



# THE COMET NEWS

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## UP IN SMOKE—THE TRUTH ABOUT VAPING

Written by: Roman Charan and Rani Basnet

Students throughout Hicksville High School have found themselves in quite a predicament: the vaping epidemic. Vaping is like the California wildfires or the Black Death that plagued Europe. Vaping is a problem that has spread like wildfire throughout our school, and many of the schools in our nation. Numerous students have reported that when going into one of the bathrooms, they see at least one student in the corner vaping. National statistics according to NBCnews.com have shown that as of 2018, 37% of high school seniors vape or have tried vaping.

The popularity of vaping shares eerie similarities to the popularity of smoking in the 50's and 60's. Many people believe that they know what they are putting into their bodies, but they are not realizing how much damage they are consequently doing. If students were educated in the dangers of vaping, they would realize that vaping is only a new, high tech, way to smoke. And while we are only now learning about the dangers, including 'popcorn lung,' many students have already found themselves addicted to the easy-to-conceal devices. In a society that is constantly advancing technologically, it was only a matter of time before smoking was upgraded. However, this upgrade has only made it more dangerous. Now, vape devices are easier to conceal and obtain, which doesn't make the future look very bright for our society.

When students were asked if they were aware of the dangers of vaping, an anonymous source who has vaped in the past, said "I didn't know about any dangers till recently. I mean, I knew there was nicotine, but I had no idea about the harmful trash they put in those things." Some students know a little bit about the dangers of vaping while some have no idea. There is really only a small group of students who truly understand how detrimental vaping can be to one's health, especially for athletes. For them, vaping can negatively affect their athletic performances. Even students mainly focused on academics can be also impacted in a negative way.

It is important for students to fully understand the consequences of vaping. Recently, a 24 year old Texas man was killed due to a cerebral infraction and herniation caused by an exploding vape pen when the pen cut up his left carotid artery (CNN.com). Vaping devices can kill, and yet students still do it. This is mainly due to the fact that students aren't aware of all the health risks that come with vaping.

When asked why they believe students vape, an anonymous source who does not vape said that students vape, "to feel accepted in a strange high school environment." Students' lives are driven by social media, the internet, celebrities, and technology. Celebrities such as

Leonardo Dicaprio, Jenny McCarthy, Johnny Depp, Kylie Jenner, and Lady Gaga have promoted vaping by bringing it to their audience's attention, which consists of many teenagers. In addition to a heavy celebrity influence, some students are influencing each other. This happens mainly due to peer pressure. When one teen sees their friends vaping, they may feel the peer pressure to join them. Another way vaping has spread is through experimentation, where people are so curious to the point where they actually try it, which can lead to addiction. Many of these issues and concerns arose in relation to cigarettes, and it is no surprise to see them rear their ugly heads once again.

The steps in fixing this crisis will start with educating the students of this school on the dangers of vaping. Pie charts and graphs are not the way to learn of the harmful effects of vaping, and while suspension may be a necessary punishment, it may not be enough of a deterrent to prohibit students from continuing to vape. There needs to be real action taken, and this serious topic needs to be brought up more. Vaping does not make a person cool or a part of some elite group of special humans. The only thing a person could gain from vaping is terrible health, suspension, and various other consequences.

The real issue is that much like smoking, vaping is becoming a cultural norm that can be seen and emulated across many forms of media. But all a person is truly left with is regret, health issues, and smoke.

# MS. EMERIC

Written by: Krisia Romano

Hicksville High School Music Department Choral Director Mrs. Michelle Shmuel was recently recognized and honored for her dedication to her students and significant contributions to the music department and school district.

Mrs. Shmuel was invited to the Hicksville Public School District Board of Education 66th Annual Founder's Day dinner as an honoree to recognize her excellence in education and dedication to her students. Honorees are nominated for their significant positive contribution to the school and community climate.

