

The Elmont Phoenix

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Elmont Memorial High School

Fall 2019 Edition

HOMECOMING KING AND QUEEN CROWNED

Introducing Nyla Allen and Fenol LaRock



By Samia Zia

The 2019 Homecoming King of Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High School, Fenol LaRock, has proven his perfect fit for this role by demonstrating how he has given back to his community - both inside and outside school. He describes his victory as a “blessing” and believes this role suits him because of his extensive effort improving his work ethic and being kind to all his peers.

LaRock describes his high school life as a path that involved “overcoming many obstacles” and believes this is a common trend among all students at this stage in their life. Thus, he sparked an interest in running for Homecoming King once he reflected on all the challenges he has faced in the past and put this goal at the top of his list. The pressure of achieving a good performance in terms of grades and situating of friend groups propelled LaRock to turn himself into “a better person and have a better life.” Moreover, he has been consistently engaged in school activities including the Big Brother Big Sister program and Men of Elmont. He describes the program as a “great experience” and one that allowed him to have the role of helping another, like his older sisters have done for him in the past.

LaRock describes his interests by mentioning that he “likes to mentor people, and give back knowledge to younger students.” Outside of school, he spends his time preaching at his church and being an active member of the youth group. In addition, he describes being selected for top five of the Homecoming Court and ultimately winning as “a great blessing, and a great feeling.” This crowning allowed him to show his parents that

he does have an impact on people around him and that he works hard to motivate the next year’s students. To conclude, he advocates for the younger students to “keep working, never stop, work hard, achieve your goals, take risks, and challenge yourself.”



Nyla Allen, the Queen of this year’s Homecoming, similarly feels that winning is a “great honor” and “it takes a lot for your peers and friends to notice your impact on the school community.” She has been interested in running just as she has been leadership positions for other extracurricular activities, especially being on the soccer team as a junior and noticing how her peers who were seniors at the time felt about Homecoming.

Allen describes her attitude towards her peers as “very positive” and details an instance when a new student was very timid, and dropped his glasses. When she saw that he had left them behind, she chased him down to prevent his day from becoming any more problematic, thus proving her helpful and comforting presence and actions.

Her positive personality and the prominence of close friends in the Homecoming Court allowed her to relax and not worry over who was going to win or lose, so once she won, Allen was “pretty surprised.” For the students who will be in the Homecoming Court next year, she advises that “if you know you are positive, well-rounded, and involved in clubs,” achieving a spot in Homecoming Court should not be of much difficulty. Allen wishes to attend the University of Pittsburgh and become a health-care lawyer or a physical therapist because she wants to help athletes like her to become stronger themselves. Moreover, her involvement with soccer coincides with her future career perfectly, and she believes she is on the path to success.

Congratulations to LaRock and Allen for winning Homecoming King and Queen of 2019!

Traditions of Homecoming Past and Present

By Christianie Joseph

Homecoming is the tradition of welcoming back former students and members and celebrating an organization’s existence. It is a tradition in many high schools, colleges, and churches in the United States.

No one is entirely positive which college officially started the tradition, but the University of Missouri, Baylor University, and the University of Illinois all claim to have started having homecoming

events in from 1909-1911. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) credits the University of Missouri with the first homecoming event. In 1911, their Athletic Director, Chester Brewer, invited alumni to “come home” for the annual game against the University of Kansas. The event drew over 10,000 alumni and fans for a weekend of speeches, rallies, dances and a parade, and the game as the weekend’s center point. As the popularity of football

grew on campuses across the U.S., several schools were inspired by the idea of holding a large-scale celebration to bolster school spirit.

The Homecoming Court has its origins in the 1930s. Originally chosen based on a combination of the float she was riding and the person herself, later queens and kings were nominated and ultimately chosen based on their qualities as an individual.

Every school celebrates homecoming differently, but the

traditions of homecoming haven’t changed much. At Elmont, we have Spirit Week, a parade, the alumni come to visit, we have a football game and a Homecoming King and Queen are announced. In other schools, they also have a Homecoming dance and a bonfire that the students make, but we don’t have that at Elmont.

Every high school has their own homecoming traditions, depending on where you live and what school you go to.

The Elmont Phoenix

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Principal’s Corner

Dear Students,

The 2019-20 school year is off to a fantastic start and I could not be prouder to lead such a wonderful group of young people. So far, we have been focused on our academics and making sure we are getting to class in a timely fashion. We must remain focused on our goals for this year and continue to figure out ways to reach them.

We showed our amazing school spirit at Homecoming 2019 which was a great success. The “All Around the World” floats looked magnificent and the various clubs, sports, and activities transformed our hallways into beautiful tributes to Elmont Pride. Congratulations to Nyla Allen and Fenol LaRock for being named Homecoming Queen and King, respectively. Elmont’s school spirit was in full effect and it was a wonderful weekend to be a part of.

October is Anti-Bullying Month. As we focus on our academics and look forward to a successful year, it is important that we also remember to be mindful and support each other to create a nurturing environment where ALL students feel welcome and accepted. Each of us wakes up each morning wanting to be successful and wanting to be loved by those around us. Even still, life will present many challenges. We must uplift each other and provide each other with the positive support needed to overcome obstacles and achieve our goals. If we choose to stand up for what is right and bring our fellow EMHS members together, little by little, we can create the type of change we would like to see in the world.

I hope everyone is off to a wonderful start and I look forward to working with you all this year. Go Spartans!

