

VOLTAGE

Science Park High School

260 Norfolk Street, Newark, NJ 07103

Volume 6, Edition 3

February 2015

Jesse Jackson Visits Science Park by Sofia Amorim



January 9, 2015: the Friday I learned a lot about the value of a photograph; the day the Reverend Jesse Jackson taught me how powerful unity can truly be.

Through the camera lens, I fiddled to find the perfect shot, one I could imagine the likes of Ansel Adams producing, but primarily trying to capture a moment where everything just seemed right.

However, there is one thing that stands out in all these pictures: It's the rapt attention held by the audience, the way it seems, as if for once, there is hope that something can be done. Everyone is standing and chanting the same words.

For once, even I, a devout skeptic, could see that we are a part of something much larger than ourselves, and when we stand together, nothing really seems impossible because there are countless others standing there with us.

A picture is worth far beyond a thousand words; it's worth the experience that it captures, and there are seldom words to replicate that.



Technology: The Grim Reaper of Knowledge by Sofia El Mekkaoui

The rapid revolution of technology has affected our lifestyles drastically and has led us to believe that our lives have changed for the better. Now communication with our distant friends or relatives, buying products or goods on-the-go and conducting business meetings is possible with just a single click. We believe that all these changes have made our lives more comfortable than before. However, there is a critical concern that is eating up most people from the inside, which is whether or not technology is in actuality doing more harm than good. People are right in being concerned, technology is mercilessly annihilating the human striving for knowledge and information.

The negative effects from the push for technology are most evident in today's classrooms. It is beyond question that the internet breeds procrastinators. The modern students prioritize where the information can be found (i.e. via Google) rather than what the information actually is. The passion for knowledge has been lost in a whirlwind of impatient and easily distracted individuals who want information quickly.

A newer tool of technology, social media, has also been proven to negatively affect the value of knowledge. By now, we are all aware that social media is a tool used by people all around the world. Its original purpose was to promote and aid communication for people all across the globe. Over time, however, social media has evolved into something much bigger. In 2014, social media sites like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook are not only changing how individuals, on a daily basis,

will communicate with each other, but also how we interact with each other in our daily lives. These sites have allowed us to hide behind screens and have limited our social interaction face to face.

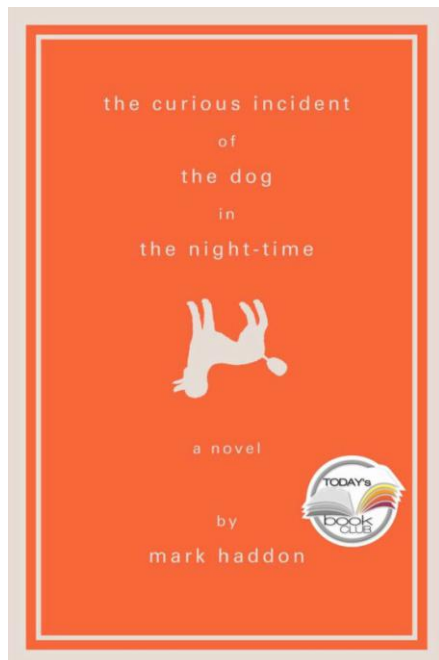
As Pete Cashmore stated, "Communication is dead, and social media holds the smoking gun." More importantly, due to the excessive usage of online chatting and shortcuts, the writing skills of today's younger generation have declined quite tremendously. These days, children are relying more and more on digital communication, so much so that they have totally forgotten about improving their writing skills. They don't know the spelling of different words, how to use grammar properly, or speak properly.

In a nutshell, the more advanced technology becomes, the more it seems to have control over our lives. Children growing up in the Internet age expect instant gratification. The Internet means no waiting and instant results with minimal effort. These traits don't translate to the classroom, where teachers expect students to work for their grades. As a result, students are often unable to work through problems. They also fail to manage their time efficiently.

