

The Buccaneer

RBR's Student Newspaper

Dear Mr. President:

RBR Students Identify Top Priorities for Biden and Harris

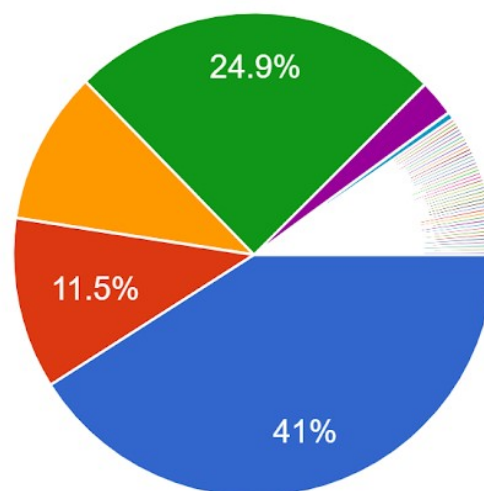
Prior to the November 3 election, *The Buccaneer* surveyed students about issues they wanted to see the next administration address, regardless of the outcome. Over 400 students responded, and results appear below. The white section of the graph reflects the number of students who indicated a combination of issues or added to the list. Anonymous additions included "bodily autonomy;" "unifying the country;" "making social media platforms (e.g. Twitter, Facebook) adhere to the First Amendment;" "upholding the Constitution;" and "Being non-partisan and focusing on the greater good of the nation."

Other students elaborated on their thoughts. "I think all of the above, because we are struggling in every one of those [areas]" said junior Thea Licata. "I think the American people deserve a chance to get a better life." Another student added, "If you're the president you should be focusing on everything that we need to change to make the world a better place. But it's also super sad that we need to bring up basic human rights in politics and the fact that [it is] an issue. I think the president should look at the bigger picture and not focus on one thing. We should all help the president as well and make the world a better place."

According to freshman Sydney Nelson, "the COVID-19 Pandemic is what our next president needs to make a priority. Other issues like justice/civil rights, the economy, [and] climate change are very large issues, but COVID is our largest road block. We need to find a cure and get back to normal life so those other bigger issues can have our full and undivided attention."

More extensive student responses appear on page 2.

- handling the COVID-19 pandemic
- the environment and climate change
- the economy
- civil rights and social justice (immigrati...
- diplomatic standing in the world and fo...
- all of the above



RBR's Little Bucs Take on Virtual Learning

By Maria Rigopoulos

One of the coolest things about RBR is that we have our own Little Bucs preschool. For those who may not know, students in our Early Childhood Development Academy work in the preschool lab as student-teachers, under the instruction of Mrs. Hanhart and Miss Mozino. It is something very special that RBR has been doing for many years. However, this year Little Bucs looks a little different. People of all ages are being heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but it was especially interesting to learn about how it has been affecting such young children.

Please see *Little Bucs*, p. 3

Goin' to the Chapel (Beach Club)

By Amy Serrano and *Buccaneer* staff

After being quarantined all spring, RBR students and teachers were certainly searching for a way to get out of their house, get fresh air and sunshine, keep themselves busy, and remain safe from the coronavirus. Many found it at Chapel Beach Club, where English teacher Mr. Forrest has worked as a manager for 13 years. Each summer, Mr. Forrest and Chapel's owners turn to RBR to staff the beach club, where, annually, 15 to 20 students and teachers find summer jobs. This year, Mr. Phil Greene (Math) and Mr. Scott Martin (English) served as assistant managers.

Please see *Chapel*, p. 4

Dear Mr. President *from p. 1*

Over 400 students responded to our survey about the most urgent issue facing the 46th president. Below are two more extensive responses, written after the election. They are the answers to a series of follow-up questions sent to those who expressed a willingness to share their ideas with *The Buccaneer*.

Junior Molly Jain:

I think that the most important thing for President-elect Biden to address is the coronavirus pandemic. While there are so many other pressing issues in our country, I don't think anything can truly be done about them until we have handled the pandemic. Recently, cases have been steadily rising as well as projected deaths, so I think it is vital to handle the crisis in any way possible to prevent unnecessary and further struggle and grief.

It seems likely that the only way to control the virus will be another lockdown, so I think it is important that Biden and his administration require that if needed, as well as work harder to reinforce and encourage protective measures like limited activities and wearing masks. Our country is stuck in a strange half-normal state because of the pandemic, so I firmly believe that we must handle it before any other issues can be truly focused on and resolved.

Freshman Maximo Ortiz:

For me, the most important problem in the U.S. at the moment is the coronavirus. Well, at least all the consequences that have come from it. The economy has been hit very hard from the quarantine guidelines and restrictions, leading to many companies closing down.

My main worry with President Biden entering office is how he will deal with some of these issues. After living out a majority of his life as a politician, he still does not have a great track record, and has a rather racist history in addition to that. However, people can change, and as president, hopefully Biden [will] make sense of our problems and work with both parties to find the best and least disputable options.

I would suggest that Biden attempts to find the best options for both parties. At the moment, political tensions are higher than they have been for years. 75 million people voted for Joe Biden and 72 million voted for Donald Trump. This makes the 2020 presidential election the highest in voter turnout in years. With Republicans gaining seats in the House of Representatives, having control of the Supreme Court, and possibly winning the Senate, I believe that it will be tough for Biden to follow his agenda; however, hopefully the Senate will work with him to find better solutions for all.

Many need to consider the background of this election and the widespread trend of misinformation. People should never believe everything they see, and should look for reliable, unbiased sources, statistics, and government websites. This way, people can gain knowledge about their country, and hopefully make good decisions.

Our Most Pressing Issue: Immigration

By Julie Flores-Castillo

Issues such as the COVID pandemic, the economy, climate change, and our country's diplomatic standing are all important issues but the one issue I find most important is immigration. As president of RBR Dreamers, I wanted to speak on immigration because this was one of the biggest issues in this year's election. I am very happy with the results of this election, but one thing is certain: the immigrant community is going to keep fighting, because the fight is long from over.

The policies of the current administration have personally affected my family in an unfortunate way, and they have also affected members of my community, such as friends and fellow classmates. Immigrants have faced much uncertainty over the past four years; certain immigration policies that have been implemented caused much harm and have driven many undocumented people back into the shadows. DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) was rescinded in 2017 by the current administration. Over 700,000 DACA recipients, also known as Dreamers, found their immigration status up in the air. The Trump administration's goal was to terminate the program, but it was later brought before the Supreme Court and the program was temporarily saved.

The program's future is still uncertain, and I wanted to address this issue because there are many students at RBR who can benefit from this amazing program. As a result of the harm that the current administration did to this program, many student and other immigrants were not able to apply and are currently undocumented. DACA will allow them to pursue their dreams and not live in the shadows any longer. DACA will allow them to get a license, go to college, qualify for social security and not be afraid of being deported.

DACA is just one issue that illustrates the importance of voting. I am the daughter of immigrants, but I know I have privilege to an extent, as I was born in this country. To me, voting is important because I am fortunate to be able to vote when I turn 18. As someone from the immigrant community, I always speak for those who cannot, and I know that whomever I will vote for in the future will impact my community. A lot of people in my community are undocumented and I want to use my privilege of voting to help them.

As president of the RBR Dreamers, I will keep speaking for those students who deserve to be in this country. As Bucs, we need to recognise that there are undocumented students at RBR, and they are the same as the rest of us. I am hoping that President-Elect Biden will reenact DACA and give hope to those who are undocumented.