Sincerely,
Mr. Dougherty

EDITORIALS

\$1,600,000,000,000 The Student Debt Crisis

By Amman Zia

1.6 trillion dollars. Imagine what you could do with that kind of money! Definitely buy a new car or a new property, invest in businesses, donate to charity, or maybe even purchase a private island. There are a million different ways to spend a trillion dollars. But does this kind of money even exist? Do Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, or Mark Zuckerberg posses 1.6 trillion dollars, altogether? Interestingly, yes. And yes, this amount of money does exist and the top three billionaires aren’t near becoming trillionaires yet. Here is an intriguing backstory as to why this kind of money exists today:

Ever since the start of colleges and universities, most specifically Harvard University, our founding fathers desired to structure a place to educate students in an easy way. Well, they were wrong; it’s not easy at all. In fact, the 1.6 trillion dollars belongs to the total Student Loan Debt Crisis in America and it is still rising to this day. The numbers have gotten so much worse that college students began asking celebrities to pay off their debt, and some have received help. Taylor Swift, whose fans are extremely desperate to receive money from her since she has a history of “helping people” and is a “rich queen,” is criticized for ignoring tweets asking, “pay off my student loan debt.” Additionally, there is also a game show that goes by the name *Paid Off* with Michael Torpey dedicated to helping people with their loans. This show was highlighted on a *Patriot Act* episode with Hasan Minhaj. Minhaj began explaining and critiquing that “they turned a national crisis into a game show,” which was followed by the audience laughing. What’s funny is that Michael Torpey’s motto is “I know it’s not everything, but I hope it takes off the pressure a little bit.” Just imagine a surgeon telling a patient: “I know it’s not everything, but I hope it takes off the pressure.” Minhaj proceeded to take this principle into a humorous direction by making his audience take a survey before coming into the show about student debt. Turns out there was over “6 million dollars of student debt in [the] room alone.”

The question is, how exactly is America combating and lowering the student debt crisis? Are large businesses and politicians making it hard for Americans, just so they can take whatever is in your pocket? Yes and somewhat yes. As of today, there are countless businesses out there that make sure you pay your loans on time. There is even the possibility of asking for student loan forgiveness which seems like it exists, but it really doesn’t. NAVIENT, a horrible corporation which makes sure Americans are paying their student debt were called out - and exposed for - unprofessional behavior. A twenty year old called NAVIENT concerning his student loan debt since he was begging for loan forgiveness and the woman on the

other end stated “you might as well live in your car.” Such amazing advice! Thank you, next time I am in a financial crisis or am unsure with my credit card statement, I might as well proceed to live in my car. Additionally, nowadays students are speaking up and calling for help concerning their debt. On average, an individual can suffer from \$69,000 just in student loan debt. Numerous Americans are still paying their debt off even in their thirties and forties, which is highly concerning. This goes to show how Americans are still in a long term relationship with their Student Loan Officers, which restricts them from doing certain things, such as getting ready for marriage and taking care of themselves since they don’t have enough money.

All in all, critiquing and criticizing certain principles that exist in society is the best way to understand what is going on and the ways in which you can get involved to resolve an issue. Although there are petitions out there for the federal government to take action towards this debt crisis, not much is happening other than going to a bank... or you might as well live in your car. Certain presidential candidates such as Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren are wanting to combat this specific issue on the campaign trail. If you have friends or family members who might be in debt, send them to the right direction or help them out. Not to mention, there are countless scholarships out there that may possibly aid you... and it doesn’t hurt at all to apply. You never know what the outcome might be. It’s best to figure out alternatives to prevent yourself from suffering with a destructive crisis.

THE MORE INCHES THE BETTER? The Debate Between Short and Long Hair

By Anna Ramtahol

There’s always been a debate on the length of somebody’s hair. Some people think the longer the hair is the better or people like short hair because it’s easier to maintain. Both have their pros and cons. Short hair is easier to maintain, but there aren’t many hair styles that can be done with short hair. On the other hand, long hair can allow people to do a variety of hairstyles, but it can take lots of time to manage.

Some people believe that long hair is beautiful and it makes the person better looking. The length of people’s hair also can be affected by the person’s culture views. For example, in India they believe that long hair is beautiful and every girl should have long hair. Because some people would rather take the easy way out, they choose to cut their hair short. Most people would have short hair, but then get extensions, so that they can have the benefits of both lengths of hair. But then the hair would just be temporary and it can be expensive.

Want to know how some of Elmont's scholars spent their summer? Here are two stories showcasing how Elmont students take advantage of the academic opportunities thrown their way - even in the off months of July and August! No breaks for these scholars! In this new Issue 1 feature, "Summer Sessions," participating students share their summer work to inspire you all.



If you have any questions about either program, see Ms. Martinez in the Library, or of course the authors of the respective articles. The first article is the piece that junior Devin Johnson wrote during his attendance at the Hofstra High School Summer Journalism Institute. The second article is a review of the ACLU Summer Institute by attendee Swera Majid-Zeeshan, a senior at Elmont.

Author Michael Otterman, formerly of Merrick, revealing truth, doing good

Editor's note: Devin Johnson, one of 10 participants in Hofstra University's 2019 Summer High School Journalism Institute, is a rising junior at Elmont Memorial High School. The following article is a profile piece on Michael Otterman, a former Herald Community Newspapers intern and freelance writer in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Otterman later went on to become an author and is now is head of the Bernard and Sandra Otterman Foundation, which funds the Institute.



Photos of Devin Johnson (L) and other Elmont students (R) including Akinwale Agesin, Roshanel Daley, and Janice erhunmwunsee, all of whom were present at this summer's Hofstra Journalism Institute. Photo Credit: liherald.com.

