



The Catch-18

Muriel Owen, Senior
REPORTER

I am 18. I have been 18 for quite some time, much closer to 19 at this point, but I think I need to write it out for my own sake because I still have not come to terms with the fact that I am an 18-year-old coming up on 19. I have taken advantage of the keys that come with being considered an adult. I voted, I have my license, and I even attempted to buy a lottery ticket on my birthday but was then told to “come back tomorrow.” If I was so inclined, I could get married, adopt a pet (or a child), and even start creating my will for all the assets I have managed to accumulate over the years. So sure, legally, I am an adult, but I have never felt so much like a “kid.” The thing with being 18 is that society says, “Yes, you are now an adult, go do adult things,” but in reality, I just graduated high school, I still live with my mom, and I am afraid to go down into my basement when it is dark. However, I want to be treated as an adult and be considered my own person and not some connected entity of my parents. When it comes to making life-changing decisions, finding a

place to live, being fully responsible for my actions, and handling the daunting test of taxes, that is where the sheen of adulthood seems a little less appetizing.

In an attempt to see if I was alone in this sentiment, I asked some fellow 18-year-olds what their feelings were about being 18, the good, the bad, and the meh. Here is what some of them had to say when asked what some of the best/worst aspects are of being legally considered an adult.

“Realizing you can now be doing so many things, but you don’t seem to be doing that much.”

“Aging out of “kids” activities, prices, places, etc...”

“Feelings pressured to know what the rest of [one’s] life is going to look like.”

“The new expectations from everyone to act as an adult, but also being taken more seriously.”

“Being treated as an adult. It’s a double-edged sword.”

I found some solace in knowing that I am not the only one who is confused about my new role in the world. Hopefully, someone else might benefit from knowing this is a shared confusion. To quote Jim Bishop, “Nobody understands anyone 18, including those who are 18.”

A Look at MHS AP Test Experiences

Alexis Earp, Junior
REPORTER

Most students at Marblehead High School are familiar with the College Board, the organization that creates tests like the PSAT, the SAT, and AP exams. Students who take AP classes spend most of the school year learning the curriculum before the AP exams in May. These exams are stressful for many students, but perhaps even more stressful was the uncertainty about the exams during the COVID-19 pandemic. Typically, students take the same type of exam in the same conditions, but this year, there were several different ways to take the test. Last year, the AP exams were shortened because schools closed in March. To learn more about the different types of exams that have been held over the past few years and how students felt about those exams, I interviewed three MHS students who took AP classes this year.

Riley Bowen, a member of the MHS Class of 2021, took ten AP classes, and therefore ten AP exams, during her time at the high school. As a sophomore, Bowen’s AP exams were “normal” with students taking the tests on paper in the high school’s lecture hall. Bowen’s exams were quite different during her junior year. Since students were taking the tests from home, each test only had one question. Bowen had to write essays for her AP English Language and Composition and AP U.S. History exams. For AP Computer Science A, she had to write a program. In addition to being shorter, these

exams were administered on computers rather than on paper. Luckily, Bowen did not experience technical difficulties during testing, but she did have friends who were not able to submit their work and had to retake the test at a later date. This year, Bowen took her exams on paper again, although during these tests, students were spread out in the Marblehead Community Center’s gymnasium rather than crowded into the high school’s lecture hall. Over just three years, students in the Class of 2021 had AP exams that differed from year to year, leading some students to reevaluate their perspectives on AP tests.

Gianni Rosato, a student in the MHS Class of 2022, had a different experience than Bowen when taking the AP U.S. History exam this year. In addition to the paper exams administered at the beginning of May, the College Board also scheduled two virtual administrations of the AP exams this year. As a student in the remote cohort, Rosato took one of the online exams from his house. He took the AP European History exam from home last year and did not have any technical difficulties, but that was not the case this year. Since the exams were full-length again, the College Board administered their online exams differently than it did last year. The system used this year only supported Windows, macOS, and Chrome OS on school-managed devices. None of Rosato’s personal devices would have worked for the test, so he had to use his family’s desktop, interrupting their workday. He felt the test this year was more stressful than last year’s virtual exams because it was complicated to set up, going so far as to say, “Compared to my experience Sophomore

Summer 2021 Bucket List: A Checklist of Local Activities to Enjoy This Summer!

