



Cate
Cody '22



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Highlights

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A Letter from the Editor



Editor-in-Chief
Bonnie Sneider '21

I would like to dedicate this issue of *The Voice* to one of our most loyal readers, my Aunt Penny. After a strong 100 years of life, Aunt Penny died on Sunday, December 13th . An independent and strong New Yorker who insisted on living in her own apartment until her very last day, Aunt Penny shared her love for all things writing and editing with excitement and grace. She even helped publicize her husband (and my uncle) Martin's invention, the interrobang (a combination of an exclamation and question mark (!?)). Upon learning that I was interested in writing for my high school newspaper in ninth grade, she shipped me a package of books on all things editing and writing, like *Fowler's Modern English Usage* and *On Writing Well*. Aunt Penny truly checked her email for *The Voice* newspaper in her upper 90's, and she never put a good book down. To the woman who inspired me to carry on a family tradition of editing and lead with strength, thank you Aunt Penny. I love you!



Images Courtesy of Bonnie Sneider

Winter Break: DIY's + Movies

Painting a Sunset: A Simple Tutorial



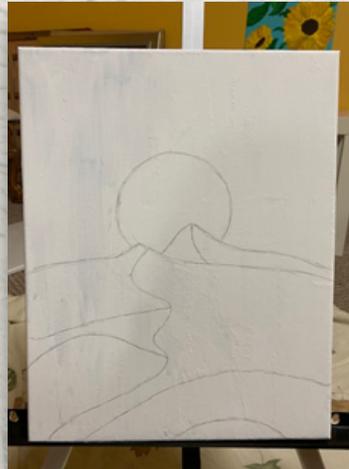
Shivani
Devrapally '24

Winter break is a great time to unplug and do some DIY's like painting! Here is a fun, simple tutorial to get you started. Painting a sunset may even bring you some sunshine this winter! If you would like to preview the process, here is a **time-lapse** of me painting. (All images are courtesy of Shivani Devrapally).

Materials:

- Canvas or a blank sheet of paper
- Paint brushes
- Water
- White paint
- Four different colors of paint

1. Start with a blank canvas, and make an outline of the painting to guide you.



2. Lightly mark the colors you will paint in each section in pencil.



3. Start with a color, and carefully paint inside the three sections shown (next page).



4. Then, paint two more sections with the next color.



5. Paint two more sections in your next color.



6. Paint the rest of the canvas with your fourth color. Do not paint the sun.



7. Paint clouds if you would like, and touch up the edges of the sun with white paint.



A Hollis Special: Meatballs



Hollis
Summers '21

Since I was little, I have loved Italian food, especially meatballs. So, during my quest to make the best meatballs in the world (or at least in my opinion), I conducted extensive research. Today, you will discover my secrets on how to make the perfect meatballs... you're welcome in advance :)

Ingredients:

- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 lb bulk Italian sausage
- 1 ½ cups ricotta cheese (12 oz)

- 1 cup Panko bread crumbs
- ½ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup fresh minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
- 1 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
- 2-4 cups of tomato sauce
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

cheese, Panko, onion, 1/2c. Parmesan, garlic, thyme, parsley, and salt. Then, mix by hand and form into 1 ½ inch (diameter) meatballs.

3. Heat a large cast iron skillet with olive oil, and brown the meatballs, half at a time on a hot and greased skillet for 10 minutes per batch. Return all meatballs to the skillet. Bake for 10 minutes.
 4. Then sauce the meatballs up, and doll them up with parsley and Parmesan cheese if you want. Lastly, you can serve them as an appetizer or over spaghetti! Enjoy!
1. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F.
 2. In a large bowl, combine eggs, beef, sausage, ricotta

A Holiday Movie List



Shivani
Devrapally '24

We all know that the holiday season is an amazing time of year. But, it can also be pretty stressful and hectic. Especially now. So, here is a list of movies that can make your winter break just a little bit better.

Elf (PG)

Buddy is a human who was adopted and raised by elves in the North Pole. After finding out he was adopted, he overhears Santa saying his real father is on the naughty list. Buddy, determined to help him, travels to New York in an attempt to find his father and get him on the nice list. This is the

best movie for the most sincere, shameless, borderline obsessive holiday fanatics, and I absolutely love it.