Posted on August 13, 2019 to liherald.com

By Devin Johnson

Investigative reporter and author Michael Otterman's life work as a journalist and human rights advocate was inspired by his father's past, and he continues to use his parents' foundation to inspire change today.

Otterman, 38, grew up in Merrick and Old Westbury and now lives in Manhattan. He visited the Lawrence Herbert School of Communication and was interviewed by a panel of high school journalism students on July 29. There he spoke about his life stories, and what inspired him to become a journalist and his aspirations

to continue a life in pursuit of a better tomorrow.

"My goal in writing is not to inject my point of view or emotions," Otterman told the students. "It is the use of the power of words and stories in my book that produces emotion for the reader."

Otterman said his goal is to drive people to act. When people oppose a government action or decision, they become determined to solve the issue at hand, he said he believes. In each of his documented stories, there is a trigger to human emotions. As people read, the injustices become clear, and so does their passion and desire to change the world.

The traumatic past of Otterman's father, Bernard Otterman, in the Holocaust inspired him to become an investigative journalist and human rights advocate, he said. Through

Michael's writing, he revealed atrocities around the world and "was determined to change the course of history for the better," he said.

Michael's father, who died at the age of 80 in 2017, survived the Holocaust with much of his family. Throughout much of Michael's childhood, his father rarely spoke of his experiences in the Holocaust, but as his father became older, he revealed more of his past to Michael.

While attending the University of Sydney in Australia in the early 2000s, Michael became interested in the U.S. government's use of torture during the Iraq War and wrote his final thesis on the use of torture. A professor at the university suggested that he turn his thesis into a book. In 2007, he released his first of two books, titled "American Torture: From the Cold War to Abu Ghraib and Beyond." The

book contains accounts of individuals who suffered extreme torture, and it details different forms of torture used "to break" prisoners.

The impetus for Michael's second book, "Erasing Iraq," was Michael's growing concern about the number of refugees in parts of the Middle East due the U.S invasion of Iraq in 2003. Otterman traveled to Syria, Iraq and Jordan to document firsthand the conditions that drove the refugees out of their countries, and he

realized that the best way to better the refugees' situation was to share his investigative work at home and inspire change.

Otterman's career plan took a turn in 2014 when he was asked by his father to take over the family real estate business and lead his parents' foundation, the Bernard and Sandra Otterman Foundation. Through the foundation, Michael continues to try to right the wrongs of history by funding programs that educate about past atrocities throughout the world, as he views the foundation as a conduit to continue one of his life goals — to create and inspire change for the better throughout the world.



Experience at the ACLU Summer Advocacy Institute

By Swera Zeeshan-Majid

Being accepted into the ACLU Summer Advocacy Institute was one of the most memorable experiences of my Summer 2019. It is not everyday that you earn a trip to Washington, D.C. following a week of building your knowledge on important issues while connecting to others all over the country.

The ACLU stands for the American Civil Liberties Union and is a nonprofit organization whose stated mission is "to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to every person in this country by the Constitution and laws of the United States." No other nongovernmental organization participates in as many U.S. Supreme Court cases as the ACLU. The organization tackles a vast array of issues, including national security and human rights, free speech, reproductive freedom, women's rights, racial justice, immigration rights, and criminal justice reform.

Along with the array of opportunities meant to advocate for the marginalized, the ACLU created a summer institute sponsored in July to allow young voices to be heard by partnering up with the Close Up Foundation. The objective is to bring together the next generation of social justice leaders. However, one does not have to specifically be interested in politics to be a part of this institute. Moreover, there should be a desire to inspire change, making this a great beginning for someone who wants to learn about tools to enhance their advocacy skills.

The program which took place at the Washington Hilton where students from all over the country - approximately 800 in total - were assigned roommates and specific homerooms for the week to come. The week I attended was designed specifically for high school students while the following week was intended for college students. Throughout the intensive six day program, students had to be at homeroom by 8AM, engaging in discussions surrounding their reasons for wanting to participate in the institute, along with the intentions for the day. Since the members of the group came from so many different backgrounds, interacting with peers was an opportunity to learn and grow in and of itself.

While most of the days were filled with seminars on change, they were quite impactful, covering

cases the ACLU has dealt with, such as the Muslim Ban imposed by Trump in 2017. There were also tours; for instance, my group attended the National Museum of African History & Culture, telling the story of over 500 years of African American history from the 15th century to the present day. Additionally, there were elective workshops which gave each student a chance to explore topics in a safe environment. In my opinion, the most notable experience was the visit to Capitol Hill, where my group was able to sit with a U.S. Representative to discuss immigration reform.

The elective sessions were the most informative, as they explored key topics, issues, and approaches to advocacy. I gained insight into the ways that the ACLU uses lawsuits to defend civil liberties and expand social justice, and how the ACLU uses "People Power" to challenge and change the institutions that shape life in the United States.

My electives included See Something, Say Something, Confronting Anti-Muslim Discrimination, Prison Reform and Ending Solitary Confinement; Media Training; and Human Rights and U.S. National Security Policy. The See Something, Say Something: Confronting Anti-Muslim Discrimination elective was the most personal, as we discussed real issues surrounding the Muslim population while also discussing how to ensure that policies affecting these communities are consistent with the Constitution, civil liberties, and human rights. There was also a focus on implementing strategic campaigns and programming within the National Political Advocacy department with an eye towards engaging Muslim, Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities.