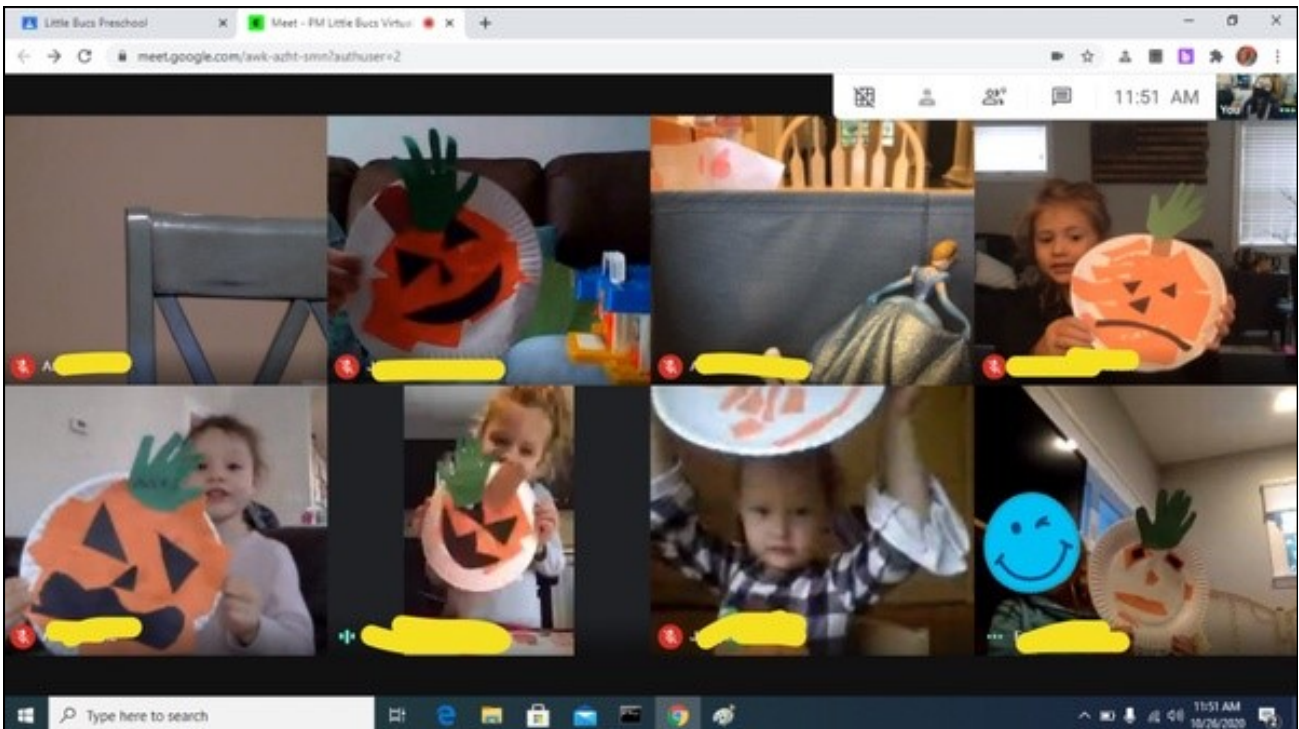
Little Bucs, from p. 1

This year, the preschool program is completely virtual. Mrs. Hanhart's class teaches for thirty minutes in the early in the morning, and Miss Mozino's class teaches for thirty minutes late in the morning. Between the two preschool classes, there are about 30 Little Bucs who join in every day. The teachers and student-teachers have created, and continue to create, a variety of lesson plans to teach the children from their homes, with activities including math, science, arts & crafts, and creative movement. These topics are taught every year at the Little Bucs preschool, but this year, the student-teachers have to come up with extra-creative approaches to keep the preschoolers engaged while not being face to face.

Although not being able to hold preschool in person created disappointment initially, Mrs. Hanhart and Miss Mozino are extremely proud of their student-teachers who have definitely risen to the occasion and are putting in amazing effort in creating their lesson plans. In addition to the student-teachers' hard work, this new learning situation would not be possible without the patience and support of the Little Bucs' parents, who are always there for their children for any support they may need. After learning virtually for over a month, the Little Bucs are learning to do things independently, such as mute and unmute their microphones. The group of children this year are learning new skills that others in the past never had to, but they are adapting to virtual learning and having fun while doing it!

Mrs. Hanhart, Miss Mozino, and the student-teachers worked hard to bring the preschoolers together for some socially distanced in-person events, including a Halloween get-together. They planned events that would allow the Little Bucs to play games, while wearing masks and practicing social distancing. These precautions were a priority in organizing a fun and safe Little Bucs gathering. The current virtual learning situation makes these in-person events that much more special for the Little Bucs and teachers. Unfortunately, the consistent rise in COVID cases forced the program to cancel these scheduled gatherings.

For months we have been living in a world of uncertainty, but our preschool program is definitely making the best of a situation that is new for everyone. We are so proud of our Little Bucs student-teachers for successfully teaching the preschoolers virtually, and for keeping a positive attitude despite the challenges they have faced. Mrs. Hanhart, Miss Mozino, the student-teachers, the Little Bucs, and their parents are looking forward to continuing an amazing year, and they hope to eventually be able to hold preschool in person in 2021. Everyone is facing new learning challenges, but it is crucial to continue to help our little ones grow and develop, which is exactly what our student-teachers work to do every single day!



Above: Little Bucs display their Halloween projects to their student teachers during their virtual preschool class



Happy Thanksgiving,
Bucs!



Chapel, from p. 1

“I moved from managing Little Monmouth to Chapel under the ownership of the Mulheren family,” Mr. Forrest explained. “Sandy Mulheren is the general manager and I help him out. We’ve gone through multiple storms together, including Hurricanes Sandy and Irene. This past summer included a hurricane that could have debilitated the club. Instead, almost the entire staff showed up to make sure we were ready to open that day.”

Every student we talked to loved their job at Chapel. “While I have only worked a handful of part time jobs, this one was hands down the best,” said senior Thomas Feldkamp. “This past summer was my first summer [there], but I quickly bonded with everyone, and by the end of the summer I felt like I had been working there forever.” Feldkamp appreciated that the larger Chapel staff helped him adjust to a new job: “As a newcomer, they made me feel welcome... I really liked working with classmates and teachers from RBR because it gave me a group of people I already knew.”

Ethan Cornish, another senior, agreed. “The job honestly helped with communication and social life, as it was right after quarantine that we started up,” he said. “Working with fellow Bucs is very cool and, in a way, relaxing. We do not slack, but we do have fun.. Whether we joke around with each other or we have serious talks, it’s always a good time. It also gives us an immediate ‘chemistry;’ we can work together really easily, and helping each other is easy.”

Besides battling Mother Nature, one of the trickier jobs at the club is manning the parking lot. Feldkamp, Cornish, and fellow senior Sam Jansky were among the Bucs who had to negotiate situations when guests outnumbered parking spots. “The most challenging part [of the job] was in the parking lot, [where] people got easily frustrated and were not afraid to express it,” said Feldkamp. “The craziest thing that happened on one of my shifts was the crashing of a new Range Rover on the Fourth of July. While I didn’t see it live, the hole it left in the side of the building was pretty incredible. Driving Bruce Springsteen’s car for the first time was also pretty scary.”

Jansky added, “the wildest thing that happened on my shift is when my umbrella broke and flew up in the air, hitting a passing biker and knocking her off her bike. (She was ok.)” There are also some dicey moments between cars and beachgoers: “I’ve seen casual bikers almost getting hit by cars, or a car turning almost causing an accident,” said Cornish. “The craziest thing I’ve seen is someone crossing the road on a bike and got hit and launched by a car - only like 10 feet or so.” Sophomore Avery Smith mentioned that her scariest moment was when “there was a storm coming and everything was blowing away—it was very windy!” Still, she loved the job because she could be at the beach all the time, and “working with other Bucs, you know everyone you’re working with.”

Another challenge this summer was, of course, COVID. “The owners did a tremendous job keeping the club safe with extra precautions,” Mr. Forrest said. “After an outbreak from a party in Middletown, my assistant managers did an amazing job with contact tracing. We had to quarantine staff and try to educate them at the same time. What’s great about working at Chapel is that we are a team. We work together. And having an RBR team behind me made this so much easier.”

