

Headlight

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

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Rise of the Planet of the Apps

Rebecca Twalfhoven
Reporter, Freshman

Everybody has noticed it; nobody seems able to stop it; and, despite valiant attempts to resist, almost everyone has succumbed to the inevitable. I am referring, of course, to the explosive growth of the smart phone, in particular the iPhone. In 2007, Apple released the first version of the revolutionary iPhone, which marked a new era of personal technology and portable devices that since has become a part of everyday life. Over the course of the past six years, Apple has quickly progressed through several generations of the product, each featuring faster Internet connections, more data availability and memory storage, and ever more applications (“apps”) with a growing range of functions. The latest version – released on September 20 of this year – includes: a fingerprint identity sensor; computer-level graphics and visual effects for viewing images; a camera featuring flash adjustment, continuous burst mode, a larger light sensor, slow-motion video, automatic image stabilization, and panorama photography; built-in apps, as well as over 900,000 apps available for download; and iCloud, which gives the user the ability to access and share content from several different Apple devices. None of this terminology even existed when I was born, yet now I hear it every day. In a way, “smart phone” is its own dialect of English, developed and spoken by an exclusive yet ever-growing group of people world-

wide. This group continues to grow rapidly, but always remains exclusive to smart phone users.

I never fail to notice the looks of incredulity I receive when I reveal that I do not own an iPhone. When people use my phone, it takes a moment to figure out that there is no passcode, and no touch screen. I am part of a dwindling population of teenagers who has not jumped on the wagon of technology. I am one of the last in my family to not own a device with applications or Internet access. When a teacher collects student cell phones before a quiz, mine is one of possibly two phones collected that is not an iPhone or smart phone of some sort. I cannot access social networking or check my grades during the day; I cannot play “Candy Crush” and compare scores with friends. To many teenagers, a lifestyle without all of these options seems practically inconceivable. Even adults now do not understand why I have not joined the crowd. My answer is simple: I don’t need it. Personally, I find all of it – all of the information and options and applications – excessive. Don’t get me wrong; there are times when it would be nice to get news updates during the day, or be able to keep up with social network activity as it happens. And I agree that it is important, in this day and age, to stay current and on top of change as it happens, at least to some extent. But at a certain point, I must ask myself: what is wrong with my life that an iPhone will fix? What benefits will outweigh all of the potential downsides? Yes, I could learn to play “Candy Crush” and eventually make it to level

413, but only at the expense of valuable time during studies at school where I could be doing homework. I could easily spend hours creating and using multiple social networking accounts before bed, but only if I give up reading. There are moments with friends or peers where everyone whips out their iPhone, and I am left sitting waiting for somebody to remember that there is a world existing around them.

I do have a cynical view on the recent upsurge of smart phones. I have witnessed firsthand some of the changes that “happen” to coincide with an update, and it is scary to reflect on the changes in society from a time before it was possible to have a personal device with more computer power than powered rockets to the moon. Most of it is simply my personal values – I prefer face-to-face interaction to online methods; I would rather read a book than play video games. But I know there may come a time when it is simply impractical to resist any longer. Certainly college nowadays requires more than a phone with texting and calling. It may be the case that it really is time to move forward, and I have simply missed the boat. There is nothing wrong with having an iPhone. Technology is rapidly advancing, and the time is fast approaching where people must make their own decisions on what to do; and maybe the insight of an outsider can lend some new perspective to the choices we face as individual when looking to update our lives.

The iOS 7 Question

Joanna Rosen
Reporter, Junior

At the moment, iPhone users everywhere are asking themselves the same question: Should I update to iOS 7 or not? The reviews on the updated are very mixed, so for those of us who haven’t yet updated this is a pressing issue. Should we update? Is it worth it? Is it actually any improvement on iOS 6, or is it just a new, colorful design for your phone? Personally, I’m still debating: I like the old design and I’m worried I’ll be too confused by my own phone if it suddenly has a new set-up. I’ve read all the reviews and researched iOS 7 online, but I decided to ask around MHS and see if someone would answer a few questions for me. I talked with a junior who got iOS 7 almost as soon as it came out, and she helped me understand the pros and cons of the update.

The obvious question to begin with is, “Do you like iOS 7?” Most people respond with either “yes” or “no,” however, this MHS student answered saying she liked iOS 7 overall, but strongly objected to certain aspects of it. She went on to explain that the new look is great, but that the update drains battery power extremely quickly. The speed of the phone, in her opinion, may be slightly faster than the iOS 6, but she isn’t quite sure. Siri understands more, and voice commands are now more responsive. I would imagine that with the new design, adjusting to using your phone with iOS 7 would be difficult, or at least confusing, but my friend assured me that the new design presents easier ways to access features like timer and controls, though she admits to not knowing how to close apps. I’ve heard many people say that once you have iOS 7, you can see when someone screenshots your conversations, but, according to my friend, this isn’t true. While texting a friend, she had the friend screenshot the conversation, but nothing happened.