The most inspiring elective I participated in was Prison Reform and Ending Solitary Confinement where a guest speaker named Marcus, an African American, shared his journey while in solitary confinement for 420 days. He discussed his time in confinement, saying, "If I made one wrong glance, moved a wrong muscle at the wrong time, I was given another infraction." Marcus then explained how he wants solitary confinement to come to an end, as reincarcerated humans after confinement who are released all suffer from some type of psychological damage or start committing more



crimes. But, Marcus exclaims, "It's their fault for doing that to us; they treated me like an animal, like I wasn't capable of love, or human interactions." Moved by his story, I asked Marcus how he had overcome this time in his life and he answered, "It's still a process, but I started getting educated, I started getting involved in my community to help me through the pain - most importantly though, I connected with God."

Throughout my time at the ACLU institute, I connected with people from all over the country, listening to heartfelt stories while motivating myself in the process. I gained in depth exposure to a wide range of constitutional rights issues that are critical to our society. It was by far the most meaningful experience of my summer, especially as I met with other impressive young advocates. It's important to mention, though, that not all the students were 100% certain of what their purpose was, and that was okay. The main focus was to grow and expand our knowledge while not belittling others for knowing any less.

Being the first student from Elmont to participate in the program, I would encourage more students to be part of the 2020 Summer Institute, to explore your advocacy side or to expand your knowledge on real world issues. Not only is it worth it, but it is definitely something to remember. For any questions you can reach me at swerazeeshan2020@gmail.com

IT’S ALL ABOUT PUTTING SOME PEP INTO YOUR STEP

Looking into One of the Most Celebrated Events in High School



By Christopher Alexander

It’s a tradition that we all know and love. It happens in the Winter and in the Fall. It’s Pep Rally! Whether you’re there to see the Step Team, the Cheerleaders, or the Dance Team perform, or you’re just there because you like the idea of getting out of class, Pep Rally is something that every high school student should treasure as one of the most valuable high school experiences. It’s one of the rare times that your entire high school is forced to be together to spectate an event.

Pep Rally has become a tradition in that it is an annual event that happens twice every school year in Elmont. Pep Rally serves as a way to hype students up for their wondrous school year, to celebrate the Athletics Department, including athletic teams and scholar athletes, and encourage school spirit amongst the entire student body. Pep rallies provide schools with the opportunity to express themselves and showcase their abilities through sports, music, leadership, and much more.

The EMHS Fall Pep Rally was held on Friday, October 4, 2019. It started off with the usual interlude given by the EMHS Senior High Band. From there, the student body showcased

their sports teams from JV to Varsity with the interluding cheers from each of the three EMHS cheerleading teams. The Dance Team also gave a jaw dropping performance, which was met with much appreciation. The Fall Pep Rally was voiced by none other than math teacher Mr. Marino, with Mr. Dougherty giving a hearty introduction to the final Homecoming Court candidates.

The Fall Pep Rally was a true success and it sure did have a very positive impact on the EMHS student body. But, as with any school-sponsored event, there has to be some background on pep rallies and when they all started. How did this wonderful event come to be? Why is it a tradition in every school?

Pep rallies are a way to hype the student body up for upcoming events, primarily Homecoming and the upcoming school year. According the Kristine Alvarez of Bizfluent, “One of many school-based assemblies, a pep rally is designed to generate school spirit and spark unity within a school community. Pep rallies are often held prior to big contests, such as homecoming games or playoff games, and provide opportunities for students, faculty, sports teams and other groups to honor and

celebrate their team in preparation for the upcoming event. Ideally, a pep rally creates an environment of enthusiasm and will likely lead all in attendance to animated cheering in support of their team.” Pep rallies help a school rock their spirit and in a way, unite the student body.

Pep rallies serve as a way to get students to embrace themselves and to bond with each other, their school, and their community. According to Ward Gossett of the Chattanooga Times Free Press, “There was a time when pep rallies were a social happening. A time to get just a little rowdy and certainly boisterous, most often with an upcoming football game being the focus.” Being a part of a Pep rally helps students embrace what it means to be an Elmont Memorial Spartan and sitting through one can really showcase exuberant school pride while engaging the crowd with expressive showcases.

Pep rallies have not only affected schools nationwide, but they’ve also infiltrated into the media including movies such as *Grease*, *Bring It On*, and *Step It Up*. Pep rallies have been so knitted into the fabric of high school history that they’ve been endlessly portrayed in classic teen movies.

REPORT ON THE HOMECOMING GAME

By Andreana Etienne

The Homecoming Varsity Football game started off rough with the opponents, Herricks High School, scoring a touchdown soon after the game started, leaving our team with a score of 0 and Herricks with 6 points, only two minutes and fifty-three seconds into the game. Although it was a bumpy start, our team tried to quickly make a touchdown. Even with that attempt, the quarter ended with Herricks High School’s football team in the lead.

The second quarter was very similar to the first. The opposing team scored another touchdown, earning them 12 points. Even though we were down, our team still did not give up hope; they kept trying their hardest to get some points in.

Then there was halftime: the Color Guard and the Band put on a wonderful display, along



with our Varsity Cheer Team. The past alumni were present and while the football players were taking a break, the special alumni picture was taken on the field in honor of the new Hall of Fame that was created in the Athletics hallway. It wasn’t long after that alumni photo opportunity that the Homecoming King

and Queen were announced. The winners were none other than Fenol LaRock and Nyla Allen.

The third quarter began and Herricks remained in the lead with our team still fighting for the win. Shortly after, our opponent scored another point, leaving Elmont almost discouraged, but the Varsity Cheer Team kept routing us on, voices loud and proud.