A full education enhances the mind and body. With new technologies, students just aren't getting a full education. Technology has proven time and time again to be the end all of knowledge and, without limitations, the concept of knowledge may very well become obsolete at the hands of technology.

Book Review

by Sofia Amarin



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime by Mark Haddon

Deciding the next book to read is always a struggle, especially if you're finicky. We're always told to not judge a book by its cover, but the cover gives you a lot of information that you need.

For example, the cover art will give you a hint as to what kind of mood or tone the author has in store, and most importantly, it contains the title. The title encompasses something essential to the story; it's the one idea that the author wants you to remember, that's what they want to come to your mind when you think about their book.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time's title is certainly very specific. To be honest, the title along with its unique cover (a plain red cover with basic font and a cutout of an upside down dog) were what initially drew my attention. The story follows a fifteen year old boy named Christopher, who is very logical, is good at deducing patterns, and hates the color yellow; he finds a dead neighborhood dog, with a pitchfork stuck through him.

Naturally, Christopher decides he will use logic and find out who killed the dog, Wellington. However, this is not the only thing that Christopher will learn. During his investigation he learns all about what happened when his mother died, how to take the train to London and above all, he learned that not everything can be explained so easily and that not everything has a set outcome.

The author, Mark Haddon, creates a very real character in Christopher. Although we may not struggle to understand social cues or figures of speech, Haddon exposes the side to people that we most nearly avoid: our uncertainties and fear of change alter the past that we thought was so sure. His simplistic writing style conveys the true simplicities of life, contrasting the superfluous and excessive euphemisms we so often employ in order to make it easier to deal with.

The story itself is very heavy, but it's seen through the eyes of a logical and innocent young boy. Christopher tells the story as it's happening, and you are with him every step of his journey.

As you're reading, you can't help but want to explain things to him, hold his hand, and simply fan your fingers out to him, since he doesn't like to be touched. Haddon's tale pulls at your heartstrings, because you see in Christopher that turning point in your childhood when you realized that now you were living in the adult world and not everything can be told as it is.

This is a great read for anyone who feels a little misunderstood, because now you'll see someone else just like you, who doesn't understand why other people don't get it.

The fact of the matter is, life is not a simple equation with a definite answer, and all the variables defined for you; it's a walk through history with events that happen and are buried with no explanation at the time, but spark all sorts of profound changes, emotional and all, later on.

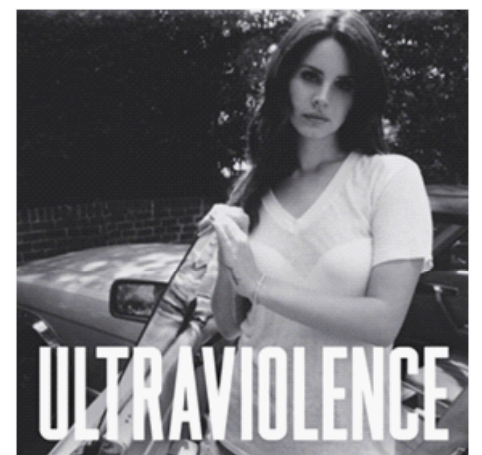
This book is an experience, and its message is one I think that many of us, myself included, could really benefit from hearing.

Music Review: Lana Del Rey's *Ultraviolence*

by Renee Johnson

Ultraviolence is Lana Del Rey's second major album that followed her widely recognized debut album released in 2012, "Born to Die." *Ultraviolence* is a melancholy crawl through Lana's personal romantic relationships, addictions, and dreams. Lana collaborated with the lead vocalist and guitarist of *The Black Keys* Dan Auerbach, who produced most of the album at his Nashville studio. With a new producer came new additions to the original signature sound manifested by Lana, like the blues and psychedelic guitar instrumentals.

The album combines desire, ferocity, and sorrow into a tight bundle that Del Rey has trouble unpacking. Many critics shook their heads at the controversial lyrics on songs like "Ultraviolence," while others nodded in approval of the candid and reflective way in which Lana chose to depict her story throughout the album. *Ultraviolence* has something to offer for every type of listener, and is worth taking the time to listen to.