Mr. Martin has worked at Chapel for four summers. Working with fellow Bucs, he says, offers “all good things: I get to see some of my students in a different light, and vice versa. It always reminds us that we are all just people with families and jobs outside of our normal roles as teachers and students.” The job comes with fringe benefits as well. “One of the things I enjoy most about [the job] is the ocean,” Martin said. “I’ve seen dolphins, whales, and all kinds of fish near the shoreline. This past summer we had lots of days with whale sightings... This year, after some pretty aggressive and tiring paddling, I came within about 20-30 feet of a breaching humpback whale.”

Science teacher Jennamarie DeVito has coached the Chapel swim team for 8 years. While she coaches and gives lessons to swimmers of all ages, the younger team members can make the job a little frenzied. “The first 20 minutes of a swim meet tend to be chaotic no matter how much planning goes into it,” she said. “Chapel typically has 20 or more 4, 5, and 6 year-olds in the first event, so making sure those little aquamaniacs are all in the correct lane and not super nervous can be challenging.” The craziness is worth it. “I coach with awesome students from RBR.... They always follow through with coaching responsibilities and that makes the job run smoothly.” As for others, the job’s location is a big draw for DeVito. “Often I am there when Chapel first opens, and it’s so quiet and peaceful in the early morning by the beach,” she said. “[It] is the perfect summer job for me. I am outside all day at the beach under the sun...sharing my love for swimming.”

The summer of 2020, while different from any other, offered RBR Chapel employees an opportunity to spend time at the beach, work hard, and bond with fellow Bucs. Sam Jansky enjoyed “the friendly community of members and staff at Chapel. Working with my fellow classmates is being able to have fun while at work.” Mr. Forrest appreciated the efforts of his students and colleagues: “It is nice to be able to work with Red Bank students because they do such a good job.” Mr. Martin also cited his “deep, dark, and seemingly permanent flip-flop and farmer’s tans” as one of the jobs’ perks.

Other RBR students that worked at the club were seniors Bodhi Martin and Dan Lopez, juniors Dylan Goldberg and Peter Thomas, and freshman JP McDonald-Mauro. Only 208 days until summer 2021!



Left: Mr. Martin getting a close-up view of a humpback whale

Student-organized Summer Vigil Spreads Peace and Awareness

By TJ Eyerman and *Buccaneer* staff

The events of 2020 have certainly been historic, with much of the year blending into a large blur. However, along with the coronavirus, the events of the early summer are still unforgettable in the minds of many. When George Floyd was unjustly murdered in May, the country came together in outrage and protest.

TJ Eyerman, a rising junior at Red Bank Regional, and Lily Thompson, a rising junior at the Academy of Health and Science, channeled that outrage into organizing a candlelight vigil on July 16 at Shrewsbury Borough Hall to memorialize victims of systemic racism. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the event was socially distanced and required all individuals in attendance to wear a mask.

Eyerman and Thompson, both from Shrewsbury, aimed to raise awareness about racism and related issues in the U.S. While the problems seen throughout the country may not be occurring as profoundly in Shrewsbury, the two thought it was important to address these issues and confront the systems that cause them. When asked about some other protests throughout the country, the pair stressed their commitment to making sure the activity was peaceful and educational. It is also worth noting they did not affiliate themselves with any organizations, but only as individuals looking to spread awareness of and campaign for human rights.

To hold the event, Eyerman and Thompson had to seek approval from the Shrewsbury Town Council. After gaining approval and insurance for the event, they moved forward with the help of Councilman Gilmartin, Borough Administrator Mutie, and Police Chief Turner. Fellow RBR juniors Maddie Barecca and Nyree Portee, along with A.A.H.S. student and RBR field hockey player Abi Naidich, helped register residents to vote and collect donations for the N.A.A.C.P.

The event hosted prominent speakers, including Senator Vin Gopal, Red Bank Councilman Michael Ballard, Park Church Pastor Matthew Agresti and Shrewsbury Quaker Peace Covener Thomas O'Brien. The vigil also included an 8 minute and 46 second moment of silence in memory of Mr. Floyd. The two organizers reported that approximately 120 Shrewsbury residents attended the vigil; Eyerman and Thompson hope that all of them left the event with more sensitivity to racial issues and concern for just treatment of all.



Above: TJ Eyerman and Lily Thompson address the crowd at their vigil



Above: Lily Thompson, Maddie Barrecca, and another volunteer ready the candlelights before the vigil

Left: Abi Naidich and Nyree Portee head the voter registration effort

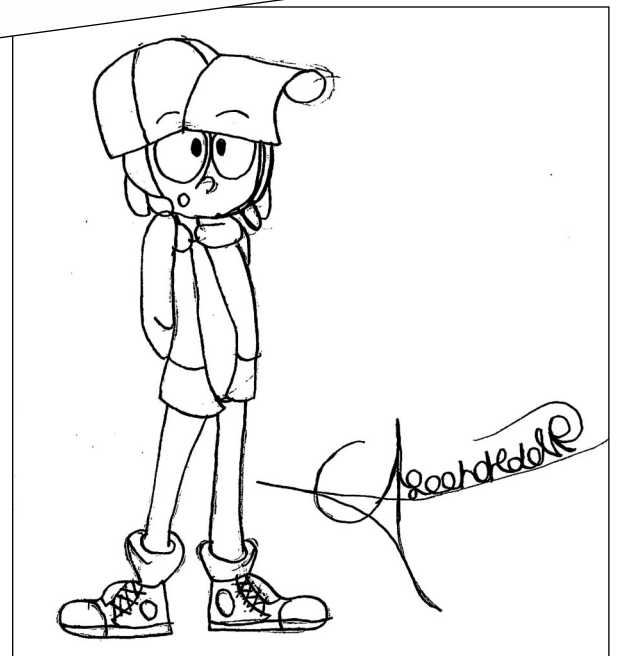
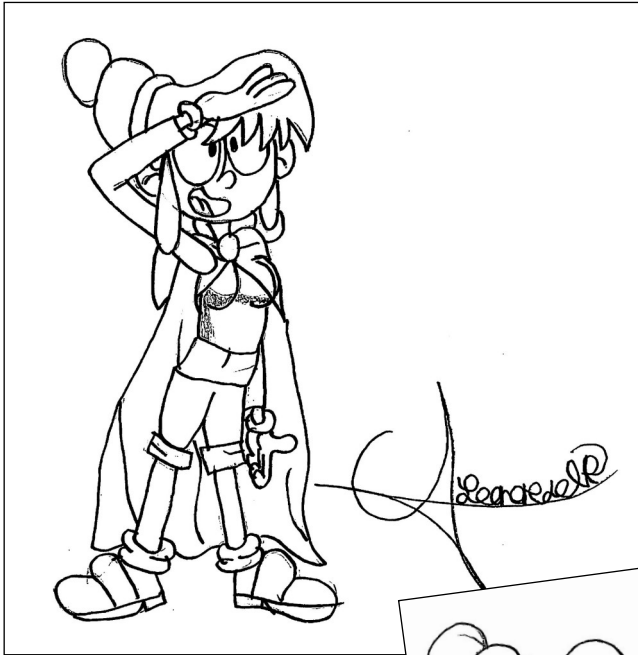
Meet Ethan and Aiden!

And their creator, Leo Morales

Leo Morales has only been drawing seriously for 10 months, but he already has big plans for his two characters, Aiden (girl) and Ethan (boy).

A self-taught cartoonist, Morales was inspired to try drawing earlier this year when he saw a flipbook. "I was watching the drawings move, so I wanted to make my own," Morales explained. "So that's what I did. I made my own and it was incredible ." And although he's happy to draw Ethan and Aiden in single panels, he adds that "They won't be on the paper for that long, since I have a passion project planned for them: a new series of theatrical cartoon shorts."

The Buccaneer is proud to introduce you to Ethan, Aiden, and Leo!



Should We Break Up with Breakout Rooms?

By Molly Jain

Most students are familiar with breakout rooms, and have witnessed firsthand the hot-and-cold relationship they have with online learning. Breakout rooms are a feature that Zoom has had for a while and Google Meet has had for... not so long. In fact, it was only in October that Google Meet added breakout rooms as an official feature.

