

LEGALLY BLONDE- WHAT A SET!

Jill Brueckner
Contributor

The curtain goes up this year with a spectacular production: Legally Blonde! This production is famously known for its chanting sorority girls, the “Delta Nu’s”, amazing dance numbers, and romantic comedy. The main “Delta Nu’s” in our production are; Tori Balena (Junior) as Serena, Grace Sharpe (Senior) as Margot, and Brittany Gresham (Senior) as Pilar. The lead, Elle Woods, will be played by your humble reporter, Jillian Brueckner.

The storyline of this musical is about a young woman, Elle Woods, and her journey from the sunny shores of California to Harvard University. She makes the trip to win back her true love Warner, played by Robert Knauf (Junior), and along the way she discovers her own potential and a love of law. Other leads in the show are played by Jacob Moore, Jules Cavallo, Gianna Storrow, Gabe Carvalho, Caitlyn McCormick, and many more.

The actors, with the guidance of Mrs. Allaire,

Mr. Robertson, and Mr. Diaz, have the capability of being something extraordinary.

This group of students is one of the most hardworking groups of JMHS, between the after school and weekend rehearsals and the personal time set aside to learn vocal numbers and scripted lines. There is so much effort and dedication required from every member of the cast and crew to be able to create a pre-

pared, stunning performance within a specified time-frame and strict schedule. The cast becomes a loving, close, dysfunctional family, making every sore muscle and late night worthwhile.

To add to the excitement of the show is the production of some of the most elaborate sets to date. Jamie Allaire as set designer, assisted by our own builder, Mr. Nagle and assistant director Cory Bott,

accompanied by her fantastic stage crew, is ready to premier a stage set that will rival those on Broadway. Her crew has been working around the clock to put together set pieces as high as 3 stories, in Elle’s favorite shades of pink! Jamie and her crews have definitely taken stagecraft to a whole new level.

This year, the curtain will close one last time on some of our fellow senior family mem-

bers. They will get to leave us knowing that their last performance was a great one and that they will always be welcome in the musical family. This show is “WHAT YOU WANT” and more; you can have the experience of seeing our talented seniors and hard-working cast’s performance of Legally Blonde on the beloved JMHS stage from March 12th through March 15th.



Front left to right: Tori Balena, Grace Sharpe, Brittany Gresham, Rachel Riccarduli, Jillian Brueckner, Pearl Polito, Nicoletta Tildsley, Emily Jacoby. Back left to right: Caitlyn McCormick, Jennifer O’Leary, Julissa Gautier, Lauren Guzman, Julie DiMemmo, Grace Burrows, Marley Anders, Allison Boenig

IS THE PEN MIGHTIER THAN THE KEYBOARD?

Larissa Scanlon
Staff Writer

The age old question used to be: Is the pen mightier than the sword? In the world we live in today, it is; Is the pen mightier than the keyboard? Recent changes to the elementary school curriculum prove that the keyboard wins. Elementary schools are making the move to cut cursive writing out of lessons since it is considered an outdated way of communication. Now considered an “art,” cursive writing is becoming more and more elusive. This is evident in the SATs, when students panic while trying to scribble out their SAT verification statements. Personally, I too wondered the benefit of teaching cursive writing since I haven’t had to write in cursive since the fourth grade.

While talking to Mrs. Donner, a literacy teacher at Elms Elementary School, I received a first-hand opinion on the banishment of a lost art: “I do agree, partially agree, with stopping the teaching of cursive. It takes an extremely long time to teach it and we can’t afford sufficient practice time to master it. I feel it is important to be able to sign one’s name and to read cursive. However, with the many other requirements during a school day, cursive just seems less important than it was in the past. It seems to be more of an art than of anything else in these modern school days.” Her opinion provided some food for thought. Does cursive writing take that much time to teach? Or is it the reinforcement that is too much trou-

ble? When asked if she saw any long term effects of the disappearance of cursive, Mrs. Donner said that she could foresee nothing that Google wouldn’t be able to fix. But

somewhat shocked by their responses regarding cursive writing. When speaking with the AP Language and Composition teacher here at JMHS, Ms. Regan, she told me that

“...with the many other requirements during a school day, cursive just seems less important than it was in the past.”

what about legal documents that need to be signed? What about historical documents that need to be read? The answer is controversial.