Teacher Profile: Interview with Mr. Bridgett

by Romina Generali

In an effort to acknowledge the incredible new additions to our staff this year, I sat down with Mr. Bridgett to get to know him.

Prior to Science Park, Mr. Bridgett had been teaching for sixteen years. He has taught at the Hun School of Princeton and at the Health and Sciences Technology High School in New Brunswick.

When asked why he chose to pursue a teaching position in a new school, and why he chose Science Park, he responded: "This school is significantly larger than my old school, and it offered me an opportunity for growth and an opportunity to impact a larger group of students."

Mr. Bridgett believes it is important to empower students to become life long learners. He states that "Science Park appears to be the perfect fit."

When asked what was his first impression of the school, and what his thoughts are now, he responded: "When I arrived on the first day, I immediately thought that this was an amazing place because of the diversity. The atmosphere here has definitely been rewarding, for both me and the students, I believe."

Mr. Bridgett believes he has brought with him the same enthusiasm and passion. He states that because the world is constantly changing, one has to be able to change with it. In the past he has had to alter the manners in which he has tried to present challenging concepts. He believes it's important to try to accommodate the students who are used to learning in different ways. Mr. Bridgett was prepared to adapt to anything that awaited him at Science Park.

We spoke about his experience with working with the students at Science Park. He states that "It's a pleasure and on some days, a challenge, to work with our students. Some of the hurdles or obstacles that students encounter here are similar, and of course different, from some of my past students."

My last question to Mr. Bridgett was if he was proud to be a Charger, to which he enthusiastically responded with the affirmative. He states, "I am extremely appreciative and grateful for the opportunity to be a Charger. I love being a Charger."



Giuseppe Speaks

On January 7 at approximately 11:30 in the morning, two Islamic extremists affiliated with a branch of Al-Qaeda based in Yemen, infiltrated the offices of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. Armed with assault rifles and other various small arms, they murdered a total of 11 people, leaving another 11 injured.

A truly tragic event took place on this day; it is one that should not be forgotten anytime soon, and one that should serve as a reminder to the threat posed by certain extremist groups, groups that misinterpret the teachings of the Qur'an and often resort to violence to deal with non-believers and those they consider infidels.

Unfortunately, it has also reawakened the belief that the rapidly growing Muslim population in France is a problem to be solved rather than a population worth integrating into French society.

This sentiment becomes particularly worrying when the state passes and enforces legislation that works to restrict the rights and progress of this minority population. Such is the case in France, and for that fact those feeling the consequences of this attack are not terrorist groups, but innocent Muslims.

Once a minority commits a crime against the majority, it seems as though the crime has been committed by all those of similar background, ethnicity, and religion.

It is more than just mere inconvenience; groups that are seen as "threats" by groups who consider themselves "victims" often take on inverse roles. In the days that followed, innocent bystanders were being attacked in the street without provocation no other reason as looking the same, and reading the same book as murderers.

The underlying issue that has arisen in light of this tragedy is truly unsettling: France's xenophobia, secularism, and protection of principle over people have become so ingrained in state affairs that it seems near irreversible.

French institutions are near utopian in their written societal frameworks. A paradise of equal opportunity and equality in every sense seems to be painted in 200 year old treatises, document, and declarations.

It isn't so much that we should take away from the significance of these accomplishments, but in over 200 years since these radical ideas were thought up, it's due time for some new ones to be imagined, those that benefit the marginalized, and not just the "majority."

Of the nearly 64 million people living in France, 2 million are practicing Muslims. Over the course of the past 50 years, Muslims have been emigrating from several North African and Sub-Saharan African nations.

Upon arriving in the mecca of Western democracy and freedom, they face disenfranchisement and futility. Many are subject to both racial and religious exploitation in nearly all aspects of living.

Being Muslim in France isn't easy when there is no place for them there. It is understandable that there is a distrust and even hatred towards the establishment in France.