The concept seems ideal at first. Teachers separate students into breakout rooms and release them. The students get a pop-up that says which breakout room (small group) they are joining, and provides a button to click to join. Teachers can hop between these rooms to see and hear the chats, and when students are done they can return to the main Meet, all without leaving the main Meet or opening another tab. It seems a perfect way to simulate in-person groups in online class, and the applications seem endless; group projects, class discussions, checking answers quickly in class, all become far easier using this feature. But there's a catch. Because it is so new, there has been some serious struggle getting breakout rooms to work. From day one, breakout rooms have posed technical difficulties for many.

From personal experience, breakout rooms can run perfectly or be absolute disasters. Two teachers, Mrs. McDavitt (Creative Writing) and Mr. Forrest (English) offered their perspective on the technology. Creative Writing used breakout rooms sparingly before Google Meet implemented them officially, and Mrs. McDavitt says she likes them far better now that they're easier to use. She has found them particularly useful for her class, which frequently involves editing and working together in small groups or pairs. Breakout rooms are useful not only for asynchronous learning, she says, but also to maintain the culture of a small, tightly-knit class and academy even while online. Some technical difficulties exist, she allows, such as the rooms crashing and then not letting you back in the Meet. Thus, she said she wouldn't want to use them every day, but thinks they're a useful and fun tool for maintaining the way the class usually works online. The way that breakout rooms fit the style of the class outweigh the technical difficulties that occur.

Mr. Forrest said that as a concept, breakout rooms are great; he likes the idea of students being able to interact and talk apart from the large group Meet while in class. However, Mr. Forrest has had his fair share of difficulties with breakout rooms. To circumvent technical issues, he has had to try multiple, different services to create rooms; sometimes he gets kicked out of the Meets every time he creates the groups. The problem, he says, is that trying to make the breakout groups work takes up much of the already abbreviated time we have for class. For that reason, Mr. Forrest said he's decided to not use them much for the time being.

However, he said that if Google continues to work on improving breakout rooms, he'd try them again, as he likes the possibility of having more natural group work and discussions in class. He added that the teachers and staff have been working on resolving technical difficulties, including the struggle with breakout rooms, leaving some hope

that breakout rooms could live up to the idea at some point.

It's not just teachers who have had varied experiences with breakout rooms. Out of 41 people who responded to a survey I posted my Instagram story, 10 said they liked breakout rooms and 31 that they were terrible. In other words, 71% of my (admittedly narrow) pool of students disliked the new feature. Why?

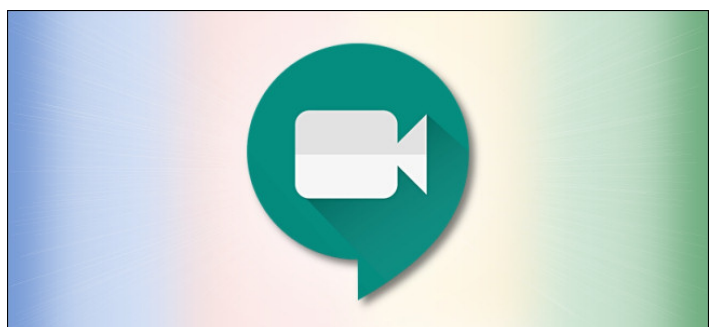
Some gave the expected answers about wifi cutting out and teachers not quite knowing how to use the tech. But surprisingly, the most common answer I got had nothing to do with technical difficulties. The largest complaint was that no one talks in breakout rooms. Some said it was just awkward, while others said they didn't understand what was going on or didn't get work done because people wouldn't participate. All of the respondents agreed that the human factor made breakout rooms in general an unpleasant experience.

So it seems that while teachers are optimistic about the uses of breakout rooms if their technology could be improved, students still find them less than ideal. However, this seems to be a problem mostly of our own creation. Everyone knows that online and hybrid school is weird and stressful. Everything feels new: learning how long it actually takes to unmute your laptop, figuring out how to have discussions in class, sharing the audio on computers, and the list goes on. Breakout rooms seem to only add to this confusion.

Teachers, some more than others, have to deal with the struggle and stress of wondering if their breakout rooms will actually work, while students feel awkward and disconnected when working in them. Still, some people told me they do like breakout rooms, and Mr. Forrest and Mrs. McDavitt both seemed optimistic about using breakout rooms if they could work reliably.

So maybe it's wrong to break up entirely with breakout rooms. Rather, maybe we should both just take some time for ourselves. We can leave breakout rooms to work out their technology problems, and hopefully become more reliable and easy to use.

Meanwhile, we can work on figuring out how to use this technology in a way that fewer people feel uncomfortable, and instead aim to make it feel like a more normal classroom experience. It'll take some work on both sides, but maybe after some time breakout rooms and school can have a true happily-ever-after.



Voting Drive Inspires GenZ Seniors

By Cooper Strauss

As divisive as this election season was, the one thing that we can all agree on is the importance of voting. Whether your favorite candidate lost in the primaries (like mine) or in the general election, the most important part was that you made your voice heard. Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy. This fall, RBR benefited from a voting drive run by Mrs. Marisol Mondaca from The Source, with help from senior Julie Flores-Castillo and Orlando Gonzalez, and juniors Andy Garcia and Madelyn McManus.

The voting drive was started to help push to the polls one group that has historically low voting numbers: teens. Garcia explained, "The next president, senators and representatives elected will be responsible for today's problems." And there was an even more personal touch, too. Mrs. Mondaca grew up in Santiago, Chile. In her youth, she lived through the Pinochet dictatorship, when citizens were unable to "exercise any rights." She made it clear: "When you lose your voice and your most basic rights, you realize how important [voting] is".

The voting drive had many goals. Garcia hoped "to educate the people on the importance of voting" and hoped to make clear that "there is no excuse" for not voting if eligible. Mrs. Mondaca hoped to "register more youth," and connected our RBR group with the League of Women Voters in Monmouth County. These incredible women gave a presentation to seniors about how and why to vote. One goal definitely achieved was that of Madelyn McManus: "to register one person to vote, even if it was just one person."



Why is voting important?

"Voting is incredibly important!" McManus explained. "People in power listen to those who put them there; they listen to the people who voted for them. Your vote is helping put someone in power who you believe will bring up the issues that are important to you." Flores-Castillo concurred: "Voting is important since it will determine laws and leaders that will either help us or cause harm." Garcia added, "Voting is important because if you, or someone you know, doesn't vote, then a representative you don't want to win, can win. Every vote counts, including yours, especially in this election."

"Voting is our most basic right as a citizen," Mrs. Mondaca said. "If we want to preserve our democracy, we have to exercise our right to vote."

McManus conceded that the drive was on "the smaller side" but made clear that there was "an awesome group of students that... [got] to cast their vote in the election" as a result. In total, eight students became newly-registered voters, adding to the substantial number of seniors who were already registered. In addition, the whole class - over 300 students - was educated about the importance of voting.

The voting drive took an incredible amount of time and dedication. The students and faculty members involved played a crucial role in preserving and promoting our democracy for future generations. Like many of you, I was not eligible to vote in this election. But the day will come when we are, and the voting drive highlighted the importance of registering, voting, and making our voices heard.

Q&A: COA Clean-up

By Finn Barrett

On Saturday, October 24th, the RBR Environmental Club helped promote a series of beach cleanups throughout several counties in New Jersey organized by Clean Ocean Action (COA). Mr. Hussey, the head of the Environmental Club, answered a few questions about these cleanups.

What is Clean Ocean Action?

According to the COA website, "Clean Ocean Action is a leading national and regional voice working to protect waterways using science, law, research, education, and citizen action."

What occurs during these cleanups?

During the beach sweeps, volunteers document litter that has made its way to our shores. This is done by collecting all of the litter in a location and tallying each piece according to category. The data is used to determine non-point source pollutants and strategize ways to eliminate them.

What measures were put in place to combat COVID-19?

