



Make America Rio Again

Amber Born, Senior
Editor-in-Chief

If you were on the Cape all summer with no wifi, you missed out. The Republican and Democratic National Conventions happened, as did the Rio Olympics. They were back to back, and if you watched extensive coverage of all three events, they started to blend together a little. It made me realize that the Olympics and the election aren't really that different. Here are some of the commonalities I discovered.

1. We're really competitive with Russia.

The U.S. and Russia are basically still in the Cold War. It's just an extended period of détente. So in the meantime, we exhibit our aggression in other ways. In gymnastics, we take great pride in our ability to outscore the Russians (gymnastics in Rio was really just five Americans vs. Aliya Mustafina, judging from what NBC chose to show of it). On the political front, Russia (or somebody. We blamed Russia, at least) hacked the Democratic National Committee's emails. Russia tries to undermine the United States' political system by creating instability, while the United States tries to destroy Russia through Putin memes.

2. The person you're really rooting for doesn't always win.

Let's face it: most of us didn't want the election to end up this way. Trump vs. Clinton, really? Are those really the best two candidates, out of everyone in the United States? A cat wearing a tie could start running for president right now and it would absolutely beat either of them. Some were passionate about Bernie, others were passionate about Marco... I suppose somebody was passionate about Jeb!, but I've never met anybody who was. In the Olympics, there were also upsets. Everyone was rooting for Missy Franklin and Allyson Felix, neither of whom lived up to expectations. But fan favorites can't always beat the people with more training and organization.

3. Sometimes, it's obvious who's going to win, but other times, it's less clear.

Hillary Clinton was the Michael Phelps of this election. Some people thought she was annoying, but her victory was inevitable. She was the logical choice to win, so it happened. The Republicans faced a less obvious choice. If you put Usain Bolt in a race with sixteen other people, it's easy to tell who's going to win. But the Republican primary wasn't like that at all. Sometimes you just throw sixteen candidates together and everyone's campaigns fall apart until Donald Trump remains simply because he's the last one standing.

4. There are scandals.

In the election, the DNC hacking incident proved that the DNC favored Hillary Clinton over Bernie Sanders (which everybody knew anyway, but it was incriminating to see it in writing). Clinton's use of private email servers has become a scandal. Nearly everything Donald Trump has ever said is scandalous, but he's like a hydra: the harder you try to destroy him, the more powerful he becomes. The Rio Olympics were also plagued by scandals, from the revelation that Ryan Lochte was robbed at gunpoint to the revelation that Ryan Lochte wasn't robbed at gunpoint at all but actually vandalized a gas station bathroom. Not to mention the allegations that many Russian athletes were doping, as well as the overwhelming concerns about Rio's ability to host the games.

5. Viewers become critics.

Most of us don't know what it's like to be the Secretary of State or a wealthy businessman and reality star. But most of us assume that if we were Clinton or Trump, we'd be doing a lot better right now. Saying a sizable percentage of Americans come from a basket of deplorables? We'd never do something so alienating. Arguing for years that the sitting President of the United States wasn't born in the United States? Come on, we're not stupid. When we watch the Olympics, we make these same kinds of judgments, but I think they're much more unreasonable than the complaints we have about the candidates. When we're choosing the leader of the free world, we have a right to be concerned when a major candidate says that his opponent doesn't look presidential (why, because she's not 6'1 and biracial?). But I'm not sure most of us have earned the right to sit on the couch in our pajamas, yelling at the TV because Simone Biles didn't stick her landing.

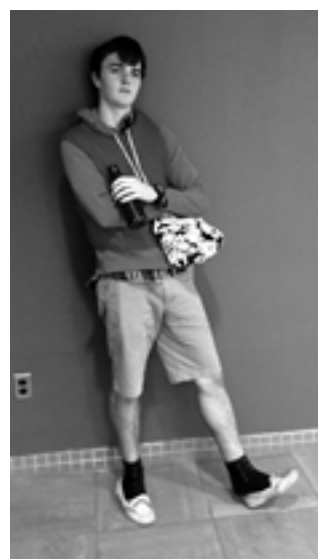
LOST & FOUND

Student Fashion from Then, Now.

Jack Krivit, Senior
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Senior bad-girl Ilana Deangelo is ready to break the rules with her gray hooded sweatshirt and open-toed shoes.



Senior Tom Quigley might look sporty in his red mesh pinny, but his undersized Sperrys tell us he's ready to relax.

These could be yours - in fact, they probably were - so don't wait.

Check your local high school Lost and Found today!

How to Get into Harvard Without Really Trying

Becky Twaalfhoven, Senior
Editor-in-Chief

Despite the differences in grade, most students at Marblehead High School are aware of the looming prospect of college. Regardless of which school students choose, however, the applications and admission process is often far different from expected. Everyone has a different experience with making the all-important decisions of where and when. As the second-youngest of seven children, I have personally witnessed several very different application processes, each one with different results. To help put it in perspective, I interviewed one of my older siblings, Charlotte Svirsky, about her experience with Harvard and the decisions she made along the way.