People have been very vocal in the days and weeks directly following the attack; there have been rallies, articles, and countless tweets and posts about it.

People have readily and loudly come to the defense of "freedom of speech" and have idolized *Charlie Hebdo*, and have erected an image of heroism in him.

In reality *Charlie Hebdo* was nothing more than a sub-par magazine with poor taste, very poor taste. Looking purely at a literary angle, the publication picked the lowest hanging fruit. It's easy for those with privilege to make fun of those who they oppress, and in effect oppress them further. It isn't revolutionary at all; it is nothing more than hate speech in my opinion.

It is unfortunate and truly sad that any life had to be lost that day, and I am deeply saddened for these people and their families.

However, it is the innocent Muslim families, who simply want to go about their daily lives in peace, that will be the most harmed.

Student Profile: Sunhee Simon

by Toyosi Dickson



Science Park High School heralds many exceptional students in its student body. Each student is unique in his or her own way, ranging from intellectual, musical, athletic, and social.

Science Park will soon bid its senior class farewell in order for the seniors to pursue a life worth living. One student SunHee Simon is leaving a lasting legacy at Science Park once she graduates.

SunHee Simon is arguably one of the best debaters in Science Park history, as she has won countless Lincoln Douglas tournaments and championships, while also representing the United States of America in its international team.

To understand her major accomplishments, one must start at her humble beginnings. In her own words SunHee simplified the complex forms and tactics of competitive debate as, “filled with claim, warrant, impact (if anyone had Mr. Alston at any point, you know what I’m talking about). This basic structure manifests itself in different forms of debate. In slower forms, like Public Forum or Worlds School Debate format, persuasion is key in presentation. In circuit level Lincoln Douglas and Policy, speed and thinking quickly on your feet is the best way to present arguments.”

Lincoln Douglas is her personal favorite as she finds it personally empowering and teaches one how to solely defend oneself. Even after years of practice, tournaments, and praise, she sates: “I haven’t overcome my fear and anxiety completely, but I have decided to instead use it to better myself. I use the criticisms and doubts of myself in my head to constantly evolve.”

SunHee manages to balance her tournaments, international travel such as her recent tournament in Germany, and participate in the International Baccalaureate program at SPHS, while also being at the near top of her class. Many already find being a Science Park High student difficult, yet she manages to balance it all through time allocation and through sheer willpower.

Once the school year ends, SunHee Simon will be heading to Stanford University to major in Psychology and Mathematics (through pre-med) and continue to competitively debate in college for two more years.

She encourages others to join the competitive debate team. She states, “I would like them (students of SPHS) to know that debate is a wonderful activity that opens many doors. It has helped me get into a great college, meet AMAZING people, gain confidence, and learn about new things. While it is a lot of work, debate is an activity that prepares you for real life. Life is filled with hard work and the earlier you learn that, the better. But debate is also extremely fun and there is no doubt that if you go through with it, you will love it.”

Interview with Mr. Swartz

by Nia Collins

Here at Science Park High School we have amazing coaches, one of whom is Mr. Swartz. Mr. Swartz has been teaching physical education for twenty-two years. Prior to working at SPHS, Mr. Swartz coached football, tennis, baseball, and cheerleading. But for Mr. Swartz, Science Park is where he feels most at home. When he was young, he was very athletic and has enjoyed sports all his life. When his parents took him to the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984, Mr. Swartz was inspired to one day coach Track and Field. By his junior year in high school, he knew what his passion was to be: he wanted to be a coach.



His expectations for his Track and Field students are to work hard and try their best at all times. It’s not all about winning for Mr. Swartz, even though it is a bonus. He believes it’s about good competition and putting your best foot forward. He’s proud to stay here at Science Park, and believes the hard work and dedication makes his team a great one. This season he has seen great improvement and believes that it has been very successful. Science Park has been everything that Mr. Swartz has wanted.



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Student Newspaper of Science Park High School
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