

Manhattan High School for Girls

VIEWS ON THE NEWS



Spring 2018

EDITION II

Views on the News

Selected Student Responses
from the Lexington Weekly Blog
of Manhattan High School for Girls

Spring 2018

Message from the Principal

As educators, one of the most important goals we wish to achieve is cultivating within our students the ability to “think for themselves,” to learn how to make meaning of the world instead of taking the opinions and positions of others’ for granted. I am so grateful to Mrs. Jackie Rosenweig, Chair of our History Department, for facilitating our Lexington Blog which fueled this publication.

Every week, our students are required to respond to one of the news articles featured on the blog, and to express their position on the topic in respectful, cogent language. This structure has been very successful. We have succeeded in giving our students an implementable routine for engaging with the news, appreciation for diversity in opinion, and a concrete example of how social media can be used safely and effectively. We have also given our students the confidence to trust their abilities to “have their own thoughts” and to make those thoughts clear to others.

Congratulations to Tzophie Ulano for serving as student Editor of this blog and to Mrs. Badrian, Ms. Licht and Mrs. Szenberg for encouraging our students to engage with our greater world and its current events.

Mrs. Estee Friedman-Stefansky
Principal
General Studies

Foreword

We are blessed, as ever, to live in interesting times.

Some will look back to 2018 as the Era of Donald Trump. The Trump presidency has rightfully dominated headlines this year, with its unique potential to pass legislation, its new approaches to American identity and our global role, and its endless circus of oval-office intrigue. (Our blog has, mercifully, tried to avoid coverage of the political circus.)

But Donald Trump is not a cause of the times; he is just one symptom among many. Currently, the entire western world is grappling with questions of how to balance liberal ideals of immigration and multiculturalism with national identity. It is also grappling with the threat posed by illiberal forces—often radical terrorism—that seek to upend multicultural harmony. Rogue states like North Korea and Iran continue to stymie the international community in organizing collective responses to their provocations.

Beyond political threats, the global economy is increasingly challenged by the benefits and pressures of global free trade, the specter of automated work, the increasing role technology plays in organizing modern lives, and the ethical questions posed by cutting-edge medicine. Soon we may see great benefits and also great challenges in self-driving cars, increased space travel, gene editing, robots overtaking work, drone delivery of goods, smart homes, cryptocurrency, and companies such as Amazon, Apple and Google wielding unthinkable influence over individuals' lives.

We hope that future society will look back and see Hashem's hand guiding our fast-changing times to very good conclusions.

Until then, we can appreciate our students' insightful comments provided on Lexington Weekly, the MHS Current Events blog, in which all of our students participate and voice their opinions about news events. The following collection features brief summaries of some of

this year's top stories together with a collection of the strongest and most original insights of students, edited for readability.

Thank you for sharing in our school community's digital dinner-table-conversation!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jackie Rosensweig

History Department Chair, Lexington Weekly Faculty

Tzophie Ulano

Student Editor

Manhattan High School Awards

*Awards are based on all of students' comments that were
nominated for inclusion in this publication, many
of which did not make the final editor's cut.*

First Place Award

Chani Shulman

Second Place Awardees

Zehava Sanders

Noa Klein

Hindi Medalie

Rachel Berenshteyn

IT'S NOT SCIENCE FICTION: SELF-DRIVING TRUCKS REALLY ARE COMING VERY SOON

Lex Weekly covered self-driving cars and other forms of artificial intelligence-driven automation at many points during the year. These technologies are currently experiencing tremendous upgrades in their capabilities, and while many consumers don't realize it, manufacturers are almost ready to start selling self-driving products. Trucks for cross-country shipping are likely to be automated long before small cars are.

Personally, I am excited for self-driving everything. If cars can drive themselves then there will be fewer accidents because they will be able to sense other cars and stop and keep to the speed limit. No one will be driving too slow or too fast and drunk drivers will cease to be a problem. I think that self-driving trucks will be especially effective

because trucks are big and hard to control and It's very hard for a human to navigate turns in a huge truck. It would be so much simpler if the truck could just turn itself. I don't think that this will take from jobs because companies will still want a person in the cab to oversee the route, especially since auto-driving trucks can be susceptible to hacking. All companies, especially those with precious cargo, will want someone in the driver's seat to take over if anything may happen. I think that the safe driving features of a self-driving truck with the addition of a person to oversee the driving will lead to a safer world where there are less truck-related accidents. — Shoshana Farber, Grade 12