Home Alone (PG)

Kevin, a young boy, is accidentally left at home after his family oversleeps and rushes to the airport. They board the plane but soon realize that they left Kevin and attempt to get home. Meanwhile, Kevin is overjoyed because of his new freedom but is also terrified as two burglars make plans to break into the McAllisters' home. Honestly, all six movies are great, but you can't go wrong with the very first. It's the perfect mix of comedy and action.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas (PG)

There are so many different versions of this, and they are all amazing (especially the most recent animated one released in 2018), but the 2000

film starring Jim Carey is, in my opinion, the very best one. The Grinch hates Christmas and flees from Whoville after being mocked by the Whos. Years later, a little girl named Cindy Lou nominates the Grinch to be the "Holiday Cheermeister" after meeting him. The Grinch then tries to ruin Christmas for the Whos of Whoville. To be honest, that description does not do the movie justice. The movie is a classic, and I think Dr. Seuss would be proud.

Get Santa (PG)

After he crashes his sleigh, Santa Claus asks a father and son for help rounding up his reindeer so he can return to the North Pole. This one is absolutely hilarious and perfect for a family movie night.

A Christmas Story (PG)

Ralphie Parker spends most of his time dodging a bully and dreaming of an air rifle. Ralphie tries his best to make it to the next year with his glasses intact and his dreams fulfilled. There's a reason why this movie gets played constantly, and it's because it's one of the best.

The Santa Clause (PG)

A single father accidentally kills Santa and is forced to take over his job or risk ruining the holiday season. I love all three movies and would enjoy seeing them all again. They're absolutely hilarious.

The Nightmare Before Christmas

Jack Skellington, the king of Halloweentown, plans to kidnap Santa and bring

Christmas under his control. I'll be honest. I had a lot of doubts about this one. Is it a Christmas movie? Is it a Halloween movie? I'm still not sure, but what I do know is that it was a whirlwind. I've seen blockbuster movies that took me on less of a rollercoaster than this movie.

Let it Snow (PG-13)

A snowstorm hits a small town on December 24, bringing together a group of high school students. I was pleasantly surprised with this one and I didn't expect it to be even partially decent. It was better than decent, but it was a little inappropriate for younger kids. I ended up kicking my sister out (she's 10).

The Christmas Chronicles (PG)

Two siblings try to trap Santa Claus, and when their plan goes wrong, they end up teaming up with Santa and his elves. This one had a predictable ending, but that

didn't take away from the movie itself. Kurt Russell as Santa Claus is memorable, and the excellent acting combined with a good plot made for an enjoyable two hours.

Unaccompanied Minors (PG)

Five kids get snowed in at Hoover by themselves. What ensues is a complete and utter chaos for an uptight airport official and his assistant. I ended up watching this last year when I couldn't sleep and the power lines went out. It is one of the best movies I have ever seen and is perfect for a laugh.

The Polar Express (G)

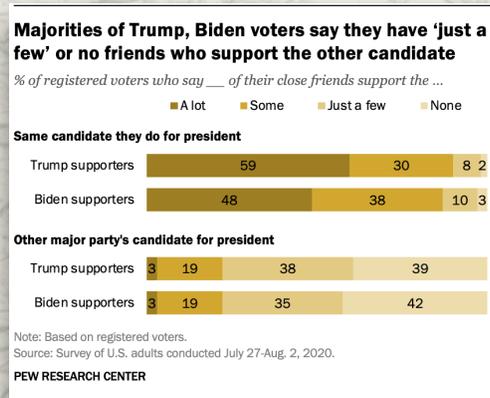
A little boy takes a magical train ride to the North Pole. This is a classic holiday season movie and I can't remember a year where it hasn't been played in my household during the holiday season.

The Social Dilemma: Technology's Role in Political Polarization



Cate
Cody '22

Political polarization in the U.S. is an especially prominent issue, as our nation becomes increasingly divided. Political beliefs and ideals can seem almost impossible to discuss with people who maintain opposing viewpoints. This division affects the social fabric of our society, even playing a role in our relationships. In the Republican Party, 59% of Americans say that their friends support the same presidential candidate as them, and in the Democratic Party 49% say the same (Pew Research).