When the fourth quarter began, the scores were zero (us) to twenty-five (Herricks). As we went through the last quarter of the game, our team didn’t manage to pull off any points, leaving Herricks High School with the winning score of 26. Even though the outcome of the game wasn’t what we had hoped, everyone was still in good spirits and enjoyed the day’s Homecoming events.

ELMONT'S CLASS OF 2020 HOMECOMING COURT

Meet This Year's Court Candidates

By Deborah Alexis

This year's Homecoming Court was nothing less than stellar. Twenty students were nominated for Homecoming King and Queen and then parents, teachers, and administration helped to narrow this well-rounded list of scholars to just ten. The Elmont Phoenix had the opportunity to meet this year's Homecoming Court and get the inside scoop on their feelings about earning such an honor! Here's what they had to say:

Rafiyat Adenlola appears to be very hardworking, is definitely a perfectionist, and is also very funny. Being the dedicated student that she is, she truly takes seriously the responsibility of the Homecoming King and Queen to "hold and have a position of honor and high esteem and be the role models for the younger generations, even the kids in elementary schools." When Mr. Dougherty announced her as a member of the year's court at the Pep Rally, she was both anxious and excited. Explaining her mixed feelings, Adenlola says, "I was anxious because I knew that meant I had to nail my interview in the following week and talk in front of teachers and parents about myself, and I don't really like to brag about myself. I was chosen by so many of my peers who not only wanted to see me win, but also thought I fit the perfect example of what a queen should be." Of all of her siblings who graduated from Elmont in prior years, she was the only sibling to be chosen for the Homecoming Court. What an honor for her family!

Saberta Guillet is also very funny, especially nice, and very ambitious when discussing her goals. During our interview, she had great energy. Hearing her name announced for a potential Homecoming Queen candidate, Guillet reacted as follows: "I was excited. I screamed, then ran to my friends to tell them the news. Then I called my mom and sister. Then my sister and I screamed together." Being nominated for Homecoming Queen is something that Guillet always wanted and we are happy that she was able to meet her goal! She never imagined a nomination, though. She explains, "In the 9th grade I wasn't really into school and had a very hard time; however, towards the end, I realized that this is something I really want to do."

Kimberly Rodriguez is another nominee who never saw herself earning a spot in the court. As someone quite athletic and quite quiet, Rodriguez never saw herself having to "dress up and have all the attention" on her for a day. However, Rodriguez is obviously very proud of her nomination because she feels as though she represents EMHS in every way possible: "Not

only am I an active student in clubs and sports, but I also help my teachers, peers and coaches with anything needed." Rodriguez believes that as a Homecoming Queen, she would "shape the way [she] works with the community" in order to continue to provide athletic assistance to "coaches, helping them mentor younger kids to develop their fullest potential."

Mayella Rubin is very well rounded and hardworking student. During our interview, she appeared focused, well mannered, somewhat shy, and most of all - very easy to get along with. Mayella never pictured herself being nominated for Homecoming Queen, particularly because she "was not very sociable with my classmates until my junior year." Given her well-rounded nature and diverse group of friends, it is no wonder that Rubin believes a Homecoming Queen should "stay involved and give back to the community in any way they are able to." Hearing her name over the loudspeaker, Rubin felt relieved and very excited. She explained, "At that moment, it made senior year officially real for me because I was still feeling like junior." Asked about the other nominees, she had nothing but praise to offer: "They are excellent role models," she said.

Amir Daley, much like Saberta, was very outgoing and high energy during the Homecoming Court interview. Daley was both excited and honored upon hearing his name announced by the principal and imagining what being Homecoming King would be like. It was so meaningful to Daley that he was nominated by his peers and acknowledged by his teachers. He was so happy for the other nominees as well, whom he said all deserve the honor.

Between class rankings and Homecoming nominations, Jeremiah Omeike was "really excited" when he heard his name over the announcements, commenting that he "ended [his] day off on a really high note." He was obviously proud of earning a spot in the Homecoming Court, but he did feel surprised, stating, "While I have friends in all different social groups at Elmont, I am friends with

many of the 'nerdier' kids in 2020, and I was very happy that I could represent them." Omeike was also surprised about his nomination because he felt he usually kept to himself and didn't really start developing solid friendships until sophomore year. When asked about the nominee who would ultimately be crowned Homecoming King, Omeike had nothing but praise: "Fenol LaRock! He's a great guy and has a huge presence in Elmont! As a leader of Men of Elmont, he constantly guides some of the younger, inexperienced

boys in Elmont and I've seen first hand how he gives them confidence as they journey through high school."

Jevon Santos was very "chill" during our interview but he was also very kind. Santos was surprised by his nomination because he considered himself a pretty quiet kid until junior year of high school. In Santos' eyes, the role of the Homecoming King and Queen is to be an "influencer, as someone the younger kids should look up to as a role model - not only in school, but outside of school as well." Admittedly, Santos was anxious about the nomination, particularly leading up to the announcement! But after he heard his name, he felt both relieved and proud. Santos admires most the amount of hard work each nominee put in in order to gain the respect of his or her peers who found him deserving of the title.

