

Headlight

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The Next Stage: College Applications

Matt Lieberson
Editor-in-Chief, Senior

There are approximately 4,700 colleges and universities in the world. Consequently, it is a tad stressful and complicated to choose the right one. Ask any senior and they would say that “a tad” doesn’t do the process justice. College talk has infested everything for the Class of 2012. With early decision/action deadlines looming on November 1st for many schools, and the January regular decision dates still fast approaching, applying to college feels like the only thing that many seniors are doing.

What many applicants and their parents are quick to realize is that the process has evolved over the past 20-30 years. It isn’t just checking boxes anymore. Now there are essays to write, and not just one. Many colleges require a supplemental application in addition to the Common App (if the school even uses the Common App); often with a specialized essay or specialized short answer questions. Some students end up writing around 15 essays for their applications. Another lovely feature about college applications are the fees. Each school has a fee

to send the application. On top of this fee, which usually ends up around \$60, there’s the \$5 cost to send a transcript and the \$10 cost to send test scores. So before you even get into college, you’re out \$75. One benefit about the evolution of applications is that everything is digitized. Now, everything is done online, allowing for easier file sharing and document sending. The Marblehead High School guidance department is hooked up with Naviance, an online program that controls the files for each student.

Speaking of the guidance department, the MHS guidance office becomes a war zone once deadlines begin to approach. The appointment book is always packed, and you’re lucky to squeeze in an appointment during a study 2 weeks out based on the jammed schedule. The guidance counselors are bombarded with recommendations and paperwork for various students and applications. This isn’t without hounding, either. I can only speak for myself, but I know that I am in Ms. Chaykowski’s office at least twice a day with various small tasks that either she has asked me to do or I have for her. This past Friday, I walked into an empty guidance office and

was disturbed. Why was it empty? Ms. Chaykowski’s door was open, and she was leaning back in a chair typing. When I went in, I heard the faint guitar riffs of “All Along the Watchtower” (my all-time favorite song, I might add) in the background. I asked Ms. Chaykowski about the music, as I was surprised to know that she was a Hendrix fan. She said that “the guidance office hasn’t been empty in 3 days, and the fact that I can listen to music without being bugged is startling to me. This is a rarity for me. It’s so peaceful.”

For being under such fire by the student body, the guidance department does a great job to work with students and get done everything they need. Senior Aron Roytenberg is very pleased with the help he’s received. “The guidance department, as well as everyone at the high school, is very helpful with this process.” The teachers are usually understanding of the process itself. However, it does take some adjusting to find the right balance between schoolwork and applications. “It’s tough at first to do both,” Roytenberg said, “but with good organization and time management it isn’t such a daunting task. You just have to stay

focused. If you can get the college stuff done as soon as possible, the pressure really comes off there.” The teachers don’t necessarily back off, but they know the pressure Roytenberg refers to. Teachers in the English department are always willing to help out with editing any writing for applications. Teachers also write a lot of student recommendations; an act which guidance counselor Mr. Gauthier always makes sure to remind students “is completely voluntary.” Teachers want the students to succeed (as much as many students may disagree at times), and they will do anything they can to help out.

Applying to college is an event. It is a marathon, not a sprint. It’s a thorough, in-depth process that has many moving parts to take care of, and if you don’t stay on top of it, it will begin to mount. But the light at the end of the tunnel is there. “Soon enough this will be over, I’ll be into school, and think to myself that I conquered the process,” Roytenberg said with a laugh. “Soon enough. It can’t be soon enough.” In the meantime, seniors are inundated with essays to write and boxes to check.

A Political Pitch

Ian Kingsbury
Headlight Alumni
2008-2009 Editor-in-Chief

All knowledgeable baseball fans knew heading into this season that the Phillies and the Red Sox would be playing in the World Series. With the additions of Carl Crawford and Adrian Gonzalez the Sox looked to have a well-balanced offensive attack with a formidable rotation to boot. The Phillies have what some were quick to proclaim the greatest rotation of all time.

But that’s why the game is played. Clay Buchholz got injured, Crawford struggled, and John Lackey altogether imploded as the Red Sox went on to have a September that was a painful reminder of the days of the Curse. The Phillies were at least able to make the playoffs, but their season ended with embarrassment topped off by Ryan Howard’s exploded Achilles tendon.

When Rick Perry announced he was running for president two months ago, political ‘pundits’ were quick to declare the GOP contest as a two-way race between Rick Perry and Mitt Romney. But like baseball, politics isn’t played on paper. It’s played in small towns in Iowa, colleges in New Hampshire, cookouts in South Carolina, and debates across the nation. In these arenas, Rick Perry has faltered and the “experts” appear presumptuous in suggesting that the pursuit of the GOP nomination had become a two-way race.

Perry has been a gaffe machine since he entered the race. He labeled Social Security a Ponzi scheme and then looked Dan Quale-esque in questioning Romney’s track record, asking, “Is it the Mitt Romney that was on the side of against the Second Amendment before he was for the Second Amendment? Was it — was before he was before the social programs, from the standpoint of he was for standing up for Roe v. Wade before he was against Roe v. Wade?” Most recently, news surfaced that he leased a ranch with a heinously derogative name.