When I spoke to some high school teachers, I was

she didn’t so much care how her students wrote their essays as long as they were legible. “Why do we get so crazy about this?” stated Ms. Regan. She feels as though we haven’t lost a style but rather gained

a new way of communication: typing. Ms. Regan feels that more emphasis should be put on the neatness and legibility of our writing rather than which way we choose to write. English teacher Mrs. Dauenhauer also stated that cursive is a thing of the past and shouldn’t be stressed over; teaching use of computers seem more relevant in this day and age. Personally, I believe that cursive still holds importance in the world we live in and I believe it should be taught since it is a skill that can improve fine motor skills and cognition skills. Hopefully it’s importance is acknowledged before it is too late. Yet I will still ask the question: where does your allegiance stand?

ROTC: LIFE CHANGER

Emily Schlechtweg
Contributor

People constantly ask teenagers what was the best choice they have made in their high school career. For me, the answer comes to my head immediately- joining the AFJROTC program. Jackson Memorial has one of the best JROTC programs in the state of New Jersey: the NJ-782nd AFJROTC, led by Major Macagnone and Senior Master Sergeant Latimer, both Air Force Retired. The program teaches many important skills, such as teamwork, leadership, decision making and time management. “JROTC builds a relationship between Jackson Memorial and Jackson Liberty, teaching them to coexist and work with one another,” says Shawn Wan, a senior from Jackson Liberty High School. The unit consists of students from both high schools, although the unit is based in JMHS, and all cadets receive equal opportunities for leadership, community service, rank and responsibility. The program has different departments, which are somewhat like mini clubs within the program, and a cadet can be involved as many as they wish. The unit is highly

involved within the community, volunteering at the Jackson Food Pantry, running a Toys for Tots toy drive, forming a Relay for Life team and countless other events. There are also different teams For example, there is a Drill Team (Armed and Unarmed), Color Guard, Honor Guard, Armed Dual Exhibition and an Air Rifle Marksmanship Team. Most importantly, JROTC builds friendships that will last forever. Many cadets see JROTC as their second family, including myself and Natalie Hnath, a senior at JMHS. “The program has been life changing for me. The program also provides you with a family that will never leave your side,” she said. Like most things, JROTC has its challengers. Although some people argue that the program teaches violence and war, there is no requirement for members to join the military after high school. Also, the program encourages three core values: Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence in All We Do. In the eyes of many, AFJROTC changes lives, not just the students in the program, but those in the community.

JMHS congratulates Yuanning (Alyssa) Cai for scoring 2370 on the SAT. Alyssa earned a perfect 1600 on the English section and a 770 on the Math section. Bravo on your hard work and remarkable accomplishment, Alyssa!

LEED AND SEED: NEW JMHS PROGRAM

Jane Kennedy
Contributor

Lead and Seed is a new program at Jackson Memorial High School that is aimed to reduce the use of drugs and alcohol among students. This year the program is focused on the use of marijuana. This coalition is a group of students as well as teachers and administrators that is going to provide vital information about the dangers of marijuana through assemblies and school wide programs. This is the first year that the program has been introduced at Jackson Memorial High School; however, it has had

a positive impact in other districts. Lead and Seed is a national program that is run under the auspices of White House Office of Drug Control Policy and follows the guidelines set by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA). All Participants in the Lead and Seed program had to be selected and then go through a two-day training course, where they learned skills and information to make the mission successful. The Lead and Seed program aims to educate youth by their peers. This method

has been proven effective because hearing information from a student who is the same age gives the facts and statistics more power. Another alternative set forth by the Lead and Seed program is to think of the positives. Instead of monotonously retelling the same worn out stories about the effects of drugs and alcohol, this program focuses on why students chose not to use marijuana. The Lead and Seed program wants students to make the decision to stay away from drugs and alcohol, and instead to focus on sports or college or family.