When meeting Matthew Ward, I found him very funny and lighthearted. It's no wonder he was nominated! Ward described hearing his name over the announcements as feeling like he was "on a huge roller coaster." He couldn't believe his Homecoming Court nomination. He thought he was dreaming! A few days after the announcement, he told me, "I could still remember hearing [the] principal's voice as he pronounced my name." Ward was very honored to be nominated and selected as a top five male candidate amongst such well rounded individuals. He is most happy and thankful for his "amazing classmates and wonderful teachers" for selecting him. He believes the honorary title of Homecoming King should be used celebrate Elmont Memorial's achievements - both athletic and academic.

The Homecoming Court is full of such amazing scholar-athletes and I can report that they are all very much deserving of the honor. As always, only two students can be crowned and the choice is always a difficult one. Nonetheless, we must congratulate the Homecoming Court and honor this year's King and Queen: Mr. Fenol LaRock and Ms. Nyla Allen (featured on this issue's cover).



MEET MARVIA PRESSOIR, THE SALUTATORIAN OF THE CLASS OF 2020

“Tough Times Don’t Last, But Tough People Do”

By Christopher Alexander

Ladies and gentlemen, I’d like to take the time to welcome you all back to Elmont Memorial High School. Some of you may be stepping into these halls for the first time, many your last. Some of you probably don’t want to be here; others are trying their hardest to put their best face forward. With many different students and thousands of different personalities roaming these halls everyday, it’s obvious that everyone is wildly different with different aspirations.

As the Class of 2020 graces these hallways for a final year in hopes of leaving its lasting legacy on EMHS, it is clear that the class is doing a good job. Marvia Pressoir is a member of the Class of 2020 and an amazing individual. She is a glowing member of the EMHS community and a member of numerous extracurriculars, a holder of membership in some of the most prestigious organizations, and the Salutatorian of her graduating class. I had the wonderful opportunity to work alongside Ms. Pressoir in many of these different academic organizations and it comes as no surprise that Marvia has aimed to earn this wonderful accolade since setting foot in these halls in the seventh grade. Marvia agreed to sit down for an interview, in which she delves into what really means to be a high school student and how she, even with her wonderful accolades, had to overcome some pretty big defeats. As you read along, take part in Marvia’s story as you may draw inspiration from it. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you, Marvia Pressoir:

Q: Tell me about yourself.

A: My name is Marvia Pressoir and I am currently a senior here at Elmont Memorial High School. I am seventeen years old and have lived in Elmont my entire life. I am a very active member of the Elmont community in various facets. For example, I am a Girl Scout and have been one for 13 years. Additionally, I love music, not just listening to it, but playing as well. I play four instruments: upright bass, guitar, violin, and electric bass. I am a very proud Haitian-American and do consider my ethnicity to be one of the biggest parts of my identity. I absolutely love being a Lady Spartan and will always remember my days here at Elmont.

Q: What activities/organizations are you currently part of?

A: I am a member of Leading Ladies, Jazz Choir, Jazz Band, Chamber Orchestra, Key Club, Senior High Musical, and Varsity Girls Volleyball. I also belong to a number of honor societies including Rho Kappa, Mu Alpha Theta, and Tri-M Honor Society. Additionally I hold leadership positions in other honor societies, such as Science Honor Society, National Honor Society, and World Language Honor Society.

Q: What was it like finding out that you were the Salutatorian of the Class Of 2020?

A: It was honestly an amazing feeling. I’ve been attending Elmont Memorial High School for about six years now and I’ve worked hard in every class I’ve taken and to find out that among my peers, who are exceptionally intellectual, I stand so high in my class was just extraordinary and

really shows the amount of work and diligence that I’ve held for my years here at Elmont.

Q: Who or what inspires you to continue pushing and accomplishing these wonderful things?

A: I am a very self-motivated person. I have very clear visions for the future that I am extremely dedicated in pursuing, but I also have external forms of inspiration. My grandmother is my primary source of motivation. She is one of the most amazing individuals I’ve ever met and probably one of the strongest. A couple of years ago, she was diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease and that diagnosis is what pushed me to realize that my biggest goal is to be a neurosurgeon. Of course I am deeply saddened by the fact that my grandma has been riddled with this debilitating disorder, but I’ve come to realize that I want to help people who are like her and don’t deserve it.

Q: Has there ever been a time where you felt unmotivated? If so, how did you handle it?

A: As I previously mentioned, I am very goal-oriented so when I don’t succeed in something that I have worked hard for, it’s probably the time where I feel most unmotivated. The key to handling that is realizing your own potential. You know yourself best and when something knocks you down, the only person who truly knows how to get you back up is yourself. So as a high achieving student, I’ve taken a number of rigorous courses at Elmont and there have been many times where I haven’t done as well in the class as I hoped or even expected. My biggest motivation is knowing that I can do better and that I definitely have the potential to get there. In addition, you must always have the mentality that giving up is never an option. Giving up is a sign that you do not want something enough, not that you can’t do it. If you truly want something, you’ll find every and any way to get there.

Q: What’s the biggest feat that you’ve crossed in your high school career?

A: The biggest feat that I’ve crossed in my high school career was pretty recent and it was sending off my first ever college application. Filling out your college application makes you [reflect] on everything you’ve done over your entire high school career and it really made me take a step back and look at what I’ve done and appreciate my accomplishments and also my downfalls. It was a really humbling process. I also feel like it was something that I really needed to send me off into this next chapter of life. This one application is how colleges are going to assess my entire persona, so knowing that I was able to press send without any regrets

about the work that I’ve put in for the past five years was really a huge accomplishment for me.

Q: You are a notable member of the EMHS Science Research Program. How big of a role has Science Research had on your life/career choice?