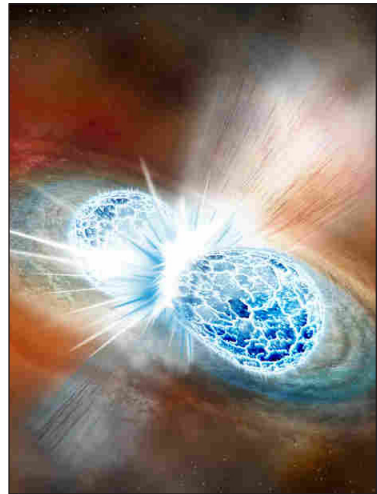
NYTimes

Honestly, I'm not thrilled at all and my reasoning is absolutely emotional. Technology

is replacing human beings and this situation is a clear illustration. Human beings are going to be less and less useful and that scares me. I don't want a truck without a driver on the road. It's haunting. Sure, the purpose of these advancements is to make human lives easier but what about when we lose purpose? — Temima Feder, Grade 12

ASTRONOMY HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED: SHOULD THE PUBLIC BE TOLD?

This past August, astronomers picked up signals of two neutron stars that collided in an astronomical event that lasted for three weeks. The data that they picked up, which travelled many lightyears to reach the earth, upended the field of astronomy and answered a huge percentage of all the questions that active astronomers today have been working on. How should the news media cover a huge event whose impact is only well-understood by one academic community?



Five Thirty Eight

I believe that this article should definitely be published in the non-scholarly papers instead of exclusively in the scholarly news. When I first saw the article and its picture, I figured I would have to plow through it because I'm not all that interested in astronomy and the only reason I would be reading

it would be to do my schoolwork. But as I read through it, I became increasingly fascinated, and I don't doubt I was the only one. Maybe many of us are generally uninterested in and ignorant of astronomical discoveries, but I think this one is an exception. This discovery seems so rare and important.

The details of the event are explained simply so that non-astronomers or non-astronomer-aspirers can understand the gist of the discovery. If I was able to be interested in this huge discovery, I definitely think most of the non-scholarly would be too. — Leora Lehrfeld, Grade 11

I think that this is an extremely newsworthy article because we don't know what in the future will benefit us. There have been many "pure research"

studies conducted in the past whose knowledge has allowed for illnesses to be cured. This knowledge which seemed unnecessary when it was discovered actually was very useful to scientists when creating new experimental designs. This is why the non-scholarly public should care about this article because this scientific knowledge can aid in discoveries that will affect future generations. — Ettie Guelfguat, Grade 10

CONGRESS PASSES MAJOR TAX REFORM

This past winter, Congress passed a most significant tax overhaul in decades, significantly altering the tax code with lower rates for most, along with larger basic deductions and fewer specific types of other deductions.

I am not sure if I would have voted for this tax bill, as it has both pros and cons. On one hand, it will likely be beneficial to most middle-class families and those with many children. On the other hand, it will likely cause an increase in tax rates for the upper-middle class and upper class in states such as New York and New Jersey because they will no longer be able to deduct their state taxes. Furthermore, although this 14 % decrease in the tax rates of corporate companies sounds great, in reality, it may not have such a strong impact. Last week in stock market



class we read an article from The Wall Street Journal discussing the effect the tax reform bill will have on corporate companies. The article stated: “the impact of the tax cut on capital investment and job growth will be limited for a simple reason: Pouring the money back into expansion wouldn’t make business sense.” Therefore, although theoretically, it may seem like this tax cut can help businesses expand and employment rise, in the long run, it will likely not do so. Additionally, this tax reform bill is extremely expensive and they do not yet have a plan on how they will earn the money back. — **Esty Friedman, Grade 12**

WOULD CITIES WORK BETTER IF WE BUILT NEW ONES FROM SCRATCH?

With rising costs of living in coastal cities, and especially with skyrocketing costs of real estate, some major tech companies are starting to think about moving their operations to new locations, and building brand-new cities there from scratch, with cheaper housing, efficient transit, and urban amenities. Should we abandon old cities for new ones?

I don’t think building a new city is going to solve New York’s traffic problems. No matter what you try, you will never create a modernized carbon copy of New York. New York’s unique culture, architecture, and citizens cannot fit in a copy machine. So why build a NEW New York, when you can build a city with its own



NY Times

identity? New York’s history was built through countless generations, wars, innovations, cultures, and individuals. The community builds the city, not vice versa. — **Meira Notkin, Grade 9**

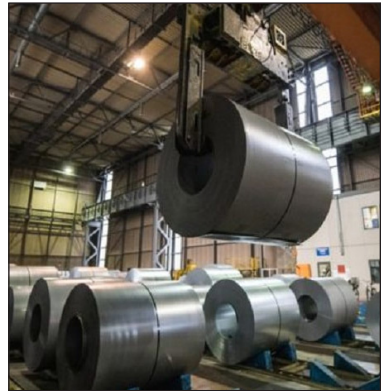
Some of the biggest problems of New York City (as well as other large cities around the world), as mentioned in the article, are traffic, cost of living, and homelessness. Building a brand new, futuristic city could solve some of these problems, however there are a number of flaws to this idea. Eventually, when technology advances and these new cities

expand and draw people from all over, the same problems will just happen again. In addition, cities were built in the location they were built in for a reason. Building new cities two hours away may seem like a small distance, but to me two hours is a long drive. —