Mrs. Shmuel was also honored to be named "Eric Whitacre Teacher of the

Week." Eric Whitacre is a world renowned Grammy-winning American composer, conductor, and speaker. The award is given to a teacher who stands out in the world not only as a music educator, but as a leader and role model for their students. Mrs. Shmuel is known for being an outstanding mentor, musician and teacher. She directs three choirs, along with many elite chamber groups and is a caring teacher for more than 200 students on a daily basis. Mr. Chad Wyman, the respected and admired coordinator of music and drama and band director at Hicksville High School, proudly made the nomination upon witnessing Mrs. Shmuel's dedication throughout her career. Mr. Wyman did not hesitate to say that "Mrs. Shmuel's unwavering approach to her daily tasks as an educator is a be-

con of professionalism for all to see. She truly displays the philosophy that she is teaching young adults how to be better human beings through singing, as opposed to simply becoming a good musician. It does not matter what level of performer you are, if you are willing to put the work in, she is willing to give her time to teach you." Loved by all who know her, Mrs. Shmuel has truly made an impact in the Hicksville School District Music Department. "Mrs. Shmuel truly embraces the notion that while she is a music teacher, her first and foremost task is to teach her students how to be great and responsible human beings."

Changing the world one student at a time – thank you and Congratulations to Mrs. Shmuel!

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## STUDENT SELECTED TO PRESTIGIOUS SUNY PURCHASE PROGRAM

Written by: Anya Marquardt

The SUNY Purchase Screenwriting and Playwriting Program is a prestigious and selective course of study. Hicksville High School's Caitlin Roberti successfully applied to the program and has recently committed to the university. "When I visited SUNY Purchase I loved the sense of diversity and acceptance there. I didn't see such a huge level of compassion at any other school that I had been to. It made me just instantly fall in love with Purchase," Caitlin said.

Caitlin has had a passion for playwriting from a young age. "I love writing about anything concerning the social problems that we face today. The first play I

ever wrote was about transgender rights, and I just saw how moved people were by it." At SUNY Purchase Caitlin will have the opportunity to take a wide array of courses, including multiple courses dedicated to screenwriting and playwriting, seminars on pitch sessions and public speaking for writers. When asked why she wanted to apply to the program, Caitlin replied "One of my inspirations, Mrs. Atkinson, who used to be an art teacher here, told me about the school and the program, and since I am involved in both art and theater, she said the program would be perfectly suited for me." Eva Shtein, Caitlin's creative writing teacher, said, "I discussed the Purchase program

with Caitlin's class, and encouraged her to write." The class also contributes to a writer's circle, where the students read and critique each other's work, including Caitlin's submission. Caitlin is the president of National Art Honor Society and the co-treasurer of Hicksville Thespians Chapter.

Her positions in both honor societies show her high level of dedication to art and theater, making her the perfectly suited student for an accelerated program like SUNY Purchase's. Caitlin has experience with playwriting through the Hicksville Thespians 'One Act Plays,' and her participation in the creative writing and acting electives that are offered to high school students.

After receiving her degree in screenwriting and playwriting from SUNY Purchase, Caitlin plans to pursue playwriting as a career. Caitlin has felt drawn to theater and has always enjoyed the creative outlet that playwriting gives her. She has also noticed the change in interest of theater over the years. "I've been to a lot of Broadway plays and musicals recently, with most of them, like Dear Evan Hansen, being geared towards teenagers. However, instead of seeing a lot of teens at the shows, I've seen older people there, which is a bit upsetting due to the fact that this musical is trying to draw in a specific age audience, and is not able to do so." Caitlin continued on to say, "I want to specifically go into playwriting because of situations like this. I want to bring theater back to the youth because theater is just so amazing and it's starting to die out with the younger generations."

Caitlin's commitment to the arts and theater shows the passion she has for her career path in the future. "Playwriting can be so diverse and can tell unique stories that other would not be able to see otherwise," Caitlin said. The hard work that she puts into all of her writing shows just how much of an impact Caitlin will make in the future, and her acceptance into SUNY Purchase's prestigious program shows just a bit of the talent that she has in the screenwriting and playwriting field.



Pictured above: Caitlin Roberti.

## FILLING STOMACHS WITH EMPTY BOWLS

Written by: Alina Naqvi

On February 7th, Hicksville High School hosted an Empty Bowls fundraiser sponsored by the National Art Honor Society. The event raised \$750 dollars. In today's society, world hunger continues to prevail, and people are trying to change it. When you watch television, you see so many people in interviews, pageants, and competitions talking about wanting to end world hunger. However, just wanting to end world hunger won't achieve anything unless people take action in communities around the world. This is where Empty Bowls, an event that takes place in Hicksville High School annually, comes in to make a difference.