While division between political parties is not a new phenomenon in the U.S., the same Pew Research study also shows that those who do not identify with either political party and take moderate viewpoints are down 2% continually dwindling, making up only 7% of the voter population in 2018. With the overwhelming

majority siding with one party or the other, we are often less inclined to find common ground with those who have differing political ideology. Recent awareness and conversations in Silicon Valley suggest that social media and the algorithms used to determine our interests may be partially to blame for this political rift.

Many Americans are under the impression that the political stories that we view on our screens is the same as what the rest of the world sees. However, due to the algorithms that gauge our political leanings by tracking what sources we read, the information that we absorb is oftentimes manipulated. Based on what we click on, technology can generate lists of content

with similar viewpoints, meaning that the majority of what is being recommended to individuals is something that is predicted will be either received well, or cause outrage and upset, in an effort to maximize user engagement.



Companies, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, mainly profit off of advertising, and the more time we spend in those apps, the more opportunity they have to show us ads. Therefore, it is in their best interest to find what keeps us connected to their service by continuing to cater stories that are likely to fit with previously

held views. Thus, the algorithm builds on political extremism by bolstering our standpoints or going against them. The Center for Humane Technology, an organization created by former Google ethicist Tristan Harris explains:

“Tech platforms make billions of dollars keeping us clicking, scrolling, and sharing. Just like a tree is worth more as lumber and a whale is worth more dead than alive—in the attention extraction economy a human is worth more when we are depressed, outraged, polarized, and addicted.”

By determining what keeps us absorbed in these platforms, our emotions are exploited in order to create revenue. By influencing the political content that we are exposed to, these companies influence our opinions and our perception of what the rest of the world thinks.

For this reason, it is important that we recognize the role that social media plays in our political beliefs in an effort to create a more unified and understanding country. Similar to how we as students are encouraged to write persuasive essays and research information that both strengthens and questions our argument, it is beneficial to intentionally gather information from many different sources in order to create a more well-informed and nuanced understanding of political events. Making an effort to choose which sources you read and trust, instead of letting your phone choose for you, can have tremendous effects on how we as a country interpret current events.

All sources can be found on this **document**.

A Highlighted Club

An Interview with the Sustainable Futures Club



Bonnie
Sneider '21

Recently, I had the opportunity to interview sophomore Kareena Kanumury ('23) to learn more about the up-and-coming Sustainable Futures Club. I was impressed with the work she and her team have done even under these circumstances and look forward to seeing all that they do when more opportunities open up. Hopefully these interview highlights will remind you of the potential of our activities here at MICDS!

Q: What are your goals for the club?

A: I hope to teach people about the importance of community service and how to help people in a hands-on way. Although spreading awareness is good, you have to contribute to the community other than talking about the issue.

Q: Do you have plans to do involved activities?

A: Yes. Right now, we're making cards out of recycled paper at home for nursing home patients and people in hospice care.

Q: How do you make the recycled paper cards?

A: You take recycled paper from

your home, soak it in water, blend the paper, and then you get a mesh which you flatten out to allow for drying.

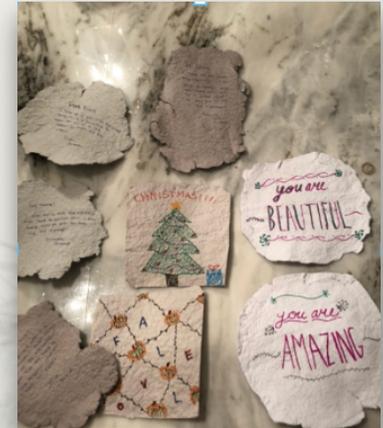


Image Courtesy of
Kareena Kanumury

Q: What other service projects do you have planned?

A: We are still thinking of more activities to do at home. The cards are an ongoing project which people can do at their own pace. Right now, we're trying to set up a podcast for people to be more informed about more issues in our world. Although our goal is to not just spread awareness, options are limited right now, and I am trying to keep the club active.

Q: What type of information would you like to share specifically for *The Voice* in the future?

A: I was thinking each club member could write about one scientific advancement which is helping the environment. A lot of times we focus on the negatives, so we could highlight solutions that people have found. People could give updates

about big environmental problems, as well.