Nili Kushner, Grade 9

TRUMP ANNOUNCES TARIFFS, WHICH MIGHT START A TRADE WAR

Following up on campaign promises, the Trump Administration announced plans this spring to begin fining imports from various countries, including certain metals



from European countries, and other lists of goods from China and from Canada and Mexico. Taxing imports is meant to protect the manufacturing jobs that exist in America, although it also stands to increase prices on goods for America consumers, and agitate allies.

I think that the main issue with these tariffs are the trade wars that will likely stem from them. Nobody wants them—the president of the European Commission himself, who is one of the people threatening to retaliate with tariffs on American goods, said that

he doesn't want them—but they are inevitably going to happen. With all the negativity these tariffs will cause, a large majority of the people will disapprove of them. However, I don't think Trump will change his mind about them until his main constituents

are the ones complaining about them. The reason for this is quite simple: Trump hates to admit defeat, and such a plan backfiring is certain defeat. — **Rachel Berenshteyn, Grade 12**

THE MET BEGINS CHARGING MANDATORY \$25 ADMISSION

Is great culture a public good that ought to be accessible to all? This spring, the Metropolitan Museum of Art began charging mandatory admission of \$25 to all non-New Yorkers who visit.

In a democracy, it is essential that the people (the citizens) have a great education because it is the people who run the country. I think that by making an entrance fee, it is risking how well our country is run because now certain people will be limited in a certain area of their education. Many other museums might follow in their lead and also start making entrance fees, which will make getting your best education a little harder, which will definitely take a toll on how our government is run.

— **Chavi Golding, Grade 9**

The new mandatory fee only applies to visitors who live outside of New York, New Jersey or Connecticut. This means that two-thirds of the museum's visitors will still be able to enter the museum free of charge, albeit they will now have to show ID. School groups will presumably be able to continue



CNN

paying bulk rates. The only people who will have to pay the fee are tourists, who will anyway be spending some money on their vacation and probably have the budget to splurge on a museum. I do think, though, that \$25 is a lot for admissions. I would definitely be less likely to visit the MET as a tourist if I were to be charged \$25, particularly as there are many other cheaper venues in NYC.

— **Sara Nordlicht, Grade 10**



CNN

China's Premier, Xi Jinping, made moves this winter to consolidate his rule in the Chinese Communist Party. Instead of ruling for two five-year terms, he has laid groundwork to continue ruling for life after that as well. Does this make China more authoritarian than it was before? Xi is a capable steward of China's economy and the middle class has grown well there under his watch.

CHINA'S XI WORKS TO ABOLISH TERM LIMITS AND RULE FOR LIFE

This new abolition of term limits makes it especially hard for those who were finally starting to speak up, as a result of a modernizing world due to Western influence, especially American democracy, but now who have been especially repressed in such a short span of time. Their efforts may seem fruitless now, now that the country seems to even be going backwards, but I think they will prevail, because I think there will be something crucial overlooked in the president's meticulous planning and something will go wrong, and the "democratic" movement will gain strength once again and enable China to be ruled by a more open-minded, more liberal government that places less restrictions on the lives of the average Chinese citizen. —

Yaffa Barsky, Grade 12

CAN WE TRUST NUTRITIONAL STUDIES PAID FOR BY PASTA COMPANIES?

Students read a fascinating report about the influence of corporate sponsorship on scientific research. One significant example from the article was the financial influence of pasta companies, such as Barilla, in scientific studies about the value or harm of carbohydrates. Are scientific studies tainted when the research is paid for by corporate interests?

Perhaps this glorious new finding is not “scientifically factual”, but it is certainly brilliant advertising. Advertising companies know how to attract attention based on human tendency. People tend to talk about the ads that are extremely humorous or outrageous. Some might think that the insurance company’s ad with the flying unicorn and Kung-fu fighting grandma must have been thought up after a rough day at the office; but, when they need insurance, the first name that comes to mind is most likely the mother to that ridiculous ad. (After all, who can list insurance companies that don’t feature geckos or “good neighbors”?)

Barilla’s sly managers realize that people eat up “scientific studies” that link delicious foods with health benefits. Although the data might be skewed for Barilla’s sake, I believe that

at the end of the day, this “study” is harmless. We live in a calorie-obsessed society, with many people limiting their day to 2,000 calories. So, if they are leaving room for some pasta, then they will do without the donut. And if they find that this study is fictitious and their goal to lose weight is futile, then they could go back to their lives without pasta (a grayer world, indeed).