One way members of a community can

become involved in the effort is with projects such as Empty Bowls, an international effort that works to fight hunger. Empty Bowls is an event that involves the work of artists and donations from the community to help raise awareness and help those in need. Communities run Empty Bowl events independently and many people throughout the school community were involved in the effort to make this event possible. Even though the events are independent, they have a common goal achieved by similar means in that many artists get involved and make unique bowls in the hope that someone will bring a bowl home and be reminded of the "empty bowls" around the world.

Members of the National Art Honor Society

hand-decorated many bowls and plates for the event and the Hicksville Middle School and Hicksville High School jazz bands performed. Guests were asked to give a five dollar donation in exchange for a decorated bowl and soup. Some bowls were ten or fifteen dollars. All of the money collected went towards local food pantries. By bringing home one of the decorated bowls, people are reminded that many others in communities go home to an empty bowl and can't afford to feed their families. We need to take action for a better world.

## "GUYS AND DOLLS" HITS THE JACKPOT

Written by: Isabella Weber

This year, Hicksville High School's musical was the Broadway classic *Guys and Dolls*. With catchy music and exciting dance numbers, this was a musical that had something for everyone.

*Guys and Dolls* takes place in 1920's New York City. The play is about Crapshooters who try and run a crap game (a type of dice game) while trying to keep the game out of sights of the police. Nathan Detroit, played by Viren Fernandes, tries to find a place for everyone to play the game. He finds a place called the Biltmore Garage to run the game, but he hits a stump when

the owner wants \$1000 for them to use the place. He later finds out that Sky Masterson, played by Jack Immanuel, a gambler who will bet on the likes of anything, is in town. So, Nathan arranges a bet with Sky for \$1000 that Sky can't take Shara Brown, the leader of the Save a Soul Mission (played by Krisia Romano) to a trip to Havana that he's taking. This begins the quest to make the "doll" fall for a "guy" like Sky Masterson. There's heartbreak, love, singing, praying, dancing, and a lot of laughs.

This is the 15th play that director and English teacher Ms. Civello has directed. Civello's experience directing the musicals, as she says, is "thrilling and stressful all at the same time". Civello is one of the main people who contributes to the decision on what the play will be. The reason she chose this play was, "I wanted to go back to some-

thing more traditional with the experience we gained from *The Little Mermaid*. I think vocally the talent was there and acting wise the talent was there and strong."

Obviously with a production this big, Ms. Civello can't be the only one working on this. Civello also has help in the form of two Assistant Directors: seniors Barbara Watterson and Skylar Jennings. Watterson is the current president of the Thespians, and has been doing the musicals and the shows at the high school for four years, with this being her first time as an assistant director. Jennings has assisted on other shows, including *The Baritones* from the 2018 One Acts, and *Radium Girls*. Both Watterson and Jennings think the show came together really well, with Watterson saying, "...each person involved put in all their effort to make this show the best it can be."

*Guys and Dolls* ran from March 8th through the 10th. Congratulations to all of the hard working students, crew, and teachers for their dedication and commitment to putting on a wonderful show.



Pictured above: The cast of *Guys and Dolls*.

# ARE GRADES 'POINT'LESS?

Editorial written by: Roxy Dias

Grades are an essential part of our education, and many students instill a high importance in them. Students who get good grades and study heavily for tests are often commended for their work. But, perhaps we care a little too much about our grades.

After all, the purpose of school isn't simply to get good grades, but to learn. The difference is that, usually when you learn, you have to have a thorough understanding of the topic. However, most of us tend to only "learn" for our test, and then forget it within the next week. But what's the point of that? The value of a grade diminishes even further as many of us will cheat on the test whenever we have the ability to.

However, although we know getting a quality education is crucial to our future and gives us endless opportunities in life, we may wonder why we need to know how to do a circle proof ten years from now. School should be about discovering your passion as you explore different topics in detail and get the opportunity to learn which direction you'd like to pursue your life in. It's about learning more than english, math, science, and social studies, as it can contribute to your growth as a person. After all, in taking rigorous courses and dedicating yourself to schoolwork, you discover the importance of time management, hard work, responsibility, focus, and commitment, which you will value later in life.

