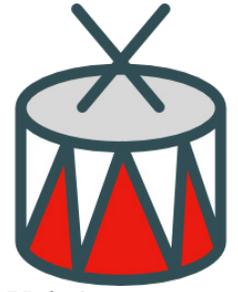


The Drumbeat



Late Winter/Early Spring 2020

Parsippany High School

Vol. 4

Unisex Bathrooms: A Better Future for Everyone

By Vanessa Henriquez

Imagine a world where everyone is identical: looks the same, acts the same. Although, we are not exactly alike, we are all equals. Biological sex and gender orientation does not define us.

One of the most pressing controversy surrounds equality. Unisex bathrooms should be accessible in every school. They open a new window to an opportunity for gender equality.

We all deserve to be comfortable and participate in daily



humane activities. Unisex bathrooms benefit the school and the students of Parsippany High School.

Including a unisex bathroom will save money for the school by not having to waste money on building/repairing a boy's washroom. Boys and unique genders will miss less quality class time while the school spends less money. As we are all aware of, the ratio of the girl to boy bathrooms in this school is not exactly the same.

see **BATHROOM** pg. 3

Old Habits Or New Chances

By Ritika Patel

Ever imagine sleeping in for an extra hour? Or leaving school an hour earlier? How about running errands and getting out early to do them?

Study hall gives you a chance to do that. Seniors are allowed to take a senior period. Students who are eligible for this opportunity can have a study hall in their schedule. Since we began block scheduling this year, seniors get to come in late or leave early on certain days of the week, either when they have study hall first block or last block. Many Seniors take a study hall, not for the purpose of getting homework done, catching up on school assignments or getting a break in the day, however they take the course to get the senior period they want.

But why not try something different? Instead of devoting precious time to sitting or sleeping around, why

not give a chance to the electives or classes our school provides. Our school so generously has given us the chance to try a new class or elective.

If you are just sitting around in study hall, take a new class that is starting next year or take one that is already given. There are many new classes offered such as: Film & Literature, Adolescent Human Development, Networks, Bioethics, AP Psychology, Chinese 1 and many more. Some classes are not running due to a low number of students wanting to take the class. Why don't you give that class a chance? While you're at it, why don't you tell your friends to take the class with you? This a great way to learn something new and give education a chance!

Overcoming Barriers While Writing

By Krishna Parikh

Writing is fighting the currents till the currents give in and carry you to your destination. Writing is a forever expanding sky that broadens horizons, and harbors ideas and dreams and hopes. It's human to listen to the heart. Putting what the heart tells you on paper is a manifestation of that 'humanness.' Writing is dabbling into immortality, and stepping into borders of unexplored territory. It is embracing the impossible. Writing has no right direction. It is an intersection of innumerable roads at innumerable places, with highs and lows and bridges closing the gaps between deep, inky chasms. It can be beautifully complex, or originally simple and easy. Writing is versatile, and caters to any unique individuality. That's the beauty of it.

Have you ever had a desire to just sit down and write something? If you have, or if you write regularly, then chances are that you have met a barrier somewhere along the way. Many times, these barriers, or setbacks, seem nearly impossible to overcome. The good news is that with a change of perspective and some effort, the setbacks can be dealt with effectively.

Three common setbacks that writers experience include becoming unmotivated, becoming intimidated by the project, and experiencing writer's block. Motivation to write can run out at any stage in the writing process. Oftentimes, this occurs when writers are halfway through a piece—does the idea not seem extraordinary anymore? Or does the piece not seem up to the mark? If it is the former, then there are some things you can remind yourself to find the drive to continue: as the writer, you will be more acquainted with the piece than your reader will ever be, since they will not be as familiar with it as you, the writer, are. It is also important to remember that editing is just as important as writing. Mistakes are a part of the process.



The other reason for loss of interest is also a major cause of intimidation - feeling that your work isn't good enough. Writing takes practice. It takes time. It takes patience. Improving significantly takes effort. The process doesn't have to be nearly as dreary as it sounds, though. If you have a passion for expressing yourself with words, then setting small goals for improvement over time can prevent you from becoming overwhelmed. It can also be helpful to observe pieces by a variety of different writers and pieces of different genres. However, don't begin to compare your work to others. Comparing is difficult not to do, especially if you are just starting out. Remembering that writing is a process meant to be enjoyed can help, as can the

fact that every writing experience is unique because every writer has different perspectives and goals. "Good" is subjective.

Sometimes, intimidation arises from the size or ab

see **BARRIERS** pg. 3

BARRIERS

-stractness of the task. You may have a plot, but you may not know how to execute it. There are two simple solutions for that - just write, or begin planning. Starting is one of the most difficult parts of the battle. Having no direction makes it even harder. However, starting is what contributes to direction. Write scenes, quotes, or concepts you have in mind. Another alternative is to plan out your plot and subplots before beginning the actual writing process.

