



## Marblehead to Mexico City

Muriel Owen, Sophomore  
Reporter

5 days. 4 nights. That was all that it took for me to fall in love with Mexico City. The second I hopped into a taxi I felt transported. Adobe buildings in a variety of vibrant yellows, oranges, pinks, and reds lined the streets. The scents of savory meats, fiery sauces, and fresh fruit filled my nose. My head was out the window, soaking up the scents and sights, the sun warm against my skin. I had entered a whole new world, leaving behind the dreary dark and cold of New England.

This vacation was not one that involved relaxing at an all-inclusive resort on the beach but was rather one during which we wanted to explore. Walking along the streets, I found food vendors on every corner. Tacos, tostadas, tamales, elote (corn on the cob), and more were being prepared, steam rising from the small carts. As I turned the next corner, there was an old woman selling large cups of perfectly ripe and fresh papaya, watermelon, mango, and other tropical fruits cut up into small pieces, with a small fork to be eaten as you walk through the city. As I wandered, I was amazed by the sights: art came in the form of famous sculptures, like the El Ángel de la Independencia, and stunning murals painted on the exteriors of random buildings covered the city in beautiful colors. Towering trees were along every street, bringing nature into a busy city and acting as a natural source of shade when the temperatures rose to the high-70s and mid-80s during the afternoon. From the many parks, small lakes, and stunning architecture, Mexico City was brimming with beauty and served as a feast for my eyes and my mouth. I was sure to not only eat my weight in tacos and fresh fruit, but also to drink ounces upon ounces of agua de jamaica (hibiscus flower water), agua de tamarindo (tamarind water), and my personal favorite, horchata (rice water flavored with cinnamon and vanilla). At night, the city transformed from a vibrant oasis to an illuminated masterpiece, with monuments like the Monumento a la Revolución and buildings like the Palacio de Bellas Artes beautifully lit. When we wanted a sit-down restaurant, we headed to the municipality of Coyoacán, where there were formal restaurants and a variety of markets with traditional clothing, souvenirs, and, as in typical Mexican fashion, food (and lots of it).



After experiencing first-hand how wonderful Mexico City is, how welcoming and kind-hearted its people are, how amazing its food, and intriguing its history, it greatly disheartens me to see how the media twists reality into a nightmare. When I told people that I was going to Mexico, not to Cancún or the resorts, but to Mexico City, a question I often received was: Why? Why are you going there? Isn't it dangerous and corrupt? At first, I was irritated by the people who responded with these questions, and I didn't understand why they didn't understand. How could they be so narrow-minded? However, when I looked at some of the top headlines reading "Mexican Activist Murdered" and "Can Mexico

Defeat the Drug Cartels," I started to realize why some friends and family members seemed concerned. The media continually portrays the negatives, and President Trump is not making things any better with his tweets and quotes of: "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists." When the news is only promoting the negative, hiding the reality of how wonderful the country truly is, how could one not assume the worst? I hope, through my experience, that others will look past the top headlines and exaggerations. After my quick trip, I can confidently say that Mexico has become one of my favorite places I have visited in the world, and I hope that you look past the news and at reality. Learn some Spanish, pack your bags, and get on a plane. In a mere six hours, you will have arrived at one of the greatest places on Earth and will go on a trip you will never forget.

## Focus on the Real Victims, Not Robert Kraft

Madison Morris, Junior  
Reporter

On Friday, February 22nd, the owner of the Patriots, Robert Kraft, was charged with two counts of solicitation of prostitution. These events occurred at Orchids of Asia Day Spa, a massage spa in Jupiter, Florida. The charges were made after the uncovering of a human sex trafficking ring linked to illegal sex work in several day spas in South Florida. This case dates back to July, when a complaint of conditions at a day spa in the South Florida area led to an investigation of day spas including the Orchids of Asia Day Spa. There was evidence at the original day spa that employees were living in the facility, cooking on the back steps, and sleeping on the massage tables. After the investigation, Jupiter Police stated that sex traffickers forced several women from China to live inside the spa and sell sexual services to more than one thousand men a year.