So perhaps, if we truly want to be intelligent, and get the most out of our education, we should shift our focus from the grade. Maybe we should concentrate on actually learning and understanding the content, as it will stick with us for a longer time. Instead, teachers can measure our skill upon the

quality of our work, how well we can understand the content and explain it to others, and our ability to perform what we learned in real life. In doing that, we will not only become far better at the topic, and perhaps even perform better on tests as a bonus, but become better learners in general, and there will be no limits to what we can achieve with that topic. If our intention is to learn, rather than get a good grade, we have no limit to how much we can successfully learn. We can constantly question and expand our thinking, and learn far more in the topic than the student who only studied what he/she knew was going to be on the test.

Think about people like Bill Gates, Elon Musk or Stephen Hawking: they didn't decide to aim to just achieve a 100, they decided to go farther than the limits of people before them and achieve everything they possibly could. In doing that, they redefined what is possible. That's how they became successful, as they didn't let normal standards stifle their ability to do more. That's what grades are doing, though, they choke our desire to thirst for more knowledge. The pressure of keeping up with the rest to achieve the "perfect" score is hurting our actual ability to truly learn. All we care about is meeting the standards, so we can get into a good college, and so our future is in good hands, causing us to leave behind one of the most important qualities

of successful people.

When Michael Jordan was asked about what makes him great, he said, "I demand more from myself than anybody else could humanly expect... I'm competing with what I'm capable of."

That's what separates the good from the great in any field of success. Successful people break the binds of the ropes that limit their potential. So maybe we should stop focusing so much on the grade, without forgetting about it completely, (as colleges obviously have value in the number) and begin to find ourselves truly engrossed in a topic that we are passionate about.

Subject	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Studies, etc.	mo.	mo.	mo.	mo.	mo.	mo.	mo.	mo.	mo.	mo.
Reading	B	B	B+	B+	B+	B+	B+	B+	B+	B+
Spelling	C	B-	B+	B	97	A-	B+	A-	B+	
Writing	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	
Drawing	.									
Arithmetic	C+	B-	B+	C	C+	C	C+	B	B	
Grammar	B	B	B	C	C+	B-	C+	B	B	
Geography	-	-	B	B+	B+	B-	B	B	B	
History	.									
Physiology	-	-								

# MAKING HISTORY FOR THE WRONG REASONS

Written by: Wilson Velasquez

Americans all around the country have now experienced United States history: the longest government shutdown. President Donald Trump kept the government shutdown for an astonishing 35 days. This meant that government workers were not paid, affecting the lives of families around the country. But the damage didn't stop there, as the economy was taken for a ride as well, costing the United States billions of dollars.

One of the root causes of this shutdown stems from the early campaigning by President Trump, where he started to make his promises to

“build a wall.” The border is approximately 1,954 miles long, and is estimated to cost \$25 billion. President Trump has mentioned at various moments that he needed the wall to keep undocumented immigrants from crossing into the U.S illegally, thereby reducing human and drug trafficking. Trump had refused to consider any appropriations that would not include that demand. So, as soon as midnight struck on December 22, 2018, the government shutdown began.

Many departments were impacted by the government shutdown. In fact, about 800,000 workers in those departments were negatively affected by the shutdown because it caused them to miss their paychecks. About 380,000 workers had

been furloughed and about 420,000 workers had to work without pay. Furthermore, these workers hadn't been able to strike because of the Taft-Hartley act of 1947, stating that it is actually illegal for federal employees to strike, and unions had refrained them from doing so.

The hope was that workers would be



Image: thehill.com

reimbursed after the shutdown. This still didn't change the fact that they still struggled for weeks.

An example of the repercussions of the shutdown could be felt in the FDA. The FDA commissioner, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, mentioned that he was trying to pinpoint the most important inspections to make sure that employees wouldn't need to suffer too much. Foreign food inspections had continued almost as normal because they had been considered more important. Yet the FDA had virtually stopped inspecting domestic food production facilities, potentially creating new threats of disease and sickness.

