



High School “Superheroes” Help Out Marblehead Kids

By Sophie Hauck

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Nowadays, everyone stays at home all the time, stuck inside with our families, the mountains of work that we must do online, and this collective feeling of restlessness for real life. Now imagine that you are a six year old in quarantine, a six year old with limitless energy for the monkey bars at recess, giggles with friends, and the occasional epic meltdown. Imagine that you are that six year old’s parent.

For many families in Marblehead, this situation is not hypothetical; it is real, and it is running around the kitchen right now asking for a snack and the chance to pick the next movie to watch on Disney+. Marblehead is full of developing kids who need an outlet for their energy, as well as parents who must entertain their children while also fulfilling regular obligations from home. Jennifer Billings, a long-standing English teacher at MHS, is self-isolating alongside her sons at home, and although these boys are all grown up, Mrs. Billings can imagine what the quarantine might be like if her kids were young enough to attend elementary school.

Three of Mrs. Billings’s fellow English teachers are mothers to young children, and as the colleagues have corresponded during this difficult time, Mrs. Billings can see the challenges of quarantine for families with little kids. Teacher of Marblehead High School’s first ever service-learning class alongside social studies teacher Lindsay Bachman, Mrs. Billings was inspired to engage the MHS community in an opportunity to help young Marblehead students from home. After spending her quarantine brainstorming and then communicating with students via Google Classroom, Mrs. Billings’s coronavirus partnership with Diane Gora’s first grade class at Glover School has officially begun, and it is already connecting bored Marblehead little kids with bored Marblehead big kids ready to have some fun.



The partnership between Mrs. Billings’s and Ms. Gora’s classes consists of multiple layers, the first being a pen pal program that is still in the works. Both teachers agreed that snail mail would be the best way to encourage safe social interaction, and Ms. Gora is excited to teach her students how to properly mail a letter. With 50 MHS students already signed up to write back, these high-schoolers who grew up learning how to text and type and tap may also have a lot to learn when it comes to old-fashioned letter-writing. Additionally, Mrs. Billings has asked her students

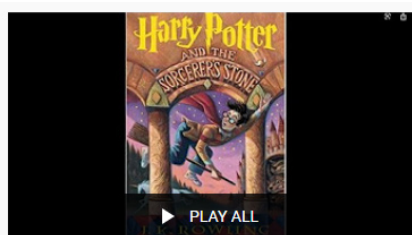
I also appreciated having the chance to slow down and return to one of my old favorites.

As Mrs. Billings says, “[during] this time when we’re all inside... a book is an escape.” Freshman Zoe Gast, who read the first chapter of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, agrees, saying that, “like a lot of people, I fell out of my reading phase around seventh grade.” Gast has been picking up her own books for pleasure lately, including the history classic *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, but said, “I chose [The Sorcerer’s Stone] because I love Harry Potter... it was just like my favorite thing when I was little.”

For the little ones now listening to these stories online, the joy of discovering a new book is only part of what Mrs. Billings hopes they’ll love about the partnership. “There’s nothing quite like a young kid knowing a big kid,” Mrs. Billings insists. “It’s like knowing a superhero.” And for us participating high-schoolers, this sense of admiration and validation is a relief. Many of Mrs. Billings’s students are juniors, and as we navigate a halted semester that was once supposed to prepare us for the college application season next fall, now would be the perfect time to revert to the childlike belief that life will always end happily ever after. With Mrs. Billings’s and Ms. Gora’s program to encourage friendship through reading and writing, we rewrite our own expectations for this spring, weaving together our plotlines with those of our young peers. Of course, the pen pal/storytime program is an important community service opportunity, but it is also a reminder to slow down, to recognize what someone else’s quarantine experiences may be like, and to put our feet in our new friends’ (much smaller) shoes. As Mrs. Billings says, “We’re all in this together.” Let’s take care to remember that.

Mrs. Billings was inspired to create this virtual storytime when she was in Maine to check in on her mother-in-law (from six feet apart). If only she had brought a copy of *One Morning in Maine*, Mrs. Billings would have loved to record herself reading the story on the beach, but instead the teacher ultimately recorded *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* as she read to her dog, Bella, back in Marblehead. Since then, 13 stories and counting have become available to watch on Mrs. Billings’s YouTube page, ranging from chapter books to picture books read by students and friends of Mrs. Billings alike.

Just having recorded my own reading of Jeff Brumbeau’s *The Quiltmaker’s Gift* this past week, I certainly hope that the first-graders will enjoy the story, but



Reading Gone Viral 2020

to record videos of themselves reading children’s books so that their pen pals do not miss out on regular storytime.

The Needs of the Many Outweigh the Needs of the Few

By Miranda Connolly

OPINION EDITOR

As we all know, the coronavirus has now spread to every corner of the world, and in one way or another, we have all been affected by it. Around half of the states in the United States are in a shelter-in-place, but people still seem to just not get it. Too many people are ignoring social distancing, and others are suffering because of it. We, as a society, must come together and do what is right and healthier for everyone. I understand that it can be frustrating to stay in your house all day, but you can still find ways to entertain yourself. Start a new hobby, learn a

new skill, read a book. There are so many wonderful things just waiting at your fingertips.