— Chani Shulman, Grade 10

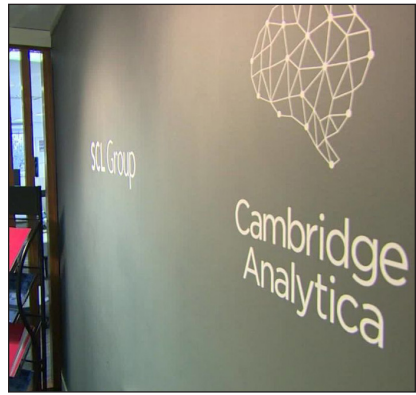


IS BIG TECH USING PERSONAL DATA IN DANGEROUS WAYS?

In 2018, many news stories reported previously unknown ways in which large tech companies, such as Google and Facebook, have been able to share personal user information.

The government honestly has better things to do than invade random civilians’ privacy, and their access to personal data is purely for security reasons. Further, these tech companies are only looking at big data, not little data; every individual’s data is incorporated into a large data pool.

That being said, it is concerning that people can know so much about us without us knowing. Even if a person is not involved in any social media accounts, these tech giants can still gain data from him through tracking his location and internet searches. It's scary to think what might happen if someone were to abuse this information, G-d forbid. —Avigail Deutsch, Passaic, Grade 11



PARKLAND, FLORIDA SCHOOL SHOOTING: A TURNING POINT?

After the February 14, 2018 school shooting in Florida, some began to suggest that public opinion had shifted in favor of passing new legislation to limit access to guns or to increase protections in schools to stem the tide of gun violence. We considered whether the high schools students who survived the shooting were uniquely qualified as activists.

Winston Churchill famously said, “If you’re 20 and not a liberal, you have no heart; if you’re 40 and not conservative, you have no brain.” It is ridiculous to suggest that these students’ voices don’t matter because they aren’t of legal age to vote yet, especially considering they’re only one year away. To suggest that they don’t have a voice merely because their opinion differs from yours is an



immature argument to make to try and fight the attention they are raising. Churchill’s quote is relevant because it is normal for younger generations to desire to create stricter gun laws for

they feel it will prevent future instances like these from happening so often. For a 40 year old to come and say that these kids aren't aware of policies and can therefore not form a plausible opinion is

to deny them their voice, which frankly is unfair and makes the critics look like immature teens.

— **Hindi Medalie, Grade 11**

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION PROPOSES FOOD BOX DELIVERY TO REPLACE SOME FOOD STAMPS



Washington Post

Following reports that food stamps are often used on frivolous purchases, the Trump Administration proposed food delivery boxes, like fancy meal kits, with pre-packaged foods to replace the food stamp program. This proposal suggested that it would cut costs and abuse, and was criticized that it would deprive beneficiaries of the choice to pick their own groceries.

I think that the food boxes are a good idea, however, individual needs must be taken into consideration. People who have allergies would need to have different boxes containing food they can eat. I think a way to make the transition go more smoothly would be to send a letter asking for the dietary restrictions of that family. Any families with more common restrictions, such as nut allergies, could receive a slightly customized box. Any family

who has more complicated restrictions could continue using the food stamps. This way, a lot of money could be saved for the families who receive boxes, but personal needs are also considered.

— **Zehava Sanders, Grade 9**

I think this is a good idea because many times food stamps are used to buy things that are not necessities. If the government will give out food they can make sure people are getting basic,

healthy food. Before they receive the food boxes they should complete a survey with their health issues, whether they have allergies, are gluten free, or keep kosher. They will also let the government know

the ages of each person in the household so if there is a baby they can send baby food. This way the people receiving the food will be able to get food they can eat.
— **Essie Abittan, Grade 10**

POLAND BANS SPEECH OF POLISH BLAME IN THE HOLOCAUST

This spring, Poland passed a new law banning anyone from blaming Poland, or the Polish nation, for the crimes of the Holocaust. It is also against the law to refer to Nazi death camps in Poland, such as Auschwitz, as “Polish.” The role that “Poland” played in World War II is complicated—the country was invaded and its people were brutalized by Nazis, while many individuals also cooperated with and sometimes collaborated in the Holocaust. Holocaust memorial groups were highly critical of the new law and its policing of speech.