This year each of the locations were capped at a safe number. This meant that everyone needed to register in advance, and sites were closed when capacity was met. Also, all volunteers reviewed and followed proper social distancing and other safety protocols like wearing masks and gloves.

When do these clean-ups occur?

COA runs beach sweeps each year in the spring and fall.

What exactly did the Environmental Club do to promote the cleanups?

Members of the Environmental Club promoted this year's beach sweep through social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter.

Did the Environmental Club Organize to participate in one of the cleanups?

As a club we only promoted the clean-ups; however, many club

Q&A: Mr. Jackson

By Kira Ashton-O'Connor

Most people know that Mr. Jackson is the production director for RBR and teaches the VPA Drama Program, but they don't know much more about him. So I took the time to interview him and get a little more background knowledge on his acting career.

When did you first know you wanted to act?

I was 14 or 15 when I was doing a summer theater production of *Godspell* in high school. I started studying more seriously when I was 18 in my first year of college, when I took an acting class.

What does acting mean to you?

Acting is a reflection of the soul...a reflection of life. It's putting life—the heart, mind and soul—onto the stage. It's a revelation of the human spirit.

What was your favorite role?

It's hard to say, but my favorite role...was when I played Captain Ahab in an adaptation of Melville's *Moby Dick* when I was 21. That, for me, was the highlight of my theatrical experience.

What is your favorite part of teaching at RBR?

Every day is a new experience with the students. Every day they bring new challenges, Every day they bring new excitement... RBR is a great space for creative freedom. It has a fantastic theater and an incredibly fantastic faculty and staff that I've been very fortunate and have had the honor to work with. They really, really are wonderful people to work with. They are "yes" people and they do things in a positive way. They say things *can* be done instead of *can't*. I also have a fantastic supervisor. It's a great arts program.

Do you have any acting advice?

My advice for anyone who is in this industry or is a student of acting is...first, stay true to who you really are and second, never give up.

How has the pandemic affected how you teach drama?

I am forced to stretch my creativity to figure out how to best connect with students in ways I haven't thought of before. The challenge has been, how do you compel students to think and feel through a computer screen? When I am not with the person in real time and in real space, it's very difficult to do a monologue, a scene or act... In the pandemic, you are completely cut off and completely isolated. I find the challenge is to be very, very clear with my communication and make sure the students absolutely understand what it is they are saying and doing and what it is they're listening to. We've had to make some creative choices as far as how we are planning out our performances this year. Some new and creative things are coming your way, but it

Notes from the [Football] Field

A firsthand report of autumn's

By Kira Ashton-O'Connor

On November 20, drama and dance students teamed up to perform a mini-play, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Since the students are split into cohorts, it was a struggle to run the play all together. We made it work by having the virtual students follow along at home with the students in school.

Every Friday the drama students went to the dance studio and practices. It was a cool experience working with the dance students. and it was coming together nicely. Then challenges started popping up.

First, as the school started to go all virtual, we never really finished the play. COVID regulations dictate that we have to be 6 feet apart and we can't have too many people inside, so Mr. Jackson and Mr. Gabriel decided it would be better if we performed it on the football field so we could all keep socially distant. It was also difficult to pick a date to perform because of the crazy New Jersey weather, so we had to push the date back several times. The students were notified on November 19 that we would be putting on the show the next day because the weather was supposed to be nice.

We arrived at the school at 7:30 a.m. and completed the parts of the play we never got to finish, Some musicians also attended and accompanied the acting which sounded nice. By the time it was 11:15, all the parents arrived and we were ready to go. Most of us were nervous, and not everyone was able to perform, but we all still did a great job considering all of the obstacles we faced. The performance was live-streamed to the entire school during block 4.

It was a fun, cool experience being able to work with the dancers, and I learned some ballet moves!



Listen!

By Dennis Dayan

Daniel Lopatin (AKA Chuck Person) is a formidable force in modern alternative electronic music. Son of two Russian immigrants with musical backgrounds, he took an early interest in Jazz Fusion and the work of Stevie Wonder. His life changed when he inherited a Roland Juno-60, a popular synthesizer. Throughout high school and college, he developed his artistry through the Brooklyn noise scene. Lopatin eventually broke ground in the Hypnagogic Pop genre, utilizing nostalgia to craft an odd amalgam of pop and ambient. Eventually, Lopatin was asked to score cinema, recently creating the entire *Uncut Gems* soundtrack himself. However, one of his most important works deviated in sound from most of his projects. This groundbreaking and legendary album is *Chuck Person's EccoJams Vol. 1*.

The origins of the Vaporwave are often disputed on online message boards. Some have claimed that true vaporwave started with the inspiration for it: muzak. Some have debated that the origins were politically motivated, with non-binary and gender-progressive artists making soulless parodies of capitalism in the form of mutilated muzak. These claims are essentially false. Vaporwave is simply a genre pioneered by Lopatin in the form of *EccoJams*.

The record is not a traditional in the slightest, flowing in an almost unnatural and eerie way. The record starts with the simply named "A1." Looping and chopping samples from Toto's "Africa," the track makes an interesting introduction that seems to speak for the entire record itself.

I am going to spare you the absolute displeasure of me describing in pain-staking detail every track off this record. This record is - to put it bluntly - unique. A record of this caliber only appears every once in a blue moon, completely inventing and revolutionizing genres with ease. The almost hypnotic nature of the repeated samples and dreamy production conjure a perfect audio dystopia of existential dread and 1980s culture. Tracks such as "A3" reflect this, constantly pounding into the listener's ear, "[to] be real it doesn't matter anyway, you know it's just a little too late."

Listening to this record takes time and understanding. It is easy to dismiss this constant droning and repeating of samples as mere laziness, but it is so much more than that. Once you take a truly deep listen, you will notice beautiful layered production and a sense of absolute dread. Whether you view said dread as something more existential and philosophical or as something to tell you to turn the music off, it still invokes a feeling, which is much more than most modern music can today.

It is a profound shame that this record isn't talked about more, as its influence is sweeping and awe inspiring. The words of Factory Records founder Tony Wilson sum up my feelings perfectly: "[B]ecause it's unsettling and slightly sinister and gothic it won't be played, [and] it seems a shame."

Verdict: A legendary and influential record on one of the most complex modern genres in music, yet difficult to listen to.

Rating: 6.5/10

Read!

By Molly Jain

The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin

Genre: Mystery

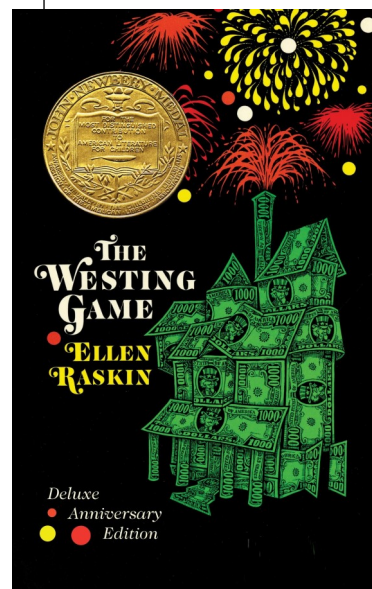
People who would like this book: Fans of mystery books will enjoy the complicated case in the book, while people who like logic puzzles will enjoy trying to figure out the clues alongside the characters. The book also features lots of tongue-in-cheek humor, puns, and plays on words.

Summary: Shortly after 16 specifically-chosen residents move into the Sunset Towers apartments and storefronts, Sam Westing, owner of the nearby Westing mansion, is found dead, and, according to his will, murdered. The residents are divided into pairs and given clues, with the task of discovering Sam Westing's murderer in exchange for inheriting his fortune.

The Westing Game is one of the most unique books I've ever read. From start to finish, the book is filled with wordplay, double meanings, and subtle hints and foreshadowing to the end. The book is written in third person omniscient, with perspectives switching every few paragraphs. However, these sections are frequently broken up with dialogue, excerpts from newspapers, letters, and other items, and each section makes it clear which character's perspective you are following.