This same tip is effective in battling writer's block. But what if there is no idea to begin with? The lack of motivation and intimidation mentioned are two causes of writer's block, and other causes stem from these two broad aspects. In other cases, ideas just refuse to come to light. Sometimes, it doesn't take much to remedy this. A simple walk, some time off, or a look at other work can be enough to spark something. Other times, more unconventional methods are required. Looking at themes in other art, such as traditional or digital artwork, or listening to music or watching creative music videos can inspire ideas as well. It is also helpful to turn to a variety of prompts, that can easily be found on the Internet.

There are many different types of writing, and all these tips may not be helpful for every kind. However, I hope that you can take something that stood out to you, and implement it when you write something, enjoying the process all the while. Writing can even be a simple activity to unwind with, and you do not have to be a "consistent" writer to implement the tips in the work you do. Either way, beginner, intermediate, or expert at writing, there is always something more to learn, but even more to enjoy, so pick up a pen today! Or just use google docs :)

Submit pieces to Totem
Magazine at
ihearttotem@gmail.com

With self doubt, there's no way out! We
want everything you have.

Still not too sure of the idea?
Submit anonymously!

BATHROOM

Boys have to walk far just to use the bathroom. Other genders who do not want to use or do not feel comfortable using the boy's or girl's room have to walk all the way to the health office just to relieve themselves. Both boys and different genders are missing crucial class time.

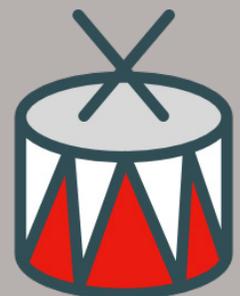
We have many students that are transgender or do not identify as a specific gender, such as being gender fluid, or non binary.

Did you know one in ten transgender respondents reported they have been denied access to a bathroom in the past year? Every gender (or lack there of) has the right to use the washroom comfortably. One of our school's immediate priorities should be safety.

Sometimes traditions need to be broken for the greater good. Unisex bathrooms in our school will make current and future students feel safe, while helping young adults normalize gender equality. All of these wonderful outcomes can stem from simply changing the sign on a bathroom door.

The Drumbeat Staff:

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Animation is a Better Art-form than Live Action Cinema

By Jared Hurta

The most recent blockbuster movies are all “live action remakes” and “live action comic book movies” that have wowed audiences with their visuals and groundbreaking CGI (computer generated images) effects. But there is always an uncanny valley when it comes to the new de-aging effects seen in movies like *The Irishman* and *Captain Marvel*. The uncanny valley is when something is meant to look human but it is just off enough to make the human brain think something is wrong. Do me a favor, before reading the rest of this article, go to Youtube and look up the latest trailer for *Cats* (2019). It is the exact definition of the uncanny valley.

With this distortion of human proportions, it is sometimes difficult to actually tell if there is a good story behind the ugly and weird looking CGI effects. This same thing can go for animated movies. If the animation is bad and distracts you from what is truly going on, it can ruin the movie. But the thing with hand drawn animation is that when it has good art and a good story, it is almost always perfection. It is somewhat of a forgotten art-form in recent years of shows and movies. Everything has been either turned into live action (like *Lion King*) or has turned into 3D animation using CGI models. Movies such as *Akira*, *Princess Mononoke*, and *The Lion King* (1994) are great examples of hand drawn animation at its finest. There is a true art-form to how people draw these characters and in my opinion it is leagues above the current trend of 3D animation, which I consider cheaper and lazier.

Now I am not saying all 3D animation is bad. *Toy Story* and almost every other movie Pixar has produced has told breathtaking stories through the power of animation. The reason these look so good is actually because they use 2D animation to storyboard and plan their stories. What I am saying is I believe the art-form of hand drawn 2D animation can and has proceeded it in many ways, even if it is more efficient.

When it comes to Disney remaking their animated classics into live action movies like *Aladdin* (2019) and *The Lion King* (2019) have been somewhat panned by critics

because of the “live action treatment” they have been unwittingly given. These stories that are getting remade



For all the work to remake The Lion King, have they really improved it?

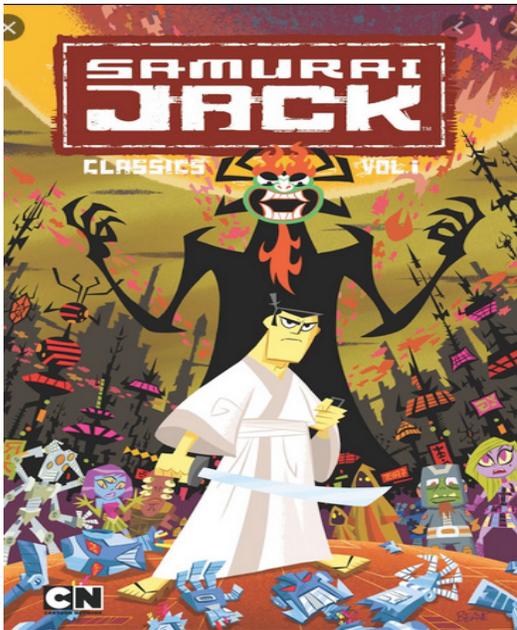
to be live action have lost their spark when it comes to their stories. It was horrible enough that they tried to replace the late great Robin Williams with Will Smith. No offense to Will Smith who attempted to make the role his own, but stepping into the shadow of the man that completely defined the role of the Genie was a huge misstep on Disney’s part. Again Smith’s performance was great, but seeing Will Smith’s head floating on a CGI blue body did not capture the same magic that the cartoon Genie could. Seeing him dance around and sing about how *Aladdin* will never have a friend like him had such an effect on young audiences. Mr. Williams



Studio Ghibli is responsible for the most iconic animated characters of all time outside of Disney/Pixar Studios.

could not be more right.