On January 25, President Trump an-

nounced that he would back a short term funding bill to reopen the government. It did not include funds to construct a border wall. Trump has said that if he can't negotiate with the Democrats, then he would need to declare a national emergency, as he stated that no border security plan can work without a physical barrier.

And that's exactly what Trump did. On February 15, Trump declared a national emergency. Trump declared the national emergency in order to have access to billions of dollars that Congress had refused to give him to build the

wall. Trump asserted that the flow of drugs, criminals, and illegal immigrants from Mexico constituted a threat to national security that justified the unilateral action. The emergency declaration would divert \$3.6 billion from military construction projects to the wall. Trump would also gather \$2.5 billion from the Counter-narcotics programs and \$600 million from a Treasury Department asset forfeiture fund. With the \$1.375 billion authorized for fencing in the spending package from February 14th, Trump would have about \$8 billion in all for his wall.

This government shutdown came with dire outcomes, not all of which have truly manifested themselves just yet.

# THE CHINESE INTERNMENT PROBLEM

Written by: Asghar Shah

International Holocaust Remembrance Day, held on January 27th, reminded the world of the dangers surrounding group-think, marginalization, and systematic oppression. Through this lens, the plight of the Uighur ethnic minority and others in the Xinjiang province is especially troubling. For reference, most of China is ethnic Han, Xinjiang is primarily composed of Uighurs. Uighurs are a Turkic ethnicity and are predominantly Sufi Muslims.

Political suppression and repression are not new phenomena in China. The Cultural Revolution of Mao Zedong outwardly resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Mongolic and Hui minorities, their houses of worship and holy books burned. In 1989, the Tiananmen Square Massacre resulted in the deaths of thousands of reform protestors in China. Now, however, efforts to repress, marginalize, and forcibly assimilate Uighurs

are discreet. One of the first steps in a genocidal campaign is dehumanization. Cui Tiankai, China's ambassador to the US, told Reuters that China wants to turn Uighurs into "normal persons". This mentality to "kill the Uighur", in terms of identity, heritage, and beliefs is dangerous and has the potential to snowball out of control. It is important to note that systematic oppression is affecting those who are not homogeneously Han; as such, Christian minorities and others are also facing systematic repression.

The September 2018 Human Rights Watch (HRW) Report entitled, "Eradicating Ideological Viruses" China's Campaign of Repression Against Xinjiang's Muslims" describes the sophisticated surveillance efforts, lack of due process, and political indoctrination occurring at the hands of the Chinese government. The report also underscores efforts by the Chinese government to justify

Uighur detainment through China's "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism". While citizens must reconcile enhanced national security with the loss of civil liberties, the objective security interest is ambiguous in the case of the Uyghur oppression.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo condemned the 're-education camps' in China. However, the world depends on the The Commander-in-Chief of the free world to take action. A New York Times piece by The Editorial Board highlighted the need for President Donald Trump to meaningfully address acts of oppression directed to the Uighur people. They argue that unlike President George H.W. Bush who had the political acumen to challenge China following the Tiananmen Square Massacre, President Trump has no experience in this delicate space.



Image: A cnn.com satellite image of Dabancheng, one of several internment camps in China.

# THE ULTIMATE SMASH PARTY

Written by: Eric Wang

Nintendo is one of the most influential game companies in the world. It completely changed the modern gaming landscape with its release of the Mario, Zelda, and Pokemon franchises. So, when Nintendo made a game in which these iconic characters, among others, are forced to fight to the death, there was no doubt that it would be massively popular; *Super Smash Bros.*

The newest entry, titled *Smash Brothers Ultimate*, is the fifth installment in the Smash Bros franchise and according to Nintendo, it is already the third best selling Nintendo Switch game as of February 2019, just two months after its release. The Smash

Bros. franchise's appeal is very obvious. It's one of a kind. There is no other game in which Pikachu can blow Solid Snake up with a banana gun while Pac-Man is trying to kill them with fire hydrants at the Mushroom Kingdom.