Every character has a distinct voice and personality, with many of them being humorous characterizations of often dislikable traits. However, every character has a much deeper story than you first think, from the sometimes-neglected and rambunctious Turtle Wexler to the goofy doorman Sandy McSouthers. Everyone has something to hide or a hidden relationship to Sam Westing himself.

The mystery of Sam Westing's murder is presented as a game and puzzle, and careful readers can work to discover the solution along with the character. Even if you play along, though, the ending and all its twists will still shock you. If you want a unique and cleverly-written mystery framed around a puzzle with a surprising ending, *The Westing Game* is the perfect book for you.



Have a book recommendation or a review? Submit it to *The Buccaneer*! Email cdorn@rbrhs.org.

Stream!

Zoe's Extraordinary Playlist

By Julianna Vockroth

Do you ever wish that you can hear what other people are thinking? In NBC's *Zoe's Extraordinary Playlist*, the title character (Jane Levy), a smart, introverted coder, goes for an MRI, worried that she is developing symptoms for the same brain disorder that her father had (Peter Gallagher). An earthquake strikes during her scan and she begins to hear people's innermost thoughts and desires through song.

Zoe can hear thoughts of complete strangers as well as her closest friends. After a breakthrough with her music-loving neighbor Mo (Alex Newell), she realizes that this power is both a curse and a blessing. She is finally able to communicate with her dad, who cannot speak because of his disease, progressive supranuclear palsy. This plotline is based on reality, as the father of show's creator, Austin Winsberg, suffered from PSP as well.

Because of her power, Zoey is able to develop a closer bond with Simon, a co-worker she's crushing on (John Clarence Stewart). However, she learns that her best friend Max (Skylar Astin) is in love with her. Additionally, this new ability comes at an important time in her career because her boss, Joan (Lauren Graham), tells her that it's between her and one other person for a promotion.

NBC has created a funny, touching musical drama that is destined to be a hit. The format makes it light and happy, with unexpected dramatic undertones. Viewers instantly feel welcomed by the Clarke family, a great place to visit during quarantine! Luckily for fans, Season 2 begins January 5 on NBC. Catch up on *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist* on Hulu, On Demand, or Peacock, NBC's free streaming service (for Xfinity customers).



Taika Waititi's Jojo Rabbit

By Declan Mannion

Taika Waititi's *Jojo Rabbit* is a brilliant movie about the effects of propaganda in Nazi-occupied Germany. The movie follows Jojo, a child in the Hitler Youth, the outcast trying to find a place in his world. In the movie, Adolf Hitler (or a rather cartoonish portrayal of him) becomes Jojo's inner voice and his imaginary friend.

While initially the plot seems grim, part of the brilliance of the movie comes from its comedy. For example, director Waititi, who plays Hitler, gives a comedic and rather goofy look at the way both children and the Gestapo view Hitler. Waititi has mentioned many times in interviews that one scene even had a Monty Python-esque tone to it.

After a screening of the movie I attended, Taika Waititi himself did a Q&A. He discussed how he was often asked about the danger in making a comedy about such a serious topic. His response: "People say, 'Oh it's a bit dangerous to be doing humor, doing a World War II film don't you think?' [But] it's like following a very fine tradition of people who, you know, who have more courage to do it because no one else was doing it...so I felt like I was in very good company." Many great comedy writers, such as Mel Brooks and Charlie Chaplin, poked fun at the famously evil dictator before Waititi did.

Waititi also described how he was able to mix comedy with such a hard-hitting topic, stating, "...if you pick on enough of the things that are stupid about something, you know, that there's a ludicrous world view like that, then you start seeing the entire thing as being this stupid flimsy idea..." Asked about how much effort he put into his Adolf Hitler, Waititi responded, "I just slapped the mustache on...I didn't want to do any research, not for that f***ing guy, and I just didn't want to give him the satisfaction of making any effort, like studying him or anything like that...I don't think he deserved it...also, it's a ten year old's projection of what Hitler is, so you only know what a ten year old knows..."

Not only does Waititi's lack of research into Adolf Hitler heighten the overall performance of the film by emphasizing the fact that this is a child's view of Hitler, but it also strengthens the moral of the movie. The entire movie was used as a way to disassemble the scary and domineering demeanor that Hitler tried to cultivate in his power; therefore, putting no effort into research reinforces the fact that Hitler deserves no respect.

Waititi also commented on the controversy the movie has with a rise in the Nazi movement in 2019. "I think it's sad that this movie even exists," he said, "that in 2019 you got to make a movie telling people not to be Nazis." The director's statement illustrates that even after the Nazi's defeat in WWII, tenets of National Socialism remain. A comedic treatment of Nazism imparts a powerful message by not only offering a simple glimpse into a Nazi's life in Germany during World War II, but by dismantling the "glamour" a Nazi sympathizer would find in that belief system.



Thrifting Benefits the Wallet, Environment, and Closet

By Claire Munley

Through informational courses and newfound information about popular stores, more and more stylish teens of Gen Z are understanding the influence that the clothing industry has on our world. Stores such as Forever 21, H&M, and Urban Outfitters employ rapid mass production of super-cheap clothing, but though the price tag may be low, the environmental costs are extremely high.

Although the fashion industry has expanded the production of sustainably-made clothing, not everyone wants to spend \$75 on a single pair of leggings that supposedly consist of recycled plastic. As consumers turn away from these booming but more expensive brands, more have turned to thrifting. Thrifting has dramatically increased in popularity due to low prices and unique finds that attract buyers, all of whom are unintentionally aiding the environment. Below are three of many reasons why secondhand is better for the Earth.

Less in landfills. Americans alone throw away about 10.5 million tons of clothing every year. The amount of clothing produced has dramatically increased, while clothing prices and quality have gone down. Studies show that 60 percent of the clothes made worldwide are made from synthetic materials. When thrown away, they often sit in landfills for hundreds of years. This is a constant pattern that will only result in tons of useless trash and lack of materials. Buying secondhand means you'll be keeping plastic out of landfills and positively contributing to the decrease in worldwide textile demand and subsequent waste.

Fewer resources used and wasted. You may not believe this, but making one pair of jeans takes roughly 1,800 gallons of water. The production process for that one pair also generates greenhouse gases equivalent to driving over 80 miles. Similar numbers apply to t-shirts, skirts, and most other articles of clothing. Through thrifting, you keep the resources invested in all of these clothing items from going to waste.

Less pollution. Nearly 90 percent of the cotton grown

for textiles is genetically modified, which means it is heavily reliant on pesticides. Twenty percent of pesticide use worldwide is for use on cotton plants. These chemicals contaminate nearby water supplies and acidify the soil. The dyes used in the textile making process also pollute water supplies when dumped directly into nearby rivers or lakes. Last, the production of the synthetic fabrics releases nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas that is 310 times stronger than carbon dioxide. By switching to secondhand shopping, the money you spend won't go toward supporting an industry that is characterized by water and air pollution.

As environmental awareness grows in younger consumers, thrifting has become a revamped phenomenon. Popular atmospheres and online technology have cultivated a following among Gen Zers. The increasing market value of the second-hand clothing business Goodwill is evidence of this modernized "Thrifting Economy." As Goodwill has grown, there has been more demand for shopping at local antique, clothing, and eco-friendly merchandisers. Local shops such as Pearl Street, Green Street, and Red Bank Antiques offer unique finds, vintage brands, and original designs on second-hand apparel.

If there's something you're dying to find but can't grab in stores, you can also shop online! My favorite website, Thread Up, offers items for any style with popular brands and crazy discounts. The social shopping app Depop has encouraged individuals to sell, purchase, or redesign unused clothing. This year, TechCrunch reported that Depop has raised over \$62 million in funding and that 90 percent of its active users are younger than 26.

Especially during these challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, don't be afraid to be creative with the extra time on your hands, especially like those who are selling their own products.

Shop smart and be safe!