BAND “DORKS” RESPOND

Kim MacDonald
Contributor

On January 1, 2015, CBS Sports Radio host Jim Rome was hit hard after making an offensive tweet towards marching bands during the all-day college football bowl coverage on New Year’s Day. After Rome tweeted “Is there anyone not in a marching band who thinks those dorks running around with their instruments are cool?” on the social media site Twitter, he received plenty of responses disagreeing with his views towards the “dorks” on the field.

These thousands of tweets to Rome in response to his tweet must have made Rome realize his mistake, and he soon deleted his tweet. However, even though the tweet was no longer visible on his profile, many people still continued to tweet screenshots and pictures of his tweet along with the new hashtag “#MarchOnRome”, in defense of marching band members everywhere. Less than twenty four hours after Rome’s tweet was initially published, and later deleted,

Rome tweeted again apologizing to all those offended: “Band nation – I hear you. I was out of line. I apologize. I do not condone bullying of any kind and that was not my intent”. Even after his apology, Jim Rome continues to receive many tweets, emails, and responses in many forms expressing their opinions towards his tweets and how they really feel about those “dorks” marching around on the field.

JAG CHAT WITH THE PRINCIPAL

Sophia Samuel
Editor-in-chief

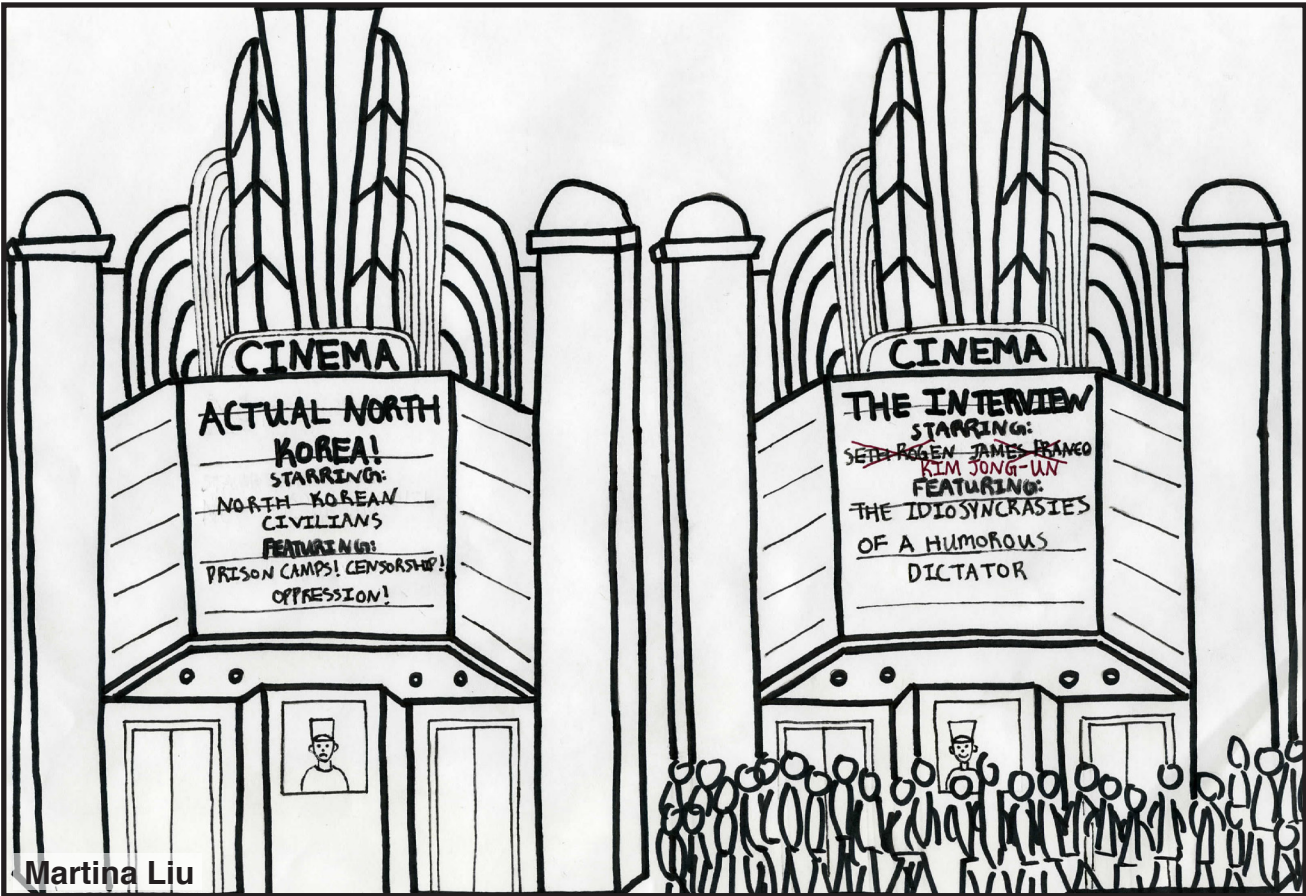
As JMHS students entered into the second half of the school year, I sat down with Principal Mr. DiEugenio to wrap up the first semester. We began our conversation with the PSATs and why sophomores and juniors were required to take them: “We have something called the New Jersey Achieve Matrix where our school is graded on different criteria. In order for kids to be college and career ready, the state feels that there needs to be a minimum number of students taking the PSAT, which is 50 percent. We’ve only had around 30 percent taking the PSATs in the past, now 65 percent have taken it.” When asked if the PSATs were in any way related to the new, more challenging PARCC test, Mr. DiEugenio explained that “it does have to do with the PARCC test in the sense