There are over 70 characters, 100 maps,

800 music tracks, and 1200 spirits, all of which are from renowned video games. It's a unique, multiplayer game that perfectly reflects what the Nintendo Switch has to offer. If you take gaming more seriously, or like a challenge, this game also



has a very high-skill ceiling. After all, Smash is not only one of the most popular fighting games, it is also played at a high level by many professionals involved in e-sports. A new element was added into the Smash series with this game, and it's the introduction of the "Spirits" mode. It's essentially a campaign mode inside of a

multiplayer fighting game. The adventure mode revolves around the cast freeing each other from the control of Galeem, then teaming up with the spirits, who are also video game characters, to defeat him. The battles in this mode are unique in that they force you to face different challenges and conditions for each fight.

If there is one thing to criticize this game for, it's the online mode. For me, Smash is all about competing with your friends and having a good time while doing so. However, most people don't live very close to those they play games with, and so we resort to playing online. The game is a fast-paced, reaction-based fighting game that gets undercut when the lag just take you out of the experience. Despite the online mode not being up to par with the rest of the game, Super Smash Bros Ultimate is still extremely popular and it's no surprise why. It's a great, nostalgic fighting game that honors some of biggest achievements in gaming history.

## INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE REVIEW

Written by: Jovani Ledesma

The Spider-Verse, one of the greatest comic book stories of all time, is now one of the greatest Spider-Man movies of all time: *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*. Miles Morales (voiced by Shameik Moore) is a Brooklyn teen just trying to get through the advanced school he's been placed in. But Miles gets bitten by a genetically modified spider, meets a legendary hero (as well as several versions from alternate realities), and learns how to be one himself. If this sounds like a straightforward superhero origin movie, don't worry, because the screenplay by Phil Lord and Rodney Rothman is so playful, the voice cast so energetic, and the animation so infinitely inventive, that there's no time for anything to get stale.

The tried and true elements of the Spi-

der-Man mythology are both subverted and celebrated throughout the film. The movie plays with and promptly dismisses the old puberty metaphor in sharp fashion, and his first onset of Spidey sense becomes not about impending danger but rather about teenage anxiety and insecurity. Despite the movie's central premise of there being a multiverse out there, each containing a unique version of Spider-Man, the movie still thankfully steers clear of tired "chosen one" cliches. Central to this film is Shameik Moore's Miles Morales. There's nothing cynical or moody about Miles Morales or in Moore's performance, and the result might be the most immediately likeable screen portrayal of any Spider-Man alter-

Bouncing from one amazing action se-

quence to the next, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* could easily have become a migraine-inducing chore. It is anything but. It took three directors and countless animators to thread that needle, but the movie never pulls the same trick twice, and even its most visually intense moments are in service of the story, often broken up with spectacularly placed gags. By the time Miles truly embraces his role as Spider-Man, you've already seen a lot, and that's where the movie chooses to deliver its most graceful, kinetic sequence.

The movie somehow manages to feel understated and yet it's one of the best big screen moments in Spider-Man history. And it belongs to Miles Morales.



# WHAT CAME FIRST, KYLIE OR THE EGG?

Written by: Jamie Brueckel

For months, Kylie Jenner held the world record for the most liked post on Instagram. In 2018, the reveal of her baby girl, Stormi, had over 18 million likes on the popular app. However, on January 15 2019, this title was taken from the popular blogger and instead given to... a picture of an egg. The simple picture, belonging to the account @world\_record\_egg on Instagram, exploded after a few weeks on the platform. The egg had racked up over 50 million likes, well surpassing the mere 18 million likes that Kylie Jenner earned. Kylie Jenner wound up responding to the viral photo knocking her off her throne with a video of her cracking an egg on a sidewalk captioned, "take that little egg." The egg wound up cooking on the sizzling

Los Angeles concrete.

As the account has gained more and more support, some followers have taken on the saying, "Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery." Dozens of parody accounts have sprung up all over Instagram. A pencil, an egg yolk, and even a black egg have been created in an attempt to copy the egg account's fame. These parodies have sprouted separate stances on the matter. Some find the accounts amusing and offer their support. Others say that the trend has gotten out of hand and has lost its once amusing charm.