A: Science Research has probably played the biggest role in my decision for the future. It’s truly been a format for me to explore my interests in both the scientific and mathematics communities. Within that exploration, I have found, as corny as it is, my true calling. It really ties into my grandmother’s diagnosis and how that’s pushed me. Science Research provided me with the tools to pursue this and helped me realize that I want to go into medicine. Science Research has already put me one step closer to achieving that goal. Additionally, Science Research in itself is a very demanding course with a very demanding workload. I know how rigorous the information is, not only for a doctor but for a surgeon, but the tools that I’ve gained in Science Research makes me feel better prepared to take that on. These skills will definitely translate into ones that I need to apply in the medical field.

Q: What challenges have you been met with inside of school? How about outside of school where diversity isn’t as prevalent?

A: As a student, I’ve been met with typical challenges such as time management and involvement in extracurriculars, but outside of Elmont Memorial High School, things can be very different. Personally, I know that for college I am applying to mostly PWIs [Primarily White Institutions] and that environment is the polar opposite of the one I’ve been exposed to at Elmont. I do feel like I am prepared for that transition. The key is knowing that despite people’s differences, education can unite, especially in the medical community. I know that there are people who may not value my intellect because of superficial characteristics that they see on the surface, but there isn’t a single person who can take away the seventeen years of knowledge and education that I have and as long as I am confident in that fact, I will always be successful.

Q: Why do you feel that it is important for Elmont Memorial as a whole to consistently show our prominence in the STEM fields?

A: The STEM field is probably the largest and fastest growing intellectual faction in the world right now. Exposing Elmont students to that puts them at an advantage over students who haven’t. As a whole, our student body could benefit so much from STEM knowledge which will most definitely be applicable into

their future education. It doesn’t matter if you decide not to pursue an education or a career that is in the STEM field, but just having that background puts you ahead of other students who’ve never been taught to think on a deeper level.

Q: Where do you plan on continuing your studies? Have you made any choices in career paths?

A: My current plan is to attend Columbia University in the autumn. I have a number of other schools that I am looking into as well, but right now that is my go to. As previously mentioned, I plan to go into the medical field and eventually specialize in neurosurgery.

Q: What do you do in your free time?

A: My favorite things to do in my free time are reading, dancing, listening to and playing music, and watching Netflix. Reading books can be viewed as an escape from reality, as weird as that may sound. It brings me out of my own problems and stressors and puts me into someone else’s world which is a great way to unwind. Lastly, no matter what anybody says, a couple hours of Netflix is not a bad thing. It helps me calm down, makes me laugh, and can be more of a helping tool if used in moderation. It is very important when you’re a busy student to have modes of relaxation and I definitely find that through these forms.

Q: If you could tell the reader of this article one thing, what would it be?

A: Natural ability can only take you so far. You have to put the work in to get the results out and that is something that will never change. No amount of technology or social media can alter the importance and usefulness of a strong work ethic and I stand by that wholeheartedly. I’d also like to leave you with this; tough times don’t last, but tough people do. There will definitely be difficult times in high school and that’s inevitable and uncontrollable, but you can control your reaction and how you handle the situation. High school is only a stepping stone to your future, but it is a very important one. Focus on your education, but enjoy the time you have here at Elmont because it will be some of the best years you ever experience.

Marvia plans on continuing her studies in Columbia University, although she does have her eye on some other institutions as well. Marvia embodies everything that EMHS emphasizes from determination to self-confidence to scholarship. When I reread this interview, what really sticks out to me would be the words: “Natural ability can only take you so far. You have to put the work in to get the results out and that is something that will never change.” Marvia has not only worked for her position, but she has also managed to retain a lot of her values along the way. Getting to know Marvia was probably one of the most memorable moments in my high school career, as meeting someone who inspires you doesn’t just happen casually. I think I speak for all of EMHS when I say congratulations, Marvia, on all of your accomplishments and we all look forward to seeing what you blossom into!



FACE OFF

Should humans colonize and set up permanent civilizations on Mars?

PRO

By Tochi Ukegbu

It has been said numerous times within history that we have one last unexplored frontier; space. But have you ever heard of Proxima Centauri-B? Kepler 186-B? Gliese 832 C? While these celestial objects are not featured within our solar system, they’ve all been classified as habitable exoplanets, which are capable of housing us humans and all of our problems. But even with all the buzz about exoplanets and an impending mass exodus, a closer planet is likely within our reach: Mars. The fourth planet is under increased scrutiny due to the possibility of widespread colonization within the future. Though many may be uncertain concerning this tremendous feat of science and technology, I’ll be the one to announce my support for the colonization of Mars. There are three reasons for supporting this concept: climate change disasters, the advancement in STEM signified by this potential feat, and the creativity and fun of living on Mars as a human being. The growing prevalence of climate change dissenters simply does not refute the fact that climate change is highly evident, occurring at an unprecedented rate in areas across the world. It shows that even with the assistance of advanced technology, the irreversible effects of climate change in the future are inevitable, to which there is seemingly no solution unless Mars is the new home for many of Earth’s displaced inhabitants. Additionally, this is only possible through advancements in STEM, namely the technological aspect. Lastly, I don’t know about you, but travelling to another planet with a beautiful color and an exceptional environment despite it’s planetary position appears to be super fun and engaging. Colonization on Mars may be decades away, but I believe it’s certainly worth a shot.