While this information is shocking, it has been overshadowed by Robert Kraft's involvement and how the NFL plans to punish him for his actions. When reporting on this event, major news publications discuss "a new statement from the NFL regarding Kraft and the league's personal conduct policy" (CNBC) and how the NFL "requires owners, players and other employees to refrain from 'conduct detrimental to the integrity of and public confidence in the NFL'" (CNN). These news publications focus very little on the sex trafficking ring and the victims of this terrible crime. Instead, publications remind readers that "Kraft is the front-facing owner of the greatest dynasty of this, and maybe any, NFL generation" (Sports Illustrated). Rather than reflecting on efforts to combat sex trafficking, news publications focus on how Robert Kraft's charges will affect his reputation and his position as the owner of the Patriots.

Robert Kraft is a celebrity, especially in New England, so it does make sense that people are interested in the fact that he is involved in such an evil crime. People should, however, pay attention to the discovery of this sex trafficking ring in South Florida, which shows the disgusting reality of sex trafficking and how large this industry is in the United States. The media should spread awareness and gather support for the victims of these crimes, instead of just discussing Robert Kraft's future in the NFL. Focus on the real victims, not a celebrity forced to face the realities of his own actions.



## Where's the Break in School Break?

Jillian Lederman, Junior  
Editor-In-Chief

This past week, all students and teachers enjoyed time away from the walls of Marblehead High School. Some embarked on vacations with their families, while others opted for a "staycation" at home. The general consensus among all, however, was that we really needed a break.

It's customary for teachers to schedule tests on the days leading up to school vacations. As we wrap up a given unit, they want to test us on the information we have covered before we have the chance to forget it during our time off. As a result, every school vacation is preceded by several days of stress and very little sleep for students. The one silver lining is that we have a week of relaxation to look forward to.

So we study for our tests and we write our essays, and we keep ourselves going with the knowledge that it will be over soon. Because we understand that if we want to do well in school, we are required to invest time and effort into our classes. It is what many of us do all year. So, finally, we make it to the last day before vacation. And in the last minutes of each class, as we wait for the bell to ring, our teachers tell us that those essays we've just written and those tests we've just taken were not the last of the week; we now have more essays to do over break, and more tests scheduled in the days immediately after. School doesn't end over February Break.

We spend much of our lives worrying: worrying about our next exam, about whether we will get into college, about how we will finish all of our work on time, about what we will do with the rest of our lives. We worry, worry, worry, and we continually gain new things to worry about every day; that's just life. But sometimes, we need life to stop for a few days. We need some time to forget about everything that causes us stress on every other day and choose to enjoy ourselves instead. We need to be able to sit and talk for an hour after dinner without running off to fulfill some obligation, to spend all day in our pajamas watching terrible television, to take a nap without worrying about how it will offset our sleep schedule, to just live.

Several studies have proven that periodic mental breaks are not merely a luxury, but a necessity. According to the Framingham Heart Study, working men who do not take an annual vacation are 32 times more likely to die from a heart attack, while women who do not take a break from work for six or more years are eight times more likely to get heart disease. The State University of New York at Oswego reported that men who go on annual vacations are 20 percent less likely to die of any cause. And, according to Shannon Torberg, a psychologist at Allina Health Annandale Clinic, those who take time away from their work enjoy improved physical and mental health, better relationships with those around them, a decreased tendency to experience burnout, and a greater overall well-being. If all of this information applies to adults, why would it not hold true for students as well? Why are students denied the ability to enjoy a week during which they can isolate themselves entirely from school-related responsibilities?

I fully acknowledge that, as students, we have 180 days during which we are expected to turn up every day to school and complete the work we are assigned. These responsibilities mirror those that we will eventually adopt when we enter the workforce as adults. Additionally, particularly in AP classes at Marblehead High School, there is a certain amount of information that all students must absorb if we want to do well on our exams at the end of the year. Still, all people, students and adults alike, deserve and need pure, unobstructed breaks every once in a while.

Instead, we spend our last few days of break hurriedly completing our homework and studying for our upcoming tests. We are forced to return to our mundane realities too early. And as we walk back into school on Monday morning, we remark to our friends that the week passed way too quickly, and that it didn't really feel like a break; because it wasn't. I am entirely willing to invest all of my effort completing every assignment I am given during the school year. I appreciate my privilege of education, and I often enjoy learning about the topics covered in my classes. But I do not believe that a good education is inevitably accompanied by perpetual schoolwork. What I do believe is that a good and healthy life must include a little bit of time each year for a complete absence of responsibilities, obligations, requirements, and deadlines. Immediately when we return from vacation, teachers should be free to assign whatever work they would like us to complete. Until then, give us a break.

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