Poland suffered tremendously at the hands of the Nazis during the Second World War. We recognize their suffering and it is their responsibility to recognize the suffering of the Jewish people at the hands of Polish civilians. This law denies Poland’s bloody involvement in the Holocaust. Poland should understand based on very true facts that they played a part in murdering European Jewry. They should teach Polish children that although Poles faced many hardships during the War and some risked their lives to save Jews, others murdered Jews. The Polish children should be educated based on real facts and not based on whether or not the government is too sensitive to handle the truth.
— **Esther Bertram, Grade 10**



The Polish population at the time of the Holocaust could be divided into three groups, one being those who assisted the Nazis by either turning in Jews or further continuing the heinous acts that the Nazis set off. Second were those who helped the Jews during the Holocaust, even risking their lives to hide Jews in their homes. Lastly, there were those who did not condone the Nazis' actions, but ignored the problems at face value (probably to stay alive). This strikes me as similar to three others in history who acted as either the villainous accomplice, the martyr, or the one who kept quiet: Bilaam, Yisro, and Iyov. When Pharaoh told his advisors about his plan to wipe out the Jewish nation, Bilaam readily agreed, while Yisro fervently condemned the idea. Then there was Iyov. I had learnt in a previous Chumash class that even though Iyov seemingly did nothing wrong, in actuality, staying quiet is a dangerous weapon (and will have its consequences). There was no one definitive mindset that represented the entire Polish nation during the Holocaust. But, they can never be guiltless knowing that majority of the Poles were in the wrong. This should be a lesson to Polish children: that to be good not only requires one not to be bad, but also not to be neutral.

— Chani Shulman, Grade 10

Poland isn't the only country that has a complicated history in the holocaust; the USA does as well. Even though at the end of the war the USA did have a major role in aiding the end of the war and liberating camps, the USA was not always actively involved in saving thousands of people being killed daily. Throughout the war newspaper headlines were constantly displaying the horror that was happening in Europe at the time. It was easy for the Americans to feel that it was far away and not portrayed right. It took a lot of time until the USA helped the war effort. In addition the USA did not let many Europeans in and made strict regulations on how many people were able to enter. You don't see the USA making laws banning what I'm saying right now. Why? Because we have the freedom of speech. America allows people to recognize its faults and so should Poland. The accurate information should be taught in schools and people should be aware. If we don't make ourselves aware and come to terms with what happened, then how can we ever change ourselves?

— Nomie Fermaglich, Grade 12

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, IS LITERALLY RUNNING OUT OF WATER

This spring, officials in South Africa warned the city of Cape Town that it was just weeks away from reaching “Day Zero,” when the taps would actually run dry due to an acute water shortage, caused by years of drought and government mismanagement. The city has not run out of water yet, but the crisis continues, and officials are still trying to convince the public to drastically cut back on water usage, with minimal success.

I believe this very rare crisis is due to a lack of proper municipal planning. Running out of water is something that should not be happening in the twenty first century, so it must be because the city government is not placing proper measures to prevent it from happening. Because Cape Town has had such a severe drought, the city should be stricter with the punishments for people who don't

comply with the water restrictions, to prevent “Day Zero” from ever happening. There should also be easier methods for transporting the water between homes, especially for the elderly who can't carry their own water. As water is such a pressing need and a basis for human survival, if the city government is not doing enough to fix the problem, then the South African government and government beyond definitely should.

— **Avigail Ovitsh, Grade 12**



I think it was a huge mistake on Cape Town's part as far as planning goes because Israel offered to help them many times with desalination technology yet Cape Town refused due to their BDS attitudes. A crisis like this doesn't happen overnight, so if Cape Town was trying their hardest to truly ensure that their people were safe I would feel as though this is nothing short of a tragedy. Unfortunately though, that isn't the case due to Israel's offer to help. I feel it is immature on their political end to refuse help that puts the safety and lives of your people at major risk due to anti-Israel attitudes. — **Hindi Medalie, Grade 11**



Washington Post

THE LATEST IN WORKPLACE PERKS: AMAZON'S SPHERES

Large American companies are spending more money than ever on workplace amenities, from in-office gyms and game rooms to free gourmet cafeterias. The most emblematic example of this phenomenon was the grand opening of The Spheres at Amazon's headquarters, a series of glass bubble atriums filled with rare plants. Do these amenities actually help people work, or do they distract? Or are they simply meant to upgrade companies' "coolness" status so they can attract qualified workers in a competitive job market?

While these botanical domes can (and likely will) boost the company's coolness factor, I think that there is some merit to the experiments that claim that exposure to nature boosts creative productivity. After all, didn't Thoreau and his fellow Romanticists flock to areas of nature and greenery to produce their best work? And wouldn't this be even more beneficial now that so many of the company's employees spend much of their time sitting in front of a computer screen? I think that Amazon's new domes will be subject to a lot of scrutiny in the coming months, but only because people want to see whether the Romanticist ideal of "inspiration by nature" can hold up under modern experimentation. — Rachel Berenshteyn, Grade 12

Recently, my sister spent the day at Google Headquarters in the city. After she told me about it, I suddenly wanted to work at Google, not necessarily because of the thrill of coding, but rather because Google offers free, kosher macaroni and cheese. They import it from a restaurant that charges 12 dollars a dish, and offer it to employees for free. However, I realize that my draw to Google should not be its perks, such as free doctors on site, and a gym to work off all that free food. These companies are implementing on site food, doctors, gym, and activities in order to decrease the need to go home, thereby increasing the time spent at the office working. It is important for employees to remember to differentiate between home and work life, and make time for both. If I end up working at

one of these gilded tech companies, it will be because of the job itself (although free macaroni and cheese doesn't hurt!).