Q: Is your club looking for more people?

A: Yes, the more people and publicity, the better!

Q: Why should people join your club?

A: With everything going on today, everyone is already tied to their own world. You kind of forget about the things around you. Let's say you go out to eat at a fast-food restaurant. You don't really think about what's going to happen after you finish your meal and how you're going to throw away a plastic container. All of the little things that we do today affect what Mother Nature has gifted us. The more we can do from our side, especially starting from home (which is the place to start since we're all home right now!), the more we can shape a better

future for generations to come and us.

Q: Is there anything else that you would like to share?

A: St. Louis is a great place to share nature's beauty. However, in the more urban areas in St. Louis, there is a lot of contamination affecting wildlife and even irrigation systems. People who want to volunteer could clean a place in St. Louis once every month. This plan is still being sorted out, though!

It was a pleasure interviewing you, Kareena! If your club would like some publicity, please contact bsneider@micds.org. *The Voice* would love to celebrate your club!

Remembering a Trip

Blazing & Alive: Mount Merapi



Aanya Tiwari
'23

Because many of us can't travel at this time, reading this article may be a good way to travel virtually!

In April 2017, my family explored the Emerald of the Equator, Indonesia. You'd expect the highlight of this two week trip to be our stay at the bustling yet lively capital city of Jakarta, but that wasn't the case. Yogyakarta or better known as "Jogja," an island city in the Indonesian land of Java, interested me considering the rich cultural heritage. Be it the eventful walks through the local markets, or visit to

Borobudur, the world's largest Buddhist temple, and Prambanan, a 9th-century Hindu temple of Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva - three creators), all served as engrossing learning points and eye-catching sites.

However, for me, the most compelling part of this trip was witnessing the long-living volcanoes in Indonesia. I remembered my geography classes in middle school and the fascinating unit about the study of volcanoes. To this day, I can recall the very explicit details such as the shocking images in our textbooks, the heart-breaking entries of victims of harsh eruptions, and the case studies regarding the remains and lasting effects. Volcanoes have always fascinated me: their conical structure, oozing of viscous lava,

intimidating clouds of smoke, and the mystery of eruption leading to massive destruction.

Mount Merapi, meaning the "Mountain of Fire," was certainly no stranger to chaos considering its history of jarring eruptions, status of being the most active volcano in Indonesia, and being one of the most deadliest volcanoes in the world. This stratovolcano has erupted over 68 times with its most dramatic eruption during October and November 2010. Its most recent eruption was recorded on June 21st, 2020.

We spent the first half of our morning driving around the Kaliadem Village, where the damaged structures and rubble from the 2010 eruption were preserved. The thick layers of ash remained intact on these

surfaces despite the passing of 10 years since the event. Then we took our first stop at the Mini Museum of Sisa Hartaku where they housed the remains of whatever that had been salvaged. In addition, there were first hand pictures of the eruption which gave an insight into the intensity of the volcanic impact.

Finally, we drove to the main Mount Merapi and took three stops, each of which were at different faces of the volcano and at different proximities. I enjoyed the last stop which was the closest anyone could go. It was truly a marvelous site! I was baffled by the height and the enormous smoke cloud that engulfed the volcano's mouth. The air had a tinge of ash in smell, especially at this last stop hence we were

advised to wear masks. This entire area has been transformed into a tourist attraction. All we could see around was people excitedly posing and clicking endless pictures, collecting sand and stones as souvenirs, and vendors selling local art.

I was no exception and posed for goofy selfies with majestic Merapi in the background. The pictures are a testimony of a wonderful natural site.

All Images Courtesy
of Aanya Tiwari



10 year old me posing with Mount Merapi!



Bunker Kaliadem was a 2006-built underground shelter of Mount Merapi used for protection.



The Mini Museum of Sisa Hartaku had also included a small house of memory as part of its entire display.



One of the evacuation vehicles from during the eruption, stored in the Mini Museum of Sisa Harataku.



These many different types of rocks came from the 2010 eruption.



These are kitchen appliances which survived the eruption. They are also kept in the Mini Museum of Sisa Hartaku.

Have

a Happy

and Healthy

Winter Break!

(and we'll see
you soon!)

