

# Headlight



Written by the students of Marblehead High School for our school and community

www.mhsheadlight.weebly.com

May 22nd, 2014

## Eight Years Old and Still an Infant

Jacob Keller  
Reporter, Freshman

Gabby Williams suffers from a condition so rare that it is yet to have a name. This disorder slows growth rate dramatically and only two others in the world are known to have it. Mutations to a regulatory gene on the X chromosome that controls what the medical researcher Robert Walker calls “developmental inertia” has slowed the rate of maturing and left Williams as an infant... even though she is technically a child..... let’s settle with child infant. Although this mutation comes with a slew of medical problems, including deafness and the inability to walk, eat or speak, if manipulated skillfully could be used to make someone immortal. With this immortality things such as Alzheimer’s disease could be prevented. Not only these handful of people could lead to perpetual life, but many other animals hold bits of genetic coding that would keep one alive longer than their life expectancy. The naked mole rat has cells that remain precise at rep-

licating even when they get old. This makes them less susceptible to diseases that would be acquired from old age such as certain cancers. Giant tortoises evolved to slow cellular dilapidation, a few living for over two hundred years. Flatworms have incredible regenerative abilities, being able to create new muscles, skin, and even brains. In fact scientists were able to create an entire colony of over twenty thousand flatworms from chopping up a single original. Lobsters produce large quantities of telomerase, an enzyme that allows them to still produce large shells even when they are 60 years old. A certain type of jellyfish- the Turritopsis dohrnii, nicknamed the “Benjamin Button jellyfish” can essentially reverse its life. It can grow younger as time passes, eventually reaching its first stage of development. The key to immortality lies in the genome of a plethora of animals, and with deft genetic engineering it is doesn’t seem quite so far fetched.

## Writer’s Block -Becky Twaalfhoven

An author weaves their tale from one small thread  
And slowly, every slows, builds an earth  
Which, always-hungry, eats all it is fed  
And all the while extending its great berth.

‘Cross silver strands of time a plot unfolds  
Ensnaring idle ink-with passing page;  
And spider spins out twisting patterns bold  
While in its brain grand ideas rampage.

Anticipation reaches out his claws  
To grip those waiting for the big reveal.  
Yet time commences to expose the flaws  
That drag away a dream no longer real.

So faithful storm eclipses fleeting sun,  
And dust eats all remainders, leaving none.

## Almost Done

Meredith Piela  
News Coordinator, Junior

There are officially five weeks left of school, but it feels like the school year has just started. At the end of those five weeks, I will be taking my last set of high school finals, since I won’t have to take them senior year. Senior Year. Two words that mean so much to a high school student. Senior year is where all of the “last” moments of high school occur, and when you decide on where you’re going to spend the next four years of your life. A lot happens during that final year of high school, and that final year will be starting in three weeks for me. You would think that the realization that the school year is almost over and I’m going to be a senior would have hit me when junior prom happened two weeks ago, or when I got my “Seniors” t-shirt, but no. I am just realizing this all right now. In a way, I still feel like a little underclassman, except now, I know the school like the back of my hand and I’m not terrified walking through the halls. It will be such a great feeling when I can tell the underclassmen about my experiences as a scared little freshman, and give them advice on how to survive the next few years. It will be even better to finally be able to walk through the halls next year with total confidence because I’ll be a senior. Even though senior year is approaching, I still have a few more weeks of junior year, which means I still have final exams. For now, I’ll just keep focusing on schoolwork, but also enjoy all of the end of the year activities, because it’ll be over before I know it.

We are very pleased to name  
**Alex Kerai, Liam Reilly,  
and Meredith Piela** the new  
**Editors-in-Chief of  
Headlight for 2015!**  
**Congratulations!**

## The Way Forward for Standardized Testing

Cassidy Alla  
Student Affairs, Junior

If you are a senior in high school, chances are you have taken at least one college prep standardized test in your lifetime. If you are a junior, chances are you’re currently going through the testing process right now. Even if you are a sophomore, you are likely already stressing about SAT/ACTs and if you’re a freshman, well, hopefully you’ve at least heard about these inevitable tests. The point I am trying to make here is that standardized tests such as the SATs or the ACTs are an overarching motif in most students’ high school careers. Save for the growing number of test-optional schools, a list which Wake Forest University most recently added itself to, in 2008, standardized test scores are a huge component in the college application process. As students become more competitive, there is growing dissent toward this norm of testing academic

intelligence – so what is the benefit of these tests?  
The goal which opponents of standardized tests must keep in mind is that these tests achieve in what they set out to accomplish – they standardize. There are hundreds of different grading systems across the country, and a college cannot recalculate the GPA of every applicant to put them on the same scale. Course difficulty can also differ between high schools; e.g. one who receives a B+ in one of the notoriously difficult AP English classes at MHS may have a lower grade, but more knowledge in the subject than a student receiving an A in an easier AP English course at another school. Colleges cannot account for the slight differences in course difficulty from school to school; however, standardized tests offer sections aimed to measure a student’s reading and writing skills. Grades, courses, teachers, and any other outside variable may affect what is seen on each student’s tran-

script, but every student is offered the same test as a basis for comparison.  
Are these tests, however, the fairest basis of comparison? We all know a person, if we are not that person ourselves, who does not test well. Whether it be due to test-taking anxiety, lack of means to prepare, or any other extenuating factor, an otherwise deserving student could score poorly on these tests and have the door to many colleges slammed shut. Approximately 20% of high school students suffer from test-anxiety, which can be near paralyzing at its worst. Many socioeconomic factors affect testing results as well – each SAT test alone costs \$51 while ACTs (plus writing) cost \$52.50. If a student wants to be tutored to improve their test taking skills, these sessions can reach \$150 an hour, sometimes even more. So many students are put at immediate disadvantages before they even walk into the testing center. Is it fair to deny college opportunities to those

students who have worked hard for their entire high school careers, but are disenfranchised by factors outside of their control?  
Regardless of personal feelings toward standardized tests, they do not seem to be going anywhere any time soon. Wake Forest is currently the only top 30 national university school which is test-optional. Strides are being made, however, in making standardized tests even more standardized, representing an accurate academic portrayal of every student (for example: the SATs are undergoing a full makeover in 2015). Besides the buzz and politics over standardized tests, it is important to remember that they do not decide the rest of a student’s life, and are nothing to fear.

## Have a Graduating Senior? Consider a Library Donation!

Each year we ask parents of graduating seniors to donate funds to purchase books or technology for our school library. The funds may be donated in honor of your child’s four years at MHS, in honor of a teacher who has made a difference, or in honor or memory of someone important in your child’s life. We believe such a gift is a nice and thoughtful way to both congratulate students on their graduation and to keep our school library stocked with new books and technology. The response has been gratifying and we would like to continue this tradition. Each book is given a bookplate indicating donor and honoree. Donors and honorees will also be mailed acknowledgments and will be recognized in the MHS Informational Update.  
Please feel free to contact Maia Hajj, in the Library with any questions at 781-639-3100, ext. 3203. Thank you in advance for your generosity and for your support.

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