Recently, the egg has begun to stir up some new attention. In several new posts

on the account, fans noticed cracks beginning to form in the egg's shell. For weeks, fans were wondering why the cracks were forming. On February 3rd, Super Bowl Sunday, the egg account finally posted a video explaining the cracks. In an animated short, the small egg came to life to tell viewers that they had begun to crack under the pressure of social media. The egg encouraged anyone feeling the same way to speak up and get help, telling fans, "We've got this." Fans were glad to see that the account was using the newfound fame for good and many patiently await the egg's next move.

# THE DC UNIVERSE FINDS ITS HERO

Written by: Matt LaBarca and Rohan Manjrekar

DC's *Aquaman*, starring Jason Momoa, is a thrilling, action-filled movie. *Aquaman* is a very good reminder that while *Finding Nemo* and *The Little Mermaid* depict one happy, carefree vision of the Cradle of the Deep, the ocean is not all fun and games.

The movie portrays the city of Atlantis as an underwater kingdom ruled by King Orm, a tyrant with no regard for human safety. Orm had a massive army at his disposal and he planned to conquer the remaining people of the ocean and then the surface world. Standing in his way was Aquaman, his half-human-atlantean brother. Aquaman retrieves the legendary Trident of Atlantis and embraces his destiny as protector of the ocean by defeating Orm and his army and consequently stopping a deadly war.

The scenes where Aquaman fights off Orm's army and Orm himself are the best fight scenes in the movie. Their fights were the most intense and filled with spectacle. Aquaman consisted of a good balance be-

tween action and emotion. The romance shown throughout the movie between Aquaman and Mera is believable and builds a needed emotional grounding to the theatrics. The balance between the two halves is something lacking from other DC Universe films, notably *Justice League*.

Throughout the movie, spoilers and sneak peeks of possible future DC movies were given to us, but some were hard to recognize. There were many 'Easter eggs' placed throughout the movie including the post credit scene, where there is a newspaper that has Coast City, Green Lantern's hometown, written on it. In the scene there is a billboard that says "Welcome to Coast City, Home of Ferris Airlines," but, the billboard has burn marks on it. Could this be foreshadowing a new Green Lantern and Aquaman movie, where they work together to defeat Black Manta?

An additional post-credit scene featured

an enemy named Black Manta that tried to kill Aquaman twice in the movie in some insane fights but was always unsuccessful. He has a great deal of rage and hatred for Aquaman because he killed his father, his grandfather, and his crew. In the scene Black Manta was in his bed injured, and another man (the news reporter who always knew the reasons behind all the weird occurrences by the water), is in the room with him as he is working on a new, powerful suit for the end of Aquaman. This seems like a sequel is very likely to happen.

Overall, *Aquaman* was a very good film that could appeal to a variety of people. Some enjoyed the movie because of the entertaining action scenes, the ongoing love stories and the foreshadowing.

## SOPHOMORE GUILLERMO REYES REACHES STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP

Written by: Andrew Scarpaci

Hicksville High School sophomore, Guillermo Reyes, a member of the Varsity Wrestling Team, is the first Hicksville student to qualify for the individual state wrestling championship since 2001. The state championship, which was held in Albany on February 22nd and 23rd, featured some of the most accomplished wrestlers from across the state.

Guillermo went 34-4 overall in match play this year and finished 2nd in the county tournament in his weight class. He received one of a few second place wild cards.

This was Guillermo's third year on the team after he was called up to varsity in 8th grade. He has been training since the summer by going to offseason camps with team coaches Mr. Russell Garcia and Mr. Rich Carroll. Mr. Garcia, is one of the coaches of the wrestling team who has

helped coach the sport back to prominence in Hicksville for the first time in nearly two decades. Reyes has also taken on the role as a team leader in spite of his younger age. His teammates look to him as a role model because he has tried to teach them "not to slack off or slack on reps and to keep pushing themselves each day."

Reyes stated his expectations and motivations for next year are to "aim higher, place sixth in states, to have more teammates make counties and to stay hungry throughout the whole season." In asking Reyes what other types of activities he has done throughout his life to help his recent success, he said that he used to box, noting that it made him "mentally tough and to not be scared of any opponent."