O Captain My Captain

An October reflection on fall sports (when they existed)

By Cooper Strauss

Let me start off by saying that I am not the biggest sports fan. In my four years at RBR, I have never attended a football game. I went to a basketball game once during my junior year. So I really had no idea what to expect when talking to two sports captains about their season. To be frank, I assumed I would hear disgruntled athletes complaining that their season could not be normal. However, Owen Laughlin, one of the three football captains, and Matt Villani, one of the three soccer captains, proved me wrong.

Owen started off discussing the safety measures for the football team: temperature checks before each practice and masks on the sideline. Pretty standard safety protocol. In addition, each player is given a bucket in which to store their personal equipment (helmets, mouth guards, and water bottles). He then addressed the late start to the season and how it hurt the overall chemistry of the team. Owen explained that practices usually start in June (this year they were pushed to August), and that these early practices often focus less on plays and drills and more on team-building.

Regardless, he was optimistic about practices, saying that in mid-October things were starting “to get back to normal.” In terms of games, however, he said that there was “just something missing.” He explained to me that the background noise during the games was never something he or fellow players noticed until it was gone. Now, he said, it was just “too quiet.” Always the eternal optimist, Owen told me that every other team was in the same boat.

Finally, the difficult topic arose: how he felt about COVID disrupting his season. Whatever answer I expected, I did not get it. Owen explained to me that his only issue with this season was the “uncertainty” of it. The whole thing, he said, could end in a matter of hours with a couple of positive COVID tests in the league. That was the thought that haunted him as well as the rest of the team. He also added that he and his fellow captains, Brian Navitsky and Nick Ferrogine, use that uncertainty to motivate the team. He says it's important to just “go out and play” because the team realizes “nothing is certain.” Still, he was confident that the Bucs, at least, would be safe due to the effort of the school administrators, Athletic Trainer Ms. Emrich, and the team. I still am not a football fan, but after speaking with Owen, my attitude changed a bit. Even if you are not a diehard sports fan, I believe that we, as a student body, owe it to Owen and the rest of the football team to go to the games when we can. The team needs us to make some noise when we are there!

Matt confirmed what Owen told me: soccer practices were kept “COVID-safe” with daily temperature checks and masks for those not on the field. The biggest change for soccer was the game schedule. In soccer, it is typical to play an opponent twice during the season. Usually, Matt explained, this pair of games was spread out over the season, giving the teams a chance to improve their skills for the next match-up. This season, though, the two games were played one after the other; the Bucs would play the same team

twice in a row. It limits exposure to the virus, but also limits the team's chances for competitive play. For example, if a team won 6-0 on Tuesday, it is unlikely that team would lose against the same team two days later. Like Owen, Matt gave me the impression that the preseason was a tough time for the boys soccer team. Like football, soccer practices started late in the year, there was no contact, and early games were either cancelled or pushed back due to health concerns. When pressed to describe the season in one word, Matt said “disheartening.”

Still, like Owen, Matt, saw the glass as half full. He was glad that the team even had a season, and he made clear that the coaches and the school did, and are doing, “the best they can.” He was just happy to be able to play. Matt added he was at an October football game and was disappointed at how few fans there were. Compared to soccer games, he said, football lost more fans proportionally and overall.

In those two conversations, I became the Bucs biggest fan. I have been close friends with Matt and Owen since my freshman year, and I thought I knew them pretty well. But I never expected them to talk about their seasons the way they did. I assumed that they would be frustrated with the restrictions and an interview as a way to vent. Honestly, my questions were angled to allow them to do just that. Instead, they took the opportunity to make it painfully clear that everyone was doing the best they can in a trying time. Their attitude brings only one word to mind: sportsmanship.

Have I beaten a dead horse when I say that I am not interested in sports? Still, I promise that from now on, I will try to attend every Bucs sporting event that I can. I never understood the real passion for the sport that every player on every team has. Now I do. Whenever sports return, I urge all of you to come out and support the Bucs also. It truly does make a difference. And, if you see me cheering on the sideline, please come up and say hi. But please, stay six feet away.

The Buccaneer

Red Bank Regional's Student Newspaper

Editors: Cooper Strauss, Maria Rigopoulos,
Julianna Vockroth

Buccaneer contributors:

Kira Ashton-O'Connor	Molly Jain
Finn Barrett	Declan Mannion
Dennis Dayan	Leo Morales
Paul Duncan	Claire Munley
TJ Eyerman	Amy Serrano
Julie Flores-Castillo	

Faculty advisor: Cassandra Dorn

The title should be “It’s a Classic—Don’t change it”

By Paul Duncan

As the new year comes about, and we go into a “musical dry spell,” it is perfect that we review a classic. During the U.K. scene in the 80’s, classical rock guitarists and primitive synthpop dominated the charts with an almost unforeseen unrelenting force.

With flamboyant frontman Morrissey dancing like he was having a seizure he didn’t know about, and the jangly Rickenbacker guitar playing by Johnny Marr on Britain’s Top Of the Pops, alt-rock band The Smiths were at odds with the times. That was the point. They were a band that dwelled on the depressive characteristics of being a teenager, focusing on topics like depression, loneliness, and love. Further, their music was incredibly lively, catchy and humorous.

Their records followed the format of the more sophisticated, more realistic and homegrown version of rock music. Their first two albums, *The Smiths* and *Meat is Murder*, featured the jangly yet beautiful playing of Marr and the overly-exaggerated singing of Morrissey, combined with the insatiable bass grooves and rambunctious yet smooth drums found on tracks like “This Charming Man,” “Barbarism Begins at Home,” and “Hand In Glove.” *Meat is Murder* also featured sharp social commentary on issues like veganism, corruption in politics, and the English school system through memorable musical performances on “The Headmaster’s Ritual,” “Rusholme Ruffians,” and “Nowhere Fast.” Morrissey was praised on these records for being lyrically grounded, but also criticized for ripping off motifs from other mediums and infusing it into these Smiths songs. So why does this context matter? Because in 1986, *The Queen is Dead* came out, a culmination of everything that came before.

The album opens up with the epic and energetic title track, featuring an absolutely manic guitar riff and an almost gut punch of commentary. The track, lyrically, acts as almost a parody of the fascination of the royal family. Instead of acting graceful and respectful, it’s rash and abrasive with little regard for backlash, fundamentally disrespecting the Queen: “Her very Lowness with her head in a sling/I’m truly sorry but it sounds like a wonderful thing.” Morrissey has absolutely no trouble shaming the monarchy. The track almost becomes biographical at points, with images about breaking into a “secured” palace or walking about the things that kill you (love, law and poverty). The track breaks down into an instrumental during its last minute. with gorgeous harp-like notes playing in the background of this rough guitar playing. The track eventually cools down and transitions us to “Frankly Mr. Shankly.” Not only does it have a stupid title, it’s 100% the least worthwhile track on the album. Even though there are positives such as the marching quality of the track and the light-hearted tone, it feels completely out of place in the track listing and doesn’t do anything interesting with its presentation.

“I Know It’s Over” is a painfully romantic yet dread-filled song. The lyrics and the performance are heartfelt, the bass line is absolutely mellow. It’s a heartbreaking track about one’s regrets after death. The lyrics are beautiful, almost poetic. They act as a guiding light for the listener to not

groom, give her room/Loud, loutish lover, treat her kindly though she needs you more than she loves you.” “Never Had No One Ever” focuses on the same lyrical motifs, but feels less rewarding. Even though the bass line just digs into your skull, the lyrics just don’t have the same kick that they did on “It’s Over.” It’s not bad; it’s almost dreamy at points. But what is this track doing that others aren’t?

Despite its morbid title, “Cemetery Gates” is lighthearted track in tone. The track itself is more of a commentary on plagiarism and the “overly dark” lyrics that the press

believed The Smiths embodied. Morrissey counters these critiques on this song very clearly: “If you must write prose/poems the words you use should be your own/don’t plagiarise or take ‘on loan’/’cause there’s always someone, somewhere with a big nose, who knows and who trips you up and laughs when you fall.” The track itself has a lot of sarcasm and quirk behind it. “Bigmouth Strikes Again” is another highlight, with an iconic acoustic guitar riff and hook. The song is incredibly catchy and makes you want to dance. It may be lacking a bit lyrically, but the first verse and chorus are expertly written.