Ultimately, this MHS junior feels positive about the update and would recommend it to other iPhone users. According to the Apple website, the purpose of the latest iOS update was to apply clarity and a single system to the entire iPhone. Though some are against the new iOS, it seems that Apple has succeeded in its goal to introduce a system that would be uniform throughout the phone. I don’t think I can make a judgment of my own until I, myself, have updated, but from what I hear from my friends and from the positive reviews I’ve read online, it seems that updating to iOS is the way to go.

A Chat with the New MHS Band Director

Alex Kerai
Webmaster, Junior

The Marblehead High School football season has begun, and with that comes the annual commencement of the high school Marching Band program. Although marching band may not be the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of the football season, it is an integral part of the Friday night home games. The band is always there, for every game, rain or shine, sitting in the right side of the stands playing pep tunes for all four quarters. This group also starts off each home game by playing the Star-Spangled Banner and providing half-time entertainment with a musical show. But after twenty-seven years under the leadership of Mr. Ken Warren, the band is going through some changes. After announcing his retirement last year, band members were unsure of what would happen to the program, but it is continuing now under the direction of Mr. Scott Winship, who was previously the band director for Swampscott High School. He came over to Marblehead this year with Mr. Layne Millington (our new high school principal). After last Friday’s game against Gloucester (and the debut of the first song in the band’s halftime show), I interviewed Mr. Winship and asked what he thought of the band and what his plans are for the coming future.

Q: What is your background in music and music education?

A: “I have my Bachelor’s in Science in music education from Rhode Island College. My Master’s is in music, with a concentration in wind band conducting, from the University of Nebraska. I played the soprano bugle in the Boston Crusaders Drum and Bugle Corps; before that I was in the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps.”

Q: How did you hear about the position in Marblehead?

A: “Basically what happened was last Thanksgiving, when we were practicing the Star-Spangled Banner before the game, Mr. Warren came up to me and said, “By the way, at the end of this year I’m retiring and you should apply for my job.” And so I was like, “Okay, I will.” Ironically, the principal that hired me in Swampscott was hired in Marblehead. It was like the stars aligned: the principal who hired me and the old band director said I should apply, it was like kismet.”

Q: What do you think of Marblehead (the town)?

A: “I love it! It’s like a Norman Rockwell painting! It’s what you think of when you think of small town America: beautiful houses, picket fences, out by the ocean. There are some mansions, but there is just normal American life. It’s a beautiful town, I don’t know how else to put it. I drive home and I’m like, “I’m so happy to work here.””

Q: What do you think of the Marblehead High School band so far?

A: “I tell you guys [the band] this all the time, I’m very impressed.

You’re good musicians, but you can be better. And that’s what I like, because I can make you better.

I love marching band – I’ve done drum corps and all that and I love it – but my real passion is concert band. That’s what my Master’s is in. We’re still a month’s away from doing it, but I’m already picking music and you guys are going to love it. You guys already have this great ability...I would say right now you guys are slightly above average in music level, according to a national or a state level. But I want to bring you guys up. You have average, excellent and superior levels, and I want to bring you up to superior. It won’t happen this year, but we’ll get there. We’re going to get up to excellent this year; that’s my goal.”

Q: What do you plan to add/bring to the band program?

A: The biggest thing is I want to expose you guys to all these competitions out there. UMass Band Day, on October 12, where you guys can go and play with the UMass Band (and around fifty other high schools) during halftime, and then watch them play their halftime show, is a great experience. I’ve done it in the past and everyone’s loved it. There’s the New England Scholastic Band Association (NESBA) Championships in Lawrence, where we’re going to go and just watch and see what the bands that are there are doing so you guys know what’s out there. I want to expose every ensemble to at least two, if not three or four, experiences or competitions. Even if you guys don’t compete, at least you’re going to see what’s out there and what you guys can do.

Mr. Warren didn’t take you guys anywhere, which was cool. I respect what he did with you guys, but there’s a whole world out there. The things we’re doing are already out there – there are hundreds of schools, we won’t be alone. So we’re going to do a lot more competitions, some just for viewing and some for competing, but I’m definitely going to get you guys out there. We’re still going to do the same things that you guys have done every year that Mr. Warren left for me, but I’m going to get you guys out there and create more memories from band, too.

In short, I want to expose you guys to as many performance opportunities as possible. I don’t care about trophies or winning awards; this is so you guys can build experiences. That’s what I did in high school. My band wasn’t great. We didn’t win many awards, but it is those memories that I still have. The memories are the important thing, the music and having fun are the most important parts.”

Alex plays in the drumline for the MHS marching band and guitar in the Jazz Band.

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