1. How did you choose which schools to apply to, and how did you choose which was your top choice?

One thing I remember about the application process is deciding that if I liked a school, I would apply, and then I would decide based on where I got in. I think sometimes people can talk themselves out of applying to places, and I remember thinking "instead of deciding in advance that they'll reject me, I'll let them reject me if that's what they're going to do." Obviously you can only do this within reason, since it costs money and time to apply, but I know I wasn't 100% certain about all 6 schools that I applied to and figured I would apply, see how things turned out, and then make a decision based on that (I didn't apply anywhere early). I don't think I had a clear top choice - it varied depending on where I had visited, what mood I was in, what I thought I wanted to major in, and how confident I was that I could get accepted to any of them.

2. Were you confident in your admissions prospects?

I was pretty confident that I'd get in to at least one of the schools that I was applying to, and I would have been shocked if I'd gotten in to all of them (which I didn't). I think I generally applied to schools that were a good fit for me, but it's such a huge unknown - college admissions are both complicated and random - that I think it's hard to be totally confident.

3. Did you know your intended field of study before applying?

I went back and forth between thinking I would study English or History, two subjects I loved in high school, and sometimes I thought I might be interested in pre-med. For what it's worth, once I got to college, I had until the middle of sophomore year to declare a major, and I was moving forward as if I would study history (I dropped the pre-med idea after one semester of life sciences) until I changed to Social Anthropology last minute. That was totally the right decision for me - it was a small department, the professors were great, I was interested in the coursework, and it had relatively few requirements so I had the freedom to take a lot of other classes in different subjects.

At the beginning of freshman year, we were told that less than half of students end up in careers related to their majors (that number is actually closer to ~30%), and that really stuck with me - it gave me the freedom to choose a major that wasn't based on what I wanted to do after college or that would make me more likely to get a job.

4. How did you stay focused and motivated during your senior year?

I don't know if I did stay focused and motivated... I think having classes I liked helped. I guess since I didn't apply early anywhere, I also had to wait until the school year was almost done to hear where I was going, and that uncertainty was motivating. Also, I had two study halls, especially senior spring, so my workload wasn't that heavy.

5. Was it difficult for you to decide where you would attend? How much did other people's opinions influence your final decision?

It wasn't that difficult for me - of the 6 schools I applied to, I got into 2 and was waitlisted at the other 4. I had a clear favorite of those 2, and then decided only to stay on the waitlist at Harvard.

The more difficult decision for me was when I got into Harvard off the waitlist, which happened in June, after I had already committed to the other school. I had a couple weeks to decide, so I went to each campus for a day and just walked around and tried to imagine myself as a student. My family didn't put any pressure on me either way, which I really appreciated, although I'm sure I was influenced by the Harvard name to some extent. I don't think there was really a wrong choice, but ultimately I picked Harvard.

6. Why did you choose to take a gap year? Was it worth it?

Actually I didn't really choose to take a gap year - it chose me. I should have been in the college graduating class of 2009, but when I got into Harvard, they offered me a spot in the class of 2010. Basically, if I wanted to go to Harvard, I had to wait a year.

That said, it was absolutely worth it. I grew a lot during that year. It was hard in the fall when my friends all left for school, and I felt left behind and was working and living at home. Working full time was really good for me, and good experience, and it let me save money for my 3 months in Spain, which were incredible. After picking up and moving to a country where I didn't know anyone and didn't speak the language, going to college felt super easy.

7. What was the most unexpected part of Harvard that you didn't anticipate in high school?

Marblehead is a wonderful place to grow up in many ways, but it's not particularly diverse. Harvard isn't the most diverse place to go to college (by a long shot) but there were differences in people's experiences and backgrounds and how they got there that represented a change from what I had known before.

Also, I had this idea of Harvard as a place where everyone was a genius and solely focused on academics. In reality, we were all concerned with mundane, everyday things like laundry, and tiny dorm rooms, and getting to class on time. It was funny for me the first time I took my laundry across Harvard Yard and realized that there were people taking pictures and tours around me.

8. Did Marblehead High School prepare you for college?

I think so - I don't remember feeling underprepared or totally shocked by anything once I got there. I had two older siblings in college so that helped.

I do think there would be a value in making time for conversations about what college is like in a structured setting - having alumni come back to talk about their experiences, or space for discussion about what to expect, what's hard about it, answer questions people might have. College can be a lonely place, and there's evidence that the transition year is really significant, especially for emotional health (good resources here: <http://www.transitionyear.org/>)

Additional note: *I got a chance to hear Frank Bruni speak as part of a panel last fall - he wrote a book about college admissions that's fantastic. I highly recommend it - it was really eye opening for me and changed my perspective on how people approach college admissions and view college education more broadly. Should be required reading for students and parents.*