— **Chani Shulman, Grade 10**

I think that there are probably benefits to having plants and daylight in workspaces, if there has been scientific research which has proven this. However, these new workspaces are a

bit of a dramatic adaptation of this research; they could have added some potted plants, maybe even a tree, to their workplace. They could have kept their shades open, or even added windows to the workplace. However, by taking these statistics to such an extreme, these workplaces are evidently just trying to attract attention and be “cool”.

— **Noa Klein, Grade 10**

IS THERE ANY WAY TO STOP THIS SEASON'S FLU?

This winter, America experienced its worst flu outbreak in many years, and the vaccine was seen as less effective than it is most years. Public health officials therefore had an uphill battle in convincing the public to get the shot, which only made the outbreak even worse, and increased the debate about what officials could really do to improve the situation.



Washington Post

Getting the flu shot is important. Although it isn't perfect, the benefits outweigh the risks. Also, although it isn't mentioned in the article, getting the vaccine is important for herd immunity. This is important for people who are unable to get the vaccine due to health concerns. They need the people around them to stay healthy so they don't catch the flu. — **Zehava Sanders, Grade 9**

GAMING ADDICTION WILL BE CONSIDERED A MENTAL ILLNESS

In the upcoming edition of the DSM Manual for diagnosing mental illnesses, psychiatrists plan to add a new illness covering people addicted to computer and video gaming. While this accurately reflects a new malady besetting many Americans, it also led to some soul-searching as to whether addiction to phones or other screen technology—which, frankly, affects huge amounts of Americans—is unhealthy enough to constitute mental illness.

The fact that it is going to be considered a mental illness shows a lot about American society and culture. Firstly, it shows what a rampant and severe problem it is in this day and age. The fact that so many kids have time enough and access and the ability to always be playing video games is really obscene. Also, I think it is a serious problem that needs to be solved but attributing it to mental illness makes people believe they can only change it through medication or therapy, when really people need to stop being lazy and to find better things to do with their time. In this society, parents are too scared what will happen if their children aren't happy, so they allow them to do whatever pleases them. This is why the age for kids with smart phones gets lower and lower. Although, and this is proven by studies, gaming



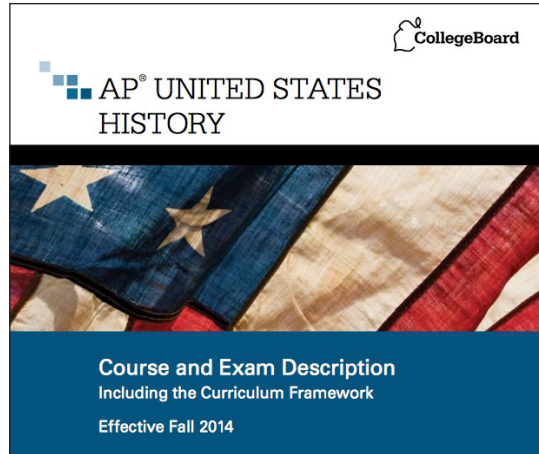
Newsweek

does release chemicals in the brain that are addictive, I believe that this problem can be tackled with parental interference and seriously revamping certain cultural norms. It is serious enough for parents to reflect on possible deeper causes and fix those before they just resort to calling it a mental illness, taking responsibility off of their shoulders and allowing medication and mental health professionals “fix” it.

— Odelia Barsky, Grade 11

DO AP HISTORY CURRICULA HAVE TOO MUCH LIBERAL SLANT?

Students read a conservative opinions article claiming that the College Board's high school history classes have shifted the focus from history's great men to a study of identity groups: women, minorities and others. The article also claimed that the redesigned AP classes play down knowledge of names, dates and facts, effectively dumbing down history knowledge.

