

# Headlight



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

2016-2017 Issue

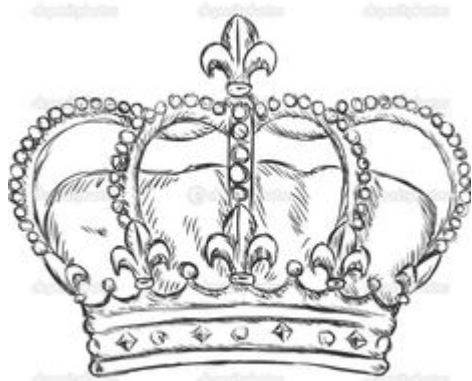
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December 1, 2016

## Spirit Week

Adam Sherf, Sophomore  
Reporter in the Field

During the final two and a half days before the Thanksgiving Break, the students and faculty of Marblehead High School took part in Spirit Week. While numerous activities and events occurred, one of the most significant festivities was held on Monday, November 28th. To begin Spirit Week, each class was assigned a pair of colors of which they were to use to create a theme and transform a single corridor to replicate their idea. This year, the Freshmen class was assigned the colors of purple and yellow, which they used to decorate a hallway in the theme of Mardi Gras. Additionally, the Sophomore class used the colors green and orange to design a jungle. The Junior class was designated the colors pink and blue, which they used to replicate a Candy Land. Lastly, the Senior class established power and royalty with the colors of red and gold. The decorations found throughout the school sparked a great Spirit Week for the high school.



## 'Tis the Season

Join MHS Best Buddies at the  
Annual Marblehead Christmas Tree Lighting!



Friday, December 2nd, 6:00 to 7:30 PM  
National Grand Bank parking lot

Best Buddies will be selling winter  
scarves for \$10-\$20.

There will be a live band, food  
for sale, and lots of fun for all!

\*Last week's photos from the MHS Powderpuff game were taken by junior reporter Kate Lothrop, instead of Kate Hertz as was originally reported

## The Crime That Is Graded Classroom Participation

Aidan Collins, Junior  
Reporter in the Field

Your average high school student walks into class with his materials and a big grin on his face. He sits at his desk and diligently works for the next hour or so while he keeps to himself; the bell rings signaling the end to another successful class. When the student checks his grades, however, he finds a big fat F in the participation category. First implemented to encourage academic discussion while providing a way for students to improve their grades, classroom participation grading has turned from an incentive to an unfair assessment of a student's abilities. A practice that awards a human being's hand-raising skills while penalizing our example student can have far reaching consequences. When his grade is marked down, his GPA goes down, and if his GPA goes down then (as everyone who is familiar with Naviance knows) his college choices are diminished - all because he didn't raise his hand. One's classroom participation is not indicative of an individual's intellectual capacity and ability to apply material taught to him. This dilemma is one that has plagued most schools around the country. In my opinion, we should eliminate classroom participation from our grading structure.

Every student is different, so why should every school treat them the same? There are quite a few reasons a person may find it difficult to participate in class. None of these reasons warrants the penalty of a reduced grade, but even at Marblehead High School this practice remains. The most common case is the typical introverted student who finds it extremely difficult to speak in class. Perhaps this student just received back a bad test grade in their last class, or their dog died that morning, or they're just having a bad day. Whatever their reason may be for silence, it is not the teacher's responsibility to assess and grade this behavior. What's worse is a student who is either too smart for the class or someone who has fallen behind. When a student is getting straight A's on homework, essays, tests and quizzes, then what is a participation grade actually telling us about this person? The class slacker may get his voice in more during class, but the rocket scientist in the back is more intent on sucking up as much knowledge as possible. On the opposite end of the class lies a student whose grades are slipping. They're doing everything in their power to pull their grades up, but they still have nothing constructive to contribute to discussions because of their confusion. The teacher should be helping this student catch up with his peers, not kick him when he is down and already hurt. It only takes a second to realize that participation grades are not simply arbitrary numerical grades.

What started out as a positive idea has turned negative for many students. Classroom participation should be encouraged but not penalized. Teachers that are overburdened with large classrooms can't be expected to fairly administer numerical grades to almost 30 students based on a subjective, non-quantifiable standard. The otherwise "A" student receives a score of 80 for his classroom participation. His overall grade is then dropped to a B+. In the words of Kenan Thompson, "What's up with that?" In the worst case, this grading tool has devolved into a way for teachers who have trouble controlling their classrooms to exert control with the Sword of Damocles being held over students' heads. Let's get back to the original intent of encouraging participation without penalizing students.

## MHS Pep Rally

Alix Livermore, Sophomore  
Reporter in the Field

Going into the pep rally last week, I was definitely skeptical about how it would be received. But unlike last year's, this year I was impressed! Mr. Bauer's positive words of praise and enthusiastic school spirit were greatly appreciated by students and teachers alike. The inter-grade dodgeball and tug-of-war competitions ran smoothly, with the upperclassmen unsurprisingly emerging victorious in both. The friendly football match between the boys' football team and the girls' powderpuff team was a nice conclusion to the powderpuff season after weeks of hard work and a win against Swampscott the weekend before. The cheerleading team's coordinated routine was equally impressive and fun to watch, as the girls flipped through the air and performed their customary jaw-dropping stunts. Based on applause, however, the biggest hit of the day was the school's new hip-hop dance club, PYT, which made their debut during the rally. The dancers' hard work and unique abilities were clearly demonstrated as they combined various modern dances into one cohesive piece. I think I speak for the entire school when I say that everyone is eagerly looking forward to their next performance. To anyone who attended, it was obvious that the standard for MHS pep rallies has been raised. Personally, I hope that future pep rallies are as successful as this year's.



PYT, the new MHS hip hop dance club

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