It may seem easier to pretend nothing’s happening, but this was Boris Johnson’s approach to the virus, and he now has it, too. We must accept the fact that this virus will change how our society functions, and maybe for the better. For instance, air pollution has drastically decreased, and the Grand Canal in Venice recently welcomed back clear waters. Instead of fighting this inevitable change, we should accept it, and the sooner the better. Already, the number of confirmed cases in the United States has risen well above that in both China and Italy.

Another issue is how our politicians are treating the virus. It seems they are only suggesting we try to stay away from each other. I think they should be more direct when they tell people to stay inside—it could finally convince people to listen to them.

In bizarre times such as these, it is important we put other people’s needs above our own. Staying safe is the only way to make this situation end sooner. We, as a society, must come together and keep everyone safe—some of us are already making sacrifices to do so. Remember to stay inside, wash your hands, and stay at least six feet apart from people when you are outside of your house. And don’t forget, this too shall pass!

Common Misconceptions About Climate Change and Extinction

By Madison Morris

OPINION EDITOR



Each day, we are inundated with news from different sources. Sometimes, it is hard to know what to believe—especially concerning such a highly debated topic as climate change. As a volunteer at the New England Aquarium, I see firsthand from the public how much misinformation there is about climate change and extinction. In order to combat climate change, we must first set the record straight about some of the most popular misconceptions so that we can all be on the same page.

One common misconception that I often hear is that an increase in carbon emissions is not that bad because plants need carbon dioxide to live. While it is true that plants require carbon dioxide for photosynthesis, there is no need for excess carbon dioxide to be in the atmosphere. Cellular respiration provides carbon dioxide that plants can use for photosynthesis, so most of the carbon dioxide emitted from fossil fuel combustion and other pollution is absorbed by carbon sinks and accumulates in the atmosphere, leading to an increase in global temperature.

Another common misconception is that the extinction of a species does not affect humans, so it is not a problem. I believe that this misconception originates from endangered species such as sea turtles and right whales that seem to have little effect on humans because we do not often see them in our everyday lives. While we may not have a direct connection to these species, they play major roles in their ecosystems that do affect us. For example, almost every species of sea turtle is endangered. Sea turtles affect humans because sea turtles control prey populations such as jellyfish that are potentially harmful to humans. Also, sea turtle eggs are consumed by many different animals, such as birds and fish. These birds and fish, in turn, provide food for species eaten by humans. In addition to the important ecological role of sea

turtles, many communities rely on them as a source of income through tourism.

I have also heard the misconception that climate change is not that big of a deal now and that we can worry about it in the future. Of course, each person has their own definition of “not a big deal,” but in my opinion, the impacts of climate change that are already having a major effect on many ecosystems warrant immediate concern. For example, ocean acidification, one effect of climate change, has already caused more than 90% of the Great Barrier Reef to be impacted by coral bleaching. As for worrying about this problem in the future, a report released by the IPCC concluded that by 2030, global temperatures may reach a crucial threshold that will lead to major problems such as extreme droughts, heat waves, and sea-level rise. That gives us only 10 years to majorly decrease carbon emissions!

Lastly, a common misconception is that the hole in the ozone layer is responsible for global warming because the hole has allowed heat to enter Earth’s atmosphere. While both the ozone hole and climate change involve human-generated chemicals, fossil fuel combustion is believed to be the primary cause of climate change, while the hole in the ozone layer is believed to be caused by chemicals known as CFCs. The most harmful CFCs were banned in 1987 by the Montreal Protocol, which was mostly successful at halting the deterioration of the ozone layer!

It can be quite difficult to separate fact and fiction when discussing ever-changing topics. Since climate change and species extinction are such divisive issues, it is important to stick to the facts when forming opinions and discussing them.

Check out the *Headlight* website (mhsheadlight.com) and Instagram (@mhsheadlight) for both these and past articles!

MHS Headlight
The Official Newspaper of Marblehead High School

Home School Local World Opinion Sports General Interest Creative In-School Editions Past Headlight Staff Contact

mhsheadlight
44 posts 216 followers 305 following

MHS Headlight
We are Marblehead High School’s student newspaper—Headlight!
Meetings in room A303 every Monday afternoon.
Send in school news and we’ll post it!
mhsheadlight.com

Coronacat... Throwbacks School news Spotlights '19-20 Artic... Planning '18-19 Artic...

Headlight Staff

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Jillian Lederman ASSISTANT EDITOR: Sophie Hauck
OPINION EDITORS: Madison Morris, Miranda Connolly, Kate Gardner
NEWS EDITORS: Lily Morgan, Sophia Piper FEATURES EDITOR: Alexis Earp
PHOTO MANAGERS: Julia Greenway, Jared Lederman

REPORTERS: Anabel Anderson, Paulina Arcos-Marquez, Nora Bekkai, Alison Buxbaum, Katherine Cronin, Siya Curtis, Olivia Gardner, Zoe Gast, Martha Heffernan, Katherine Jenkins, Caroline Johnson, Sean McLean, Eva Nickolas, Eliot Piper, Magdalena Rieper, Talia Schwartz, Evelina Thibodeaux

TEACHER ADVISOR: Mr. Higgins