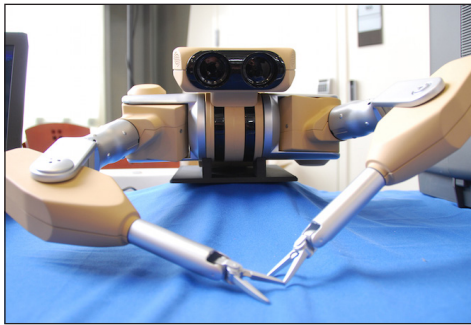


Having taken both AP Euro and APUSH I have definitely seen a leftist influence on the curriculum through the concepts that had greater emphasis placed upon on them. (I've gotten over the fact that women in the 18th century didn't do much; now please don't make me write an essay about it!) However, I disagree with the notion that moving the emphasis from dates and names to more general trends comes from a Marxist approach, rather the realization that more can be taught that way, or that this way the

information is more approachable. In the end, each student is taking in the information in through multiple filters: their teacher's views, as well as their own. While the curriculum has some flaws due to its left-leaning habits, I don't think it is causing great damage to the worldview of the many students who take AP courses, as many already have this worldview themselves, and if they don't are able to pick out the biases for themselves. — Miriam Escott, Grade 12

WILL ROBOTS TAKE OUR CHILDREN'S JOBS?

In one article about workplace automation and the rapid advances of artificial intelligence, the author described how robots are much closer than most people know to replacing workers in a large array of professional and skilled positions, including even many medical tasks.



NYTimes

While it may be possible for robots to be better surgeons than humans, or scan documents faster, they can't take everything into consideration like humans. For example, if we program a robot to do a heart surgery then that's all the robot is going to do. A robot wouldn't be able to see an additional problem in the patient's body because it's only focus will be the heart surgery. However, a human can look at other internal parts of the body while performing heart surgery and will know to check the internal parts of the body that may also be affected.

On the other hand, I think that

the amount of robots helping in jobs will increase. A robot may scan a document and make a shorter one for the lawyer, but then the human would be the one in court. When I look for a job I don't think that many jobs will have been taken over by robots, they will just be making the job easier for humans. — Sima Leah Mandelbaum, Grade 9

I do think that future careers will be changing over time with more use of A.I.. However, I do not think that robots will completely take over any specific career. Rather, robots may carry out more and more responsibilities of a career. Therefore, I think that fear is merely that future careers may change and be slightly more limited toward future workers. However, a more positive aspect is that the children of our generation may have new opportunities to develop or research in new areas because robots may be taking care of more trivial tasks. — Zahava Giloni, Grade 10

NORTH KOREA AND SOUTH KOREA MAKE UNITED GESTURES AS OLYMPICS APPROACH



North Korea was a major story in the news this year. The communist regime defied the world by completing its nuclear weapons program and testing missiles that would enable its bombs to reach American shores. Donald Trump teased and taunted Kim Jong-Un on Twitter, and South Korea elected its most pacifist president in years, Moon Jae-In. Then, in late winter, tensions began to drastically ease, with the Koreas joining teams at the Olympics, meeting in the de-militarized zone, and with Kim meeting with President Trump in June. Most of the student body opposed South Korea hosting the Olympics, fearing the North Korea would attack the games. It is amazing how far public opinion has moved since February.

I think having the Olympics in South Korea is no different from having them in America. Because North Korea peacefully joined South Korea in the Olympics, they are no longer a concern. ISIS, however, is still a worldwide concern and in order to prevent a terrorist attack security at the Olympics will still be very tight. — Dina Rothman, Grade 9

I think that having the Winter Olympics in South Korea wasn't a bad

decision. As the article says, South Korea is a very safe country and has not suffered terror attacks like other countries have recently. Also due to the fact that South Korea is in such close proximity to North Korea they have strengthened their security which makes the games a more safe atmosphere. The fact that the Koreas have marched under one flag at the opening ceremony also shows there's little reason to be concerned. — Esther Bertram, Grade 10

I think that this might actually be a good thing for North and South Korea. From what I've heard it seems that North Korea will be trying to have talks with South Korea and maybe this will lead on the path of peace. However, North Korea could very well be tricking everyone and they might actually bomb the games. I don't think that this will happen because North Korea could bomb the olympics with or without tricking everyone, so they probably do want to finally have peace with South Korea. — Sara Sash, Grade 9

WHAT IS NET NEUTRALITY, AND DOES IT MATTER THAT IT'S GOING AWAY?

In April, federal officials decided to end the policy of net neutrality, which requires Internet service providers to not discriminate between network users on the basis of how much data they use. Without net neutrality, Internet providers may have a “slow lane” and a “fast lane,” or may charge more to users to consume more bandwidth through watching streaming video content.

Net Neutrality tells service providers to charge the same amount of money to all Internet users, even though some users are using up more Internet than others. The Federal officials want people to only pay what they use on the internet instead of having everyone pay the same amount because that's

what is fair. You are only responsible for what you personally use, not for the entire community's use of the Internet. — Yvee Rosenthal, Grade 9



MOHAMED BIN SALMAN IS TAKING POWER: IS THE NEW SAUDI CROWN PRINCE A MODERNIZER OR POWER HUNGRY?