Presidential hopefuls can recover from such gaffes. Joe Biden emphatically encouraged a paraplegic Missouri state senator to “stand up.” While running for reelection in 1984, Ronald Reagan joked to

radio technicians before an NPR interview “My fellow Americans, I’m pleased to tell you today that I’ve signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes.” Word of the joke got out, and the Soviet Union briefly went on high alert.

What Rick Perry cannot recover from is the Tea Party’s awakening to his ‘compassionate conservative’ approach to illegal immigration, which includes controversial measures such as granting in-state tuition to illegal immigrants in Texas.

Stricter immigration policy is an important issue for many who identify with the Tea Party Movement. In the 2010 midterm elections, the Tea Party-backed J.D. Hayworth challenged John McCain in the primary largely because Tea Party oriented voters rejected McCain’s “amnesty” for illegal immigrants. According to a poll conducted by the University of Washington, 88% of Tea Party supporters were in favor of the strict immigration bill that was signed into law in Arizona.

This all spells trouble for Perry. A recent Florida straw poll that was widely expected to be won by Rick Perry was instead a shocking and decisive victory for Herman Cain and one that many correctly assert was a referendum on Rick Perry’s stance toward illegal immigration. Given that the Tea Party has a number of candidates to choose from whom more closely reflect their values (particularly Michelle Bachmann and Herman Cain), it seems that the short-lived marriage between Tea Party voters and Rick Perry is over.

While it seems very likely that Mitt Romney will remain the favorite among establishment Republicans (especially now that Christie has decided against running), it remains to be seen which candidate, if any, Tea Party voters will convalesce around. For the past two months, the press has spoken of a two-way race between Mitt Romney. But like the baseball experts who predicted a Red Sox and Phillies matchup in the World Series, political pundits have forgotten Yogi Berra’s ageless maxim — “it ain’t over till it’s over.”

Ian is currently a junior at The College of William and Mary

Let A Book Take You Away

Grace Perry
Headlight Staff.
Sophomore

“Grace, you’re a nerd” says my best friend Sophia Capalbo, a sophomore at MHS, as I sit at the lunch room table, reading a book. Since when did reading become so un-cool? Since when was reading categorized as “nerdy”? According to National Endowment for the Arts in 2004, “On average, Americans ages 15 to 24 spend almost two hours a day watching TV, and only seven minutes of their daily leisure time on reading.”

“The last time I read a book on my own was last year,” says Eliza Fitzgerald, a sophomore at MHS, “I read about two books, on my own, per year.” Most students do not enjoy books that they have to read during the school year and simply do not have the time to read leisure books. Unfortunately, because students do not enjoy school-assigned

books, they are less likely to be willing to read during their free time. “I used to be such a big reader, I just lost interest,” says Hannah Verrette, also a sophomore at MHS, “My vocabulary and my grades have been affected because I lost an interest in reading.” Many students’ grades 9-12 do not choose to read in their daily leisure time.

According to The Best Damn Writing Blog online, “A status update on Facebook is the new bestselling novel. At least, that’s how teenagers see it.” Hannah McLaughlin, a busy sophomore at MHS notes: “I read in the summer, and on vacations. I can’t read during the school week because I have so much to do. It’s hard to find the time.”

A few weeks ago, I started to be Shoshannah Turgel’s (Marblehead High School’s librarian) assistant. After spending most of my time in the library, Turgel asked if I was interested in becoming her helper. During my H-block study, I help out our librar-

ian make the library more appealing to students. I am a total bookworm. I find myself constantly encouraging my friends and fellow classmates to read. In a world constantly moving, I often find my head buried into a novel. I enjoy reading, because of the books I choose. I have a weakness for cheesy romantic novels and novels that I simply cannot put down. I read reviews, listen to recommendations and try to not judge books by their covers.

I have started a display in the library called, “Let a Book Take You Away”. The point of the display is to draw students in and encourage people to read books that interest them. I have placed some of my favorite books on the display, such as “Night Road” by Kirstin Hannah, in hopes that others will eventually add their own favorites. The display is located in the MHS Library to the right of the computer lab.

Turgel and I hope students will take out books that appeal to them, (found

either on the display or throughout the library) and write a review after completing the book. Students can write reviews in the white binder located on the display. The review binder will be helpful to other students who are curious about a certain book(s), and want to know what others thought about it. Turgel, when asked if the display has encouraged others to read, notes: “Yes! Not only have many students participated by borrowing and reviewing some of Gracie’s picks, but one English teacher even expressed doing something comparable with her class in lieu of a formal book report.”

I hope my display will eventually start a chain reaction and get people to enjoy reading. Come check it out! Have any questions/comments or fantastic books that you would like to add to the display? Contact Shoshannah Turgel or myself, and we’ll be happy to expand our collection.

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