between the new and the fairy worlds. However, when her adopted son Henry Mills, played by young actor Jared Gilmore, who discovered the story book that outlines all of the lives of the characters.

Henry’s real mother Emma Swan, played by talented actress Jennifer Morrison, is known as the savior of Storybrooke, who saved all the storybook characters from losing their memory of who they really are.

There is Snow White (Ginnifer Goodwin) and Prince Charming (Josh Dallas) who are Emma’s parents. They

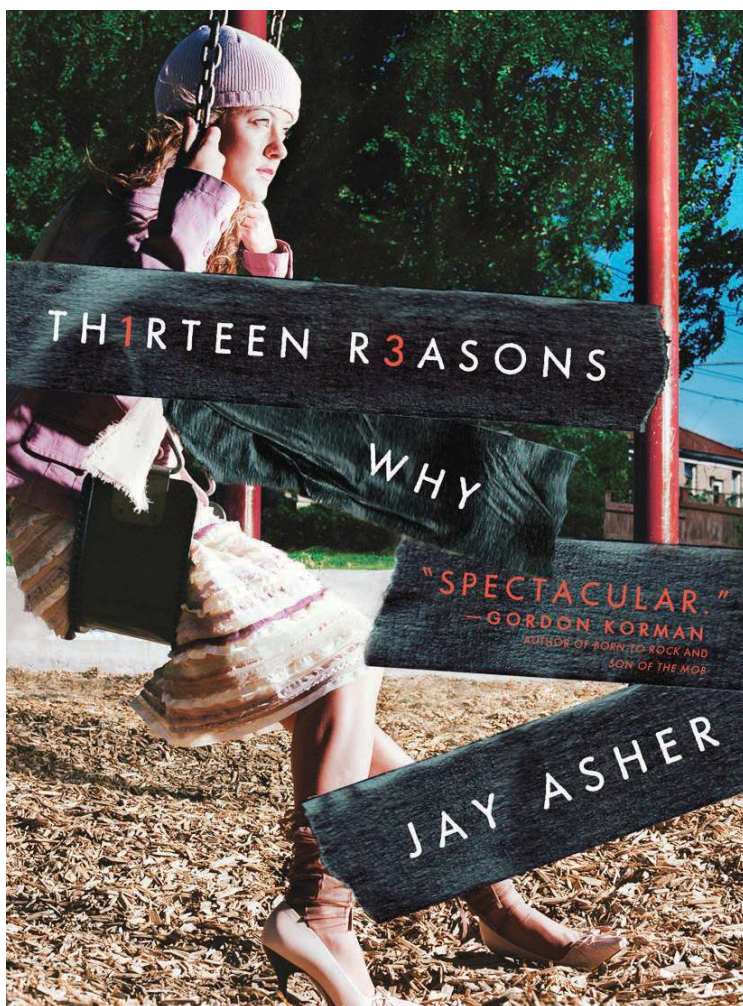
saved Emma from losing her memory by sending her into the new world with magic knowing she would be the one to bring their memories back.

Emma falls in love with a pirate, Captain Hook, also named Killian Jones, The Dark One, and Prince Charles, (played by Colin O’Donoghue). Like Rumpelstiltskin, Hook also changes between good and bad and keeps the audience guessing his true intentions.

Throughout the series all of the characters switch back and forth from what happened before in their fairy tales, to where they are now. The writing is so good that episodes flow smoothly and

the audience is never left confused about the plot. The characterization is excellent and all the characters come to life. This show is truly not the typical fairy tale portrayal, and is definitely not intended for younger audiences.

Trying to explain this complex story is harder than just watching it. While telling the story they would leave out some parts and then bring it up later which ends up tying some parts of the story together. This helps the viewer make an understanding with the things that use to be confusing. The fairy tale characters continue fighting battles of darkness and lies trying to fix the world of magic and create a happy ending for all.



AMAZON.COM

Book Review

‘13 Reasons Why’

By Judith Hernandez

Sometimes books written for young adults tend to be superficial, leaving its audience entertained but not really intrigued or fulfilled. This is not the case with the novel, *Thirteen Reasons Why*, by Jay Asher.

Hitting the New York Times best-seller list back in 2011, this read is still noteworthy.

It is about a boy named Clay who gets a package from his dead classmate, Hannah Baker, after she committed suicide. The package is a shoe box with seven cassette tapes, on which she recorded 13 reasons why she committed suicide. Every tape is dedicated to a person who was instrumental involved in her decision to commit suicide.

Clay listens to the tapes, realizing how many secrets his community holds. The plot unfolds as he discovers the real reason for Hannah’s death. The story is really good in many ways, but it also has its flaws. Hannah is a likable character, but she seems to be overly dramatic and too sensitive.

Not everyone will like everyone else

and sometimes people do some mean things to others. It is just a part of life, and not a reason to assemble a big project before committing suicide. She should have reached out to a potential friend instead of mailing him a box of tapes.

The story focuses on the recipient of the tape package, Clay, who had a crush on Hannah. He did not know that she was suicidal, he thought nothing was wrong.

Clay develops as a character, as he learns about people in his school and in his town. When he finishes the tapes, he decides to send them to another person, so that they can learn and benefit from Hannah’s pain.

By the end Clay looks at his classmates differently. He realizes that they too are isolating themselves, and learning from Hannah decides to reach out to others, so that they will not suffer the same faith as Hannah.