Mr. Garcia is extremely proud of Guillermo and the team overall, and can't be more excited to go into next season. "It is just the

beginning; it's all about building up and getting back - it has been our most successful year as a team since 2001." Garcia stated that "we showed up by coming close each and every match," which is a testament to the work ethic he has tried to instill in his team since before the start of the season.

Guillermo Reyes has a big future ahead of him as he looks to lead the Hicksville High School Varsity Wrestling team to a level of achievement not seen in many years. His motivation and talent are most certainly there, and it looks to be only good things ahead for this team, the coaches, and Guillermo himself.



Image courtesy: Mr. Garcia

Pictured above: Members of Hicksville Varsity Wrestling team

# THE SKETCHPAD

## A LOT COULD HAPPEN IN A DAY

A Lot Could Happen In A Day

By: Taylor Murphy



March 2019

# THE ENVIRONMENT + CRIPTIDS

Panel 1 (Top Left): A Bigfoot-like creature stands in a deforested area. Text: "Because of Deforestation, Big Foot Can't Hide.."

Panel 2 (Top Right): A Mothman-like creature flies over a polluted landscape. Text: "Because of Air Pollution, Mothman Can Barely Fly.."

Panel 3 (Middle Left): A Unicorn-like creature looks distressed. Text: "Lion Poaching is the Reason the Unicorn Population is Crazy!!"

Panel 4 (Middle Right): A Yeti-like creature sits on a melting ice floe. Text: "Global Warming is Melting Away the Yeti's Home.."

Panel 5 (Bottom Left): A Loch Ness Monster-like creature swims in a polluted lake. Text: "Water Pollution Made Nessy Go Belly UP.."

Panel 6 (Bottom Right): Two alien-like creatures in a UFO fly away from a building labeled "AREA 51". Text: "See ya! All These Problems Caused The Aliens to Leave..."

Bottom Panel (Message): "The Environmental Problems are affecting everyone.. Even those we may not believe in..  
Protect the Environment

The Environment and the Cryptids

By: Sage Boiko and Isabella Weber



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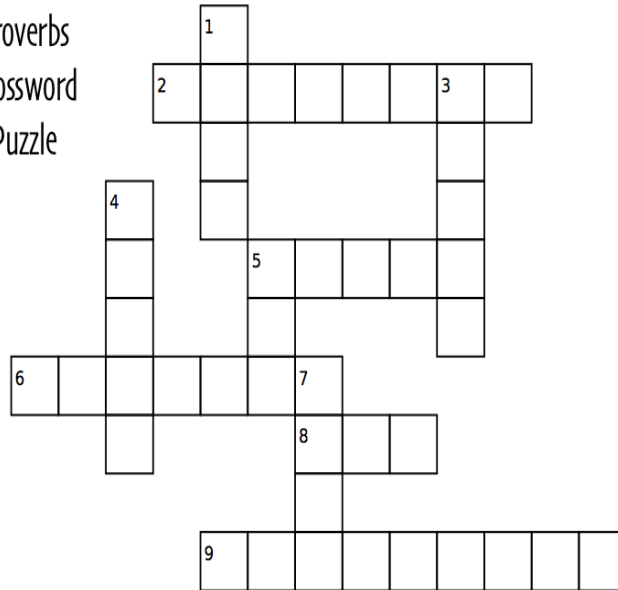
Isabella Weber

## Advisor:

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IF INTERESTED IN  
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WORK OR PHOTOGRAPHY,  
PLEASE SEE MR. COHN  
FOR DETAILS!

## Proverbs Crossword Puzzle



### Down:

1. He that runs fast, will not run \_\_\_\_
3. The \_\_\_\_ is told in jokes
4. Only a fool tests the \_\_\_\_ of a river with both feet
5. He who is caught in a \_\_\_\_ is not believed when he tells the truth
7. The opportunity did not knock until I built the \_\_\_\_

### Across:

2. If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a \_\_\_\_
5. Last, but not \_\_\_\_
6. Don't count your chickens before they have \_\_\_\_
8. The hunter that chases after 2 rabbits won't catch \_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_ killed the cat, but satisfaction brought it back

### Answer Key

1. long
2. mosquito
3. truth
4. depth
5. lie (down)
6. hatched
7. door
8. one
9. curiosity

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