that it relates to the overall model of having kids ready to go to college, but the PARCC is a completely separate test.” As a parent as well as principal, he feels that testing is “a double-edged sword. I think we need our kids to become better thinkers and processors and I don’t think that the NJASK and HSPA were helping kids do that. I think that there is going to be more authentic testing that will result from this. I don’t, however, like the amount of time it will take out of class.” In recent years, JMHS has enjoyed improvement in overall scores and enrollment in challenging courses. Mr. DiEugenio believes that extending the curriculum to middle schoolers has resulted in this improvement: “I think we have pushed the curriculum down to the middle school so that students

there can take more rigorous courses. And when they come to JMHS, they can be ready to enroll in the STEM program and AP courses. But we shouldn’t get caught up in year-to-year numbers; for example, our SAT average dropped 5 points this year. We can’t always compare students from different years, as some are stronger in certain areas than others.” In addition to academic improvements in the school, there are advancements in security and technology in the works. Mr. DiEugenio stated: “Swipe cards [which will replace keys] will be in by March 1 and I now have 80 security cameras that are inside and outside the school. The air conditioning project is a good calendar year away because it’s a big \$11 million project. It will most likely start in April over spring break and contin-

ue through the summer.” More generally, the atmosphere in JMHS seems to be more relaxed and less violent in recent years. Mr. DiEugenio explained that “you guys are the first real generation to have the HIB policy [Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying] that punishes students who harass and bother other students. It has really made people think twice about being mean to each other. Also, my leadership style is hands-off; I try to let you guys have the best high school experience you can and I don’t try to micromanage it. I think that style, in combination with the HIB policy, has contributed to a calmer atmosphere.” “We’ve had a great fall with the 50th anniversary and the football team winning the state championship. There was such a positive vibe and school spirit was at an all-time

high. I think students just love being Jaguars and love coming here.” Mr. DiEugenio is certainly addressing the issues that concern students today, but he does have a vision for JMHS in 10 years: “I definitely want to crack into the top tier of high schools in New Jersey. Realistically, we can be in the top 50, we are close to the top 100 right now. I want to continue to build on the academics, I want JMHS to offer more programs. I want to offer specialized slots for students to prepare them for their careers in the culinary arts, humanities, business, engineering, health sciences, etc. I have the vision and it’s just a matter of everything coming together.”