This year, Mohamed bin Salman (MBS) has become a major force in Saudi Arabia. He has positioned himself as the kingdom's next heir to the throne, has imprisoned many of his political opponents, and has made many moves to modernize Saudi society. He has allowed women to drive and attend sporting events, and has visited with western business leaders to improve technology and openness in Saudi Arabia. Is he increasing freedom, or is he an aspiring autocrat?

I think MBS is definitely a modernizer, because even though his tactics to filter out the corrupt leaders aren't democratic, his intentions seem genuine. Additionally, the relationship he has been forming with Trump is a step towards Saudi integration in the global community of democracies and religions. All his efforts to modernize Saudi Arabia seem more idealistic than narcissistic and he seems to be well meaning even though of course there is the major issue of no due process. —

Chedva Levine, Grade

10



THE NEW SPACE RACE: PRIVATE COMPANIES COMPETE TO BRING US TO SPACE



In February, Elon Musk’s private company, SpaceX, launched a Falcon-Heavy rocket into space successfully. This marks a new era in private companies aggressively leading the way in a new generation of space exploration. NASA and government projects are less interested to devote their money to outer space. Will private citizens pick up the slack, and can they do so at the highest standards of safety like the government can?

I think a huge advantage to having an entrepreneurial company maneuver space operations is its bigger chance at testing revolutionary space technology that might be too expensive and risky for government to undertake. The entrepreneur companies developing space technology today compare to the companies sent for global sea trade in the 17th century by the monarchies, but they’re also quite different. The companies in the 17th century were sent as a means to further develop

their states’ economies, while the development of space technology by independent companies is purposely not related to any type of government. — **Elona Ryba, Grade 10**

NEW STUDIES SUGGEST THAT “LEARNING STYLES” MIGHT NOT REALLY EXIST

In a psychological report in *The Atlantic*, scholars suggested that a collection of recent studies cast doubt on the actual existence of “visual” or “auditory” learners, and that people might have preferences for what they enjoy, but not for what helps them learn best.

I agree with the article that one's "learning style" may not benefit their studying. I think that when the topic interests the student, they will remember the information best. Sometimes I hear a someone I know saying, "I'm not an auditory learner," so she tunes out anyone reading the newspaper aloud. However, in conversation, her listening skills are excellent, and she pays attention to every word because she enjoys those topics. Therefore, a person's ability to focus on the material is somewhat dependent on whether the topic finds favor in their eyes.

— **Rebecca Bral, Grade 9**

there may have been other factors which caused these results, such as environment, time or people, like it is with every experiment. As a student though, I have often heard the term "visual learner" or other terms which see to define in a definite way the type of learner a student is. I agree with this article's main researcher that people are not one type of learner, but instead have certain abilities. However, I think that most often "styles" of learning are a result of one's environment — how they were taught or learned in the first place. — **Noa Klein, Grade 10**



The Atlantic

It has been proven time and time again that science is a circuitous process. One year, scientists will be sure that caffeine is necessary for cognitive development, and another they will say it stunts your brain's growth. Therefore, we cannot be sure that this study is definite, because

This article poses an intriguing point-- perhaps our "learning style" isn't actually reflective of the way we perform best on the test, but just how much we enjoy what we study. I might argue, while studying in accordance with one "style" may not actually impact our memory performance, it does impact the studying process. If the process is pleasant, than we study harder. Studying harder yields better results, and that gets you back to the sort of data that would suggest that learning styles are actually real on some level, after all.

— **Esther Mehlman, Grade 12**

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR BANNING PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS



In April, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that he will work to ban plastic shopping bags in New York State. Previously, the State legislature had considered a tax on plastic bags, which the governor prevented from taking effect. Plastics are a huge source of global pollution and shopping bags are difficult to recycle. However, many households do find them useful.

wasted plastic but cannot imagine living without the convenience of being able to throw things in a bag which you know you can throw out and go home carrying one less thing. I never walk to the grocery store but it would be a major inconvenience without shopping bags. When shopping in Costco (which becomes your regular grocery store when you have 9 kids in the family) it always frustrates me how they

Plastic bags pose a great threat to our environment. Scientists have predicted that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. I believe the ban on plastic bags can only be beneficial. In my household we use reusable bags, and when we do not, we recycle or reuse or plastic shopping bags.

— **Ayala Cweiber, Grade 9**

In my house, we save the shopping bags from the grocery store and typically use them once more before it being thrown out. I agree that this results in a lot of

don't give bags. Instead of dropping a few things in your cart and then transferring bags into your car, you have to carry each thing separately and then the worst part is when you come home, you again have to carry everything into the house, one item at a time. I think that charging for the bags is a good idea because it is with the extra few cents and it will make sure that people don't throw out a bag as often and think before taking bags, but the convenience would still be offered, unlike in the proposed ban. — Avigail Spira, Grade 12