This novel is well written, and compelling. The gripes about Hannah’s character are small, and in the end this was a very enjoyable, and educational book.

Baseball Player a Champion in Overcoming Personal Strife to Stay on Field

By Ariadni Aguilar

The Passaic Indian Baseball team has been on fire this season and it is due to the teamwork and hard individual work of each of the players. However, one of the players almost did not make it to the field this season. Jose Ledesma, junior, was looking forward to his final year of playing baseball, representing PHS and making us all proud. However, after feeling a little dizzy, just two days before practice, doctors found a microscopic tumor on his cerebellum.

Jose was devastated because baseball was his life and he wanted to play more than anything. The thought of not being able to play again was horrible. Tests did show that the tumor was benign, but if it grew doctors would have to perform surgery to remove it.

An avid viewer of sports, Jose said, "Usually when you see stuff like that on ESPN, people don't come back from that. Going through that at a young age, it made me look at the big-

ger picture and see that there are things more important than baseball."

Doctors monitored Ledesma's tumor for more than a month and the symptoms subsided. He was cleared to return to Passaic's baseball team after missing the first 11 games of last season because the tumor did not grow.

Because he was forced to be away from the team and sport that he loved, Jose was much more appreciative of the time that he had on the field. "Every opportunity I got to be on the field, I was just appreciative of it," said Ledesma.

Coach Diaz said of Ledesma, "He is a model program kid" because he is a quality student and one of the Indians' three captains.

Now that it seems that Jose Ledesma is out of the woods, he can concentrate an hundred percent on his game, which in turn will help the team. With dedicated students like Jose on the team, the Passaic Indians should have a bright season this year.



PHOTO BY ARIADNI AGUILAR

Jose Ledesma, looks forward to a nice long career in baseball and in life, as he works hard on and off the field.

My Golf Story

By David Buonafina

Everyone has a passion. Whether it is sailing or cooking there is no denying the importance of passion. Why? It's quite simple. Without a passion there's no drive, no push. There is no fear of failing, or thrill of success. Without a passion, there's no life. Everything molds into a meaningless grey mass of wake up and go to sleep.

I know this because, up until about 15 years ago, I had no passion. So, most of my pre-teen years were spent numbing my brain in front of the T.V. That was of course before I discovered the wonderful game of golf.

I know what you're thinking. "Oh no, not another article about sports". However, I assure you that golf is more than a sport to me. There are many reasons why I love golf. For one, golf is almost impossible to master, so it keeps me coming back.

Golf is not a competition against others; it is a competition against myself. It's so easy to blame others for my mistakes but golf keeps me honest. Golf draws many parallels to life. The contrast between beauty and struggle are vividly apparent in each.

When I make a bad shot in golf, I look up and see the beautiful landscape that surrounds me. Similarly, when I mess up in life, I can step back and realize that I am blessed with many other things. Golf teaches me to not stress the little things. It is the culmination of shots that make up a good round. In life it is the combination of your actions that make up who you are.

I started playing golf competitively



123RF.COM

Playing golf helps students to set high goals for themselves ... and achieve them.

at six. Coming from New Jersey, golf isn't a huge deal. So, I found myself competing against kids who didn't care much about the game. I quickly realized that if I judged myself based solely on my competition, I would get nowhere. I wanted to get good.

To do this, I had to set my own standards. So, when all of my friends were tired after playing eighteen holes, I stayed and played nine more. When it rained, I played. In the spring of my freshman year, I was finding it difficult to break 100. I wanted to improve so badly, but golf is fickle. One day I would play well and my confidence would grow, the next day I wouldn't be able to get the ball off the ground.

It was only through weeks of play-

ing every day after school that I started to see some consistency. I was now in the mid-nineties with most rounds that I played. In my first match of the season I was even through three holes.

Then I let my confidence get the better of me and butchered the next six holes finishing the nine holes with a 52. I was disappointed but I realized it would take much more competitive experience before I was able to perform in the pressure of a match.

Still, I wanted to get much better. My summer consisted of golf, work, eat, and sleep. I had never put so much time into something in my entire life. By summer's end I was shooting in the mid to upper 80's. I

was excited but I wanted more.

During the winter I chipped and putted indoors constantly to keep my skills sharp. When the snow cleared I could not contain my excitement.

However, I encountered a huge setback when I developed a case of the "shanks" in the pre-season of my junior year. No matter what I did, I couldn't stop hitting the ball off the hosel of the club causing a low, short, left to right trajectory.

As a golfer, this is devastating. I lost all of my confidence and was on the verge of giving up. But I realized that, once I got through this, my game would be stronger. I persevered until I could get back to playing competitively.

My best score in a match my junior year was an 82, not exactly where I wanted to be but I was improving. I played most of the season as the first ranked player in our starting five players. I also lettered my sophomore and junior year. However, I'm not satisfied.

Over the summer of my junior year I have consistently been shooting in the upper 70's. My goal for this season is to be the number one man on the team and to shoot in the 70's in two matches. It will be difficult but I know I have the skills to do it.

Golf over the years has been so much more than a game for me, it has been a learning experience. I have learned to be more patient with situations in my life, but most importantly, I have learned that, if I want something, the only foolproof way of getting it is through hard work and dedication

Read these stories (and more) at www.hilltopstar.com