Talia Schwartz, Sophomore
INCOMING TECHNOLOGY EDITOR

• **Devereux Beach and Neck Run**
Devereux Beach is arguably the most popular beach in Marblehead, especially for teenagers and families. With the Neck Run Cafe conveniently located on the beach, it’s a great summer spot to hang out while eating beach food. The Neck Run, mainly serving American food, has a variety of options for everyone, including chicken fingers, burgers, french fries, salads, wraps, and ice cream.

• **Preston Beach**
Preston Beach is another fun beach in Marblehead right on the town border. During low tide, you can even walk the length of the beach to Phillips Beach in Swampscott. Also, there is almost always an ice cream truck at Preston Beach periodically throughout the day!

• **Warwick Movie Theater**
While the Warwick was closed for some time due to the pandemic, it has recently reopened and is a perfect rainy day activity or escape from the summer heat. Currently, the Warwick is playing F9, A Quiet Place Part II, and In the Heights.

• **Paddleboarding at Riverhead Beach**
SUP East Coast Style rents stand-up paddle boards at Riverhead Beach for \$20 an hour. Paddleboarding through Marblehead Harbor is a super fun, reasonably priced activity on a hot summer day. However, watch out for the 25 foot long basking shark that was seen in 12 foot deep water this month!

• **Local Restaurants**
Clearly, Marblehead has no shortage of restaurant and cafe options for a great meal over the summer. There are many fancier options available for a sit-down meal such as Five Corners Kitchen, Three Cod Tavern, The Landing, Soall Bistro, and the Barnacle. However, there are also several options for smaller cafes and lunch spots including Shubies, Eat Well Kitchen, Cafe Vesuvius Marblehead, Mino’s Roast Beef, Village Roast Beef and Seafood, Blue Canoe Cafe, Maria’s Java Sun, and Tony’s. Whether you are looking for pizza, Mexican food, or any other cuisine, there are a plethora of great options located throughout Marblehead, and it’s always best to eat local. Getting takeout from any of these restaurants and eating at Crocker Park or the beach is another great summer activity!

• **Shopping Downtown**
Besides these restaurants, Marblehead also offers a variety of fun shopping options in Downtown or Old Town. Walking around town and shopping briefly at stores such as Seaside Allure, Bobbles and Lace, Marblehead Outfitters, Bus Stop, Fat Face, Mud Puddle Toys, Mahri, and Pint Size and Up can be very enjoyable on a hot day!

Marblehead has a variety of entertaining activities for a fun summer at home! Whether you’re searching for a great place to eat, a picnic location, a park, a beach, or a cafe, it’s always ideal to stay in town and support local businesses, especially at the end of a challenging year for many. Enjoy your summer and make the most of it!

year, this test felt like a step backwards in every way possible.” After taking this test, Rosato felt let down by the College Board’s handling of the virtual exams this year. He elaborated on this, saying, “It’s painful to see from my test taking perspective that feature parity and familiarity with paper tests was favored at the cost of user experience over new ways of thinking that would have benefitted users and possibly changed testing in the future.” Taking the virtual exam as a remote student complicated the testing process for Rosato, adding more stress to a year that was already full of it.

Some students who were attending MHS in-person this spring took virtual exams, but their experiences seem to have been much better than Rosato’s. One such student is Zoe Gast, part of the Class of 2023. Gast took the AP European History exam online in the school’s library along with her peers. She found this test environment somewhat stressful since people were close together and you could see on people’s screens if they had finished early, putting pressure on students who needed more time to complete the exam. However, Gast did not have the same issues with technology that Rosato did. Even though this was her first AP test, Gast did not feel particularly stressed while

preparing for it. She thinks this is largely because the whole school year was so bizarre that she just was not in the same headspace she would have been normally. However, she is worried about the AP tests she will take during her senior year. Gast is going to be an exchange student in Spain during her junior year and will not be taking any AP tests, but when she returns for her senior year, she will be taking several. It will be strange for her to take so many AP exams without having a good idea of what the on-paper exams are like. Hopefully for Gast and her peers who are taking AP exams next year, the different exam format will not be too difficult of an adjustment.

AP exams are often a source of stress for high school students, and though this year was no different, the stress surrounding the test manifested in different ways for students depending on their previous experience with AP exams and the format of their test. Hopefully in the future, students will be able to take the same format of the test again or even choose the type of test they would most like to take. In the coming years, it will be interesting to see if the College Board changes how they administer AP exams as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and how students will react to those changes, especially after already having such varied experiences with the tests.

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Last Week's Meeting!