CON

By Christopher Alexander

With the arousal of mindless shenanigans involving the raid of Area 51, I think it is safe to say that the human race has a lot of maturing to do before we can accomplish such a feat. Colonizing Mars is not only controversial in its cause, but it is also flawed deep within the cracks of its foundation. Let’s face it: the human race has messed up pertaining to keeping the planet safe and clean. It’s just a fact and disagreeing at this point in time is just plain unacceptable. We polluted the once clean streams that used to harbor a diversity of life that was perfected by millions of years of evolution. We have heated the planet to scorching temperatures (how is it 90°F normal in October?). We have exploited the planet for every living thing, piece of precious metal, or scrap of capital value for our own gains. With temperatures scorching to almost unbearable highs, it really leaves me asking: could it really get any worse than this? Numerous scientists, as well as a great part of the population, believe that this problem cannot be directly solved and as a result, we should seek to find a new world for us to colonize and thus destroy. The only other planet within the Habitable Zone within the Solar System is Mars. Studies have shown that there could have been life on Mars once, as polar ice caps have been discovered on the red planet. Now back to the point: humans need to worry about fixing their planet before considering the mere possibility of inhabiting a new world. Our ancestors roamed this land, drank this water, and breathed this air without any problems. And if they had a problem, they found a solution. The human race is more obsessed with the capital value of mere objects as opposed to the right actions to be taken for the greater good. Climate change is real and there are numerous organizations here to help combat the problem. The influx of plastic, although still very large, has been taken more seriously and there are groups of wonderful people who have removed more than a million pounds of trash from the Earth’s seas thus far. My point is this: we cannot abandon the one thing that has kept us flourishing for so long. Humans must stop having this mindset of “have this, have that” and get more into the habit of giving back to the planet. Yes, colonizing Mars would be an amazing feat and it would further our knowledge and stature in scientific technology. But imagine if we could reverse the problems in the world that was meant for us to live in. Instead of putting millions of dollars towards Mars expeditions, why don’t we consider investing in carbon converting technologies or automatic ocean cleaners? Colonizing Mars, although fascinating, can wait, as it shouldn’t be our one solution to climate change and other environmental problems. However, our solution should be a lot more “earthly.” We should consider saving our own planet before colonizing another.

12 ANGRY PEOPLE

Elmont's Adaptation of
12 Angry Men

The spotlight is on in this courtroom drama!

2019 SENIOR HIGH DRAMA

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2019
7:00PM - ELMONT AUDITORIUM
MS. MORALES & MS. SIEBER

Tickets are \$5.00 for students & \$10.00 for staff

SNEAK PEAK:

November
Senior High
Drama

By Christianie Joseph

This year the Senior High Drama, advised for the first time by Ms. Morales and Ms. Sieber, will perform the play *12 Angry Men*, or should I say 12 Angry People, as most of the cast is women.

The play is following the closing arguments in a murder trial; the 12 members of the jury must decide if the defendant is guilty, which will result in the death of an 18 year old boy.

As the dozen people try to reach a unanimous decision in the courtroom, one juror casts considerable doubt on parts of the case; that juror is being played by Olisa Emeagwali.

Personal biases soon rise to the surface and threaten to unhinge the process that will decide one boy’s fate. To find out how this thrilling drama concludes, be sure to come out to see the play and support the Senior High Drama Club.

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DIRECTED BY MS. MORALES AND MS. SIEBER

NOVEMBER 1, 2019 AT 7:00 PM

A SENIOR HIGH DRAMA PRODUCTION

12 ANGRY MEN

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REVIEWS



TRASH OR TREASURE:

Tom Clancy’s Ghost Recon Breakpoint

By Diego Zuniga

In this age of constantly recycled and soulless games, Tom Clancy’s *Ghost Recon Breakpoint* promises to reimagine and improve on the widely known third-person shooter genre people simultaneously love and hate. But, is the game actually what it presents itself to be and to what length does it go to present itself “differently”? Ubisoft, the creator of yet another Tom Clancy title, is known for a history of unfulfilling and latent games that are greatly degraded at launch in terms of graphics and story. Yet, with the promise of “reimagining” the genre of their newest title, it is very evident that this company still can’t put aside monetary value when making a great new title. Like most of their games, *Breakpoint* appears to be another cash grab by Ubisoft to garner money from fans of the Tom Clancy games.

Current gameplay shows the game to be based around a hit and run style of combat with a lot of sneaky hiding from an enemy force that greatly outnumbers your own. This style of play is aided by the use of reconnaissance equipment that can be both tedious and fun to use; however, wonky controls can be deemed more than costly for a fulfilling experience of such a game. Drones can be used to locate and spy on enemy locations; armed drones are also available in case you want to get more hands on with the action whilst staying at a safe distance. The games survival aspect appears to be more advanced than that of other titles, with the player having the ability to camouflage from the enemy by lying prone and covering themselves with dirt or mud. Like all other shooter games, you can customize your character and your weapons how you wish; co-op is also available in case you want to play this game with your friends and have a more fun experience. Unfortunately, the game’s playability is hindered by the unexpected implementation of micro transactions, which were hidden to players during the beta under a “locked” section of the menu. The micro transactions became extremely controversial when it was discovered that attachments and weapons that had high effectiveness were able to be purchased with micro transactions, leading to the game being considered “pay to win.”

Overall, Tom Clancy’s *Ghost Recon Breakpoint* only brings new ways to camouflage oneself in the survival genre of games; vehicles can also be considered new although they’re available in previous iterations of Tom Clancy’s title. The games legitimacy is compromised by the implementation of micro transactions which gives more leverage to the players who pay more as opposed to those who want to obtain weapons traditionally. This game really is... trash.



LOVE ANIME? LOVE MANGA?

Then You Will Love Light