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“THE INTERVIEW” LEFT ME SPEECHLESS

Nick Papandrea
Contributor

Sometimes life is about taking risks. That is exactly what Sony Pictures did when it created “The Interview.” This movie was supposed to come out on Christmas Day; however, Sony Pictures was viciously hacked by unknown people just a few days before Christmas, allegedly because there was a controversy over the morality of the movie. Some theaters pulled the movie, resulting in many disappointed fans. But Americans and

other people from different nations across the globe received an early gift on Christmas Eve when the movie was released for rent or sale on websites like YouTube and Amazon. This action-comedy stars James Franco as Dave Skylark and Seth Rogen as Aaron Rapoport. It seems as if these two actors enjoy working together as we see them yet again co-starring in another movie. In the movie, Dave Skylark hosts his own TV

show called “Skylark Tonight” where he interviews celebrities and investigates gossip and rumors, and Aaron Rapoport is Dave’s producer. Aaron has had enough of doing pointless stories and wants to establish his journalism career. Dave hunts hard news to satisfy his best friend’s wish, which leads him to one of the most dangerous people on the planet: North Korean dictator, Kim Jong-Un. Dave lands an interview with the manipulative

dictator when he finds out that Kim is a huge fan of his show. The CIA finds out about Dave’s interview with Kim wants to take advantage of it; it asks Aaron and Dave to assassinate him. The comedy lies in the ultimate question: Are these men qualified for performing such a task? If you were a fan of movies like “This is the End” or “Neighbors,” then this is definitely a movie you should go see. “The Interview” shares the same

directors and writers and may be even funnier than those movies. Also, be on the look out for other celebrities who are in the movie. The sales for this movie have not been affected by the movie’s only being available online and not in theaters. The film has already made over five million dollars and that number continues to rise. This is a must see movie.

EQUALITY IN SPORTS

Is there a double standard?
Haley Meyers
Contributor

For decades, women have been fighting for equality in our world; socially, economically, and politically. The problem with this fight for womens’ rights is thatonce women receive the same equality as men, the women do not want to face the same consequences as the men face. Recently, our country has had many controversies with professional athletes and equal consequences between the male and female

players. In the last year, three major athletes have been charged with accounts of domestic violence: Ray Rice, Adrian Peterson, and Hope Solo. Ray Rice, the running back for the Ravens, was charged with assault of his girlfriend at the time (now wife) for hitting her in an elevator. Everyone sees this man as horrible and violent but remember little that his girlfriend hit him first and then married

him after. Adrian Peterson, running back for the Vikings was charged for injuring his son. Child abuse has come a long way from decades ago, when many people were raised by getting beaten with stick or a switch to spank their child for doing something wrong. Unfortunately for these people, they do not realize that child abuse is considered very strongly in this day of age, and just laying a finger on

a child can be considered child abuse. Adrian Peterson deeply regrets unintentionally injuring his son. Hope Solo, Goalie for the USWNT and professional Seattle Reign FC, has been charged with two counts of domestic violence for hurting her sister and nephew. Solo was put in jail with investigation of violence. There was visible injuries for both the sister and nephew. The big controversy is

two out of the three athletes are demonized by the media and lost their job and one still plays for their pro team, the national team, and is still signed by Nike. Why should Hope Solo get a go free card from her domestic violence when Ray Rice and Adrian Peterson are paying major consequences? I thought women wanted equality not to be treated special because they are women.

SENIORS OF THE MONTH



Dylan Thomas, January

If I could give a piece of advice, I would say to live in the moment. High school passed in a blink of an eye and these were the best four years of my life. College will come, your career will still happen even if you don't think about it every day, don't worry and don't stress. Cherish these days.



Meilin Lu, January

What's your superpower?
 "My superpower is that I protect bugs."
 Why? They're just bugs.
 "They are lives."



Chayton Bagley, February

I am most proud of, in fact, winning Senior of the Month. Jackson Memorial is full of extraordinary students, particularly in our class. To be recognized amongst a class so rich in intelligence, hard work, dedication, and potential means the world to me. All of the hard work, extra effort, and incredible dedication that I have put forth is finally being noticed and appreciated. More importantly, the fact that I was singled out over so many flawless seniors that also deserve the honor makes it so much more special. It's also nice to know that something other than GPA and rankings are taken into account because I am not ranked at the very top of the class, which means that my efforts outside of the classroom are also acknowledged. For example, my active status in Key Club and my challenging schedule.



Jenna McDonnell, February

My accomplishment I am most proud of is being able to juggle my high academics while being involved in two varsity sports and multiple clubs. It was very important to me to challenge myself academically while participating in what I love to do. My studies and sports are my two biggest accomplishments and balancing them both is a rewarding experience.