A studio in Japan, known as Studio Ghibli, is always acclaimed for their stories with beautiful animation and storytelling that makes it not just some other animated movie. I feel like everyone has this stigma about animation, that it is mostly for children. Of course most of the animated movies that have come out in America for the past few decades were targeted towards children, and that is mostly due to Disney and Pixar. Adult movies were always live action dramas or heart pounding action blockbusters. What I don't think people understand is that animation can provoke so much more emotion than any normal person acting in front of a camera can. Even if that person is a well trained Shakespearian actor or actress, it is different when it comes to animation. They can do things you can't do in real life, like camera angles and shots that would be physically impossible to do; as long as you can draw it, you can do it. That is



always what I loved about animation, it is a freedom much like literature and writing are. Anything you can think of and put on a paper can come to life. And when you get to witness beautiful animation come to life

that took so long to make on screen, gives you so much more appreciation for those animators that sat at desks for most of their days drawing each frame we see on the screen. Each meticulous frame and every inch a character could move, is drawn by animators. Not only that, but animation isn't just for children like the stigma says, it can be for mature adults and even mature with its audience as they grow.

A great series that accomplished this growth is *Samurai Jack*, an old Cartoon Network show that came back

for its fifth and final season in 2017 on Adult Swim.

The show was originally created for kids and was aired on Cartoon Network from 2002-2004. It was created by Genndy Tartakovsky, who has such a knack for animated storytelling; showing from his bibliography. And now that the shows old audience are now adults, Samurai Jack took that and ran. Creating new more serious situations Jack could find himself in, while still keeping the charm of the first four seasons. The original show was about Jack, the titular character, placed into the future by the villainous demon Aku. It consisted of Jack fighting monsters and robots as he tried to get back to the past. After the show wasn't picked up for a fifth season, it sat in limbo for so many years. People believed it to be dead and gone until it was announced that the show would finally have a final season in 2017. Now, Jack had to deal with his own inner demons and deadlier enemies. Being stuck in the future for upwards of 20 years, he has lost faith within himself and the only thing that could kill Aku, his sword. Seppuku (ritual suicide of dishonorable samurai) and Jack's pride are huge combatants Jack faces in his head throughout the season, and it exemplifies that the show has officially grown with its audience. And Tartakovsky uses the animation to his advantage. Some episodes had no dialogue and most fight scenes in the show contain known, giving it a unique style. Letting you bask in his animation and action as Jack bounces around the screen. And Tartokovsky is experimenting with no dialogue heavily in his latest work titled *Primal*. A prehistoric story about a caveman and a dinosaur killing and fighting their way through the landscape. Seriously check out his work if you have an appreciation for animation.

Animation is an outset of cinema and storytelling that is more expressive, unique and thought provoking. It is something different to what we see in our day to day lives, and that is the most true form of complete escapism and what cinema is truly made for.

Learn more about animation
in the **Literature and Film**
elective next year! Be sure
to let your counselor know
you're interested!

My Perspective: Every issue, The Drumbeat seeks to give voice to those ideas you may be carrying around. Do you have something to say? Let us know. TheDrumbeatPHS@gmail.com.

You have it, but not everyone does

By Sabreen N. Dawud

Privilege. It comes in different forms, has several branches, and is rooted in a variety of experiences. However, one thing it is not is acknowledged.

Having an enhanced ability to access certain opportunities can be complicated. Those who are financially secure, racially favored, or a member of any “preferred” category are not always capable of recognizing their advantage. They are typically either born into a life of privilege or have been living in their privilege for so long that they cannot fathom a life without it. However, why does this seem to justify their lack of acknowledgment of their advantage in life?

I have had countless encounters with people of varying backgrounds and lifestyles. An unfortunate commonality that I have personally witnessed is a barrier built between these varying livelihoods. It dawned upon me that some of those who have never been disadvantaged by society struggle to empathize with those who have. While it is evident that everyone faces challenges, there is no denying that some simply have it harder than others. This phenomenon has always been easy for me to understand but apparently it has not been for everyone.

Life is far too complicated for things to be black and white. Although you may not be able to imagine why another person cannot access a certain opportunity

or feel a certain emotion, it does not mean that it isn’t possible. Not only does not everyone live the same life as you but not everyone has the ability to live the same life as you as well. You may not have enough experience to think of a world without the benefits you’ve always received, but that does not mean that there aren’t people existing in a world of disadvantage.

Life is far too
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An inability to think beyond your own world can be dangerous. It’s limiting. The only connections a close-minded person can make are with those in their small, personal world. Of course it’s up to you to decide whether you want to consider the circumstances of others. But, whether you decide to or not, practice some humility. Your life is not the only life occupying the world.