“The Boy With the Thorn in His Side” feels more folk-influenced, with some very rich guitar strings that just feel like home. The track in general is about a man who needs to be loved, and it’s quite charming. Don’t discredit it. Meanwhile “Vicar in a Tutu” feels very childlike in nature, which fits the tone of the song. It feels like the predecessor to every beginning stage in a 3-D platformer from the 90’s. It’s that carefree. The song bounces from the first- to third-person narrative, and comments on the ostracism one might face for being too odd. Because a vicar in a tutu would be deeply disturbing.

“There is a Light That Never Goes Out” is without a doubt the most well known song on the album. Why shouldn’t it be? It’s a song that isn’t a love song, but more of a song about wanting to feel love. The classic lines of “If a double decker bus crashes into us/to die by your side is such a heavenly way to die” are deeply rooted in a person who just wants to get lost in love. The track features gorgeous strings which complement the song beautifully. Finally, “Some Girls are Bigger Than Others” features an instantly recognizable guitar riff. The track is lacking on the lyrical front, but its guitar riff makes it more vibe-heavy. As the closing track, it’s a quite excellent track and ends the album with grace.

This record fully encapsulates everything great about The Smiths. With the almost simple yet very deeply thought-out lyrics, Marr’s enchantingly beautiful guitar playing, and Morrissey’s presence, this record contains a lot of personality and charm. While it is not perfect, it should arguably be considered as one of the best of its time, if not all-time. *The Queen is Dead* was, in essence, the last great Smiths record, and it’s a shame to see the events that led up to their downfall.

Score: CLASSIC/10

Best Tracks: The Queen Is Dead, I Know It’s Over, Cemetery Gates, Bigmouth Strikes Again, The Boy With the Thorn in His

The Title Should Be “It’s Not Good”

By Paul Duncan

Where do you begin when discussing Green Day’s *Father of All M—*? This album is not good, and it’s almost shocking. In fact, it’s so bad that it borders on good. It’s the equivalent of Tommy Wiseau’s “The Room,” where everything’s horrible but there is something about it that you just can’t help but laugh at.

On the surface, there’s nothing wrong with a little pop-punk throwback. Being someone that grew up on that, I do tend to find something positive about it, even if most of this music is irredeemable. But with this, god. These people are pushing 50 already; they’re practically boomers at this point. The entire record reeks with that kind of energy, especially the toxic promotional banner that essentially tells the listener, “You kids and your trap beats. None of that music has any merit. Back in my day, we had real music that talked about real topics.” It’s that kind of attitude that makes the record so bad. Basic and repetitive, this album is just not good.

On the surface, parts of this album aren’t inherently bad. There’s not inherently a problem with a group of guys with their guitars making some jams. But that’s the thing. The boomer mentality the title track or “Graffiti” are obnoxious and soul-sucking. First off, can we talk about the title track? The lyrics on this track are so Green Day, yet not Green Day: back in their “Dookie” days, Green Day would have the youthful charm and annoyance to pull a song like this off, even if it would be a little migraine inducing. The chorus is stereotypical emo: “There’s a riot living inside of us/I got paranoia, baby and it’s so hysterical.” “Fire Ready Aim,” for some inexplicable reason, sounds like a hollow rip off of “Feel it Still” by Portugal. The Man. I don’t know why this song is a point of inspiration for Green Day, *Green Day* mind you.

Just in these cuts we already have tired tropes and an annoying boomer demeanor that is absolutely unacceptable. It’s like Billie Joe knows he’s an adult, but refuses to let go of being an emo kid, but not one of today’s emo kids. One of the emo kids from the early 2000’s, who are just the worst kind of people. And then we have tracks like “Meet Me on the Roof” and “Stab You In The Heart” that feel like bad indie hits without a touch of self awareness. They sound like they are meant to be played in a car commercial: no originality, cliché and tacky. It’s to the point where you can’t say that these songs, which, mind you, are based on the same 4 chords and drum beats, and are without a single twist isn’t allowed to be mocked.

However, the album then transitions from incredibly campy music into a section that becomes truly hollow. “Sugar Youth” is bland and boring. “Junkies On A High” sounds like “Boulevard of Broken Dreams” but you lose all sense of why the song was enjoyable in the first place, even from a legitimate standpoint. And then there’s “I Was A Teenage Teenager.” God, this song is awful. If someone took a computer and combined all the tired stereotypical tropes of a white suburban emo band, this song would come out: “I was a Teenage Teenager full of piss and [vinegar]... My life’s a mess and school is just for suckers.” Are we serious? What kind of mindset do you have to be in to write this? It’s actual madness. The same verse, also bad, plays over and over again: “Who’s holding the drugs?” What kind of middle-aged man writes this?

I’m at a loss with this album. Bordering on incredibly hollow yet incredibly ironic, it becomes an album that just begs to be made fun of. I could rant about the stylistic robbery of this album or how Billie Joe has lost all of his charisma on the mic and lost why people listen to Green Day in the first place. He was the guy that his audience looked up to as the man who would say something when no one else would, even though people were already saying it. We just needed an emo kid to stand up and be the rebel.

That’s the thing with this album too. It comes across as rebellious and edgy, yet it is so clean and marketable as to be lost. This is what happens when an artist becomes lost in their own artistic vision: they become so attached to the image that they’ve marketed themselves as that they literally become that artistic image, watered down to the bare essentials and then becoming squeaky clean to the point of being obnoxious. Still, if you can find the time, please listen to this album, because it is an ironic trip that you can just make fun of over and over again.

From an ironic standpoint, I’m giving this a 7/10 because it is just the right amount of corny, just the right amount of hollow, and just the right amount of boomer energy to make this one of the worst albums of the year, and I love it. Other than that, don’t listen to this album if you want a mentally healthy life.

Score: just retire already/10 *(2/10)*

Best Song: no

Worst Song: I Was A Teenage Teenager



Happy Thanksgiving, Bucs!



When Will My Life Begin?

An All-Virtual Parody

7:15 the everyday wakeup.
 Hit the snooze before actually getting out of bed.
 Go downstairs and eat and stare at food.
 Get back upstairs and by then it's about 7:30.

So then I brush my teeth, still groggy as can be.
 I'll get dressed on top, with sweatpants on the bottom.
 I'll go onto school and listen
 And watch and basically
 Wonder what they look like in real life?

Then after school it's lunch and homework.
 Wonder why I'm so unnecessarily tired.
 Watch tv and go outside a bit.
 Then I'll wonder what the hybrid kids are doing.

I'll get out a book
 Read a chapter or two.



From Halloween....

...to Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Word Search!!

Y	Y	R	T	I	L	O	O	O	A	S	S	G	L
A	F	L	G	P	G	T	O	T	E	F	I	U	B
M	L	K	I	I	U	A	T	O	I	R	F	O	I
F	Y	R	I	M	G	I	T	D	C	K	B	L	S
L	V	K	U	M	A	A	C	I	N	I	F	L	M
H	A	R	S	N	T	F	C	A	L	D	F	A	I
C	R	I	A	O	E	L	H	T	L	R	P	B	R
R	G	R	P	N	F	T	U	O	I	T	O	T	G
L	G	D	U	S	D	R	G	E	G	O	L	O	L
E	O	L	Y	O	K	U	N	I	R	A	L	O	I
T	B	E	O	E	A	D	S	O	F	M	D	F	P
P	B	F	Y	E	S	T	I	A	F	O	F	M	R
S	L	P	I	E	S	D	B	T	O	U	G	G	F
F	E	O	O	C	O	R	N	U	C	O	P	I	A

- PIES
- THANKFUL
- POTATOES
- FOOD
- FAMILY
- TURKEY
- CORNUCOPIA
- PILGRIMS
- GOBBLE
- FOOTBALL
- GRAVY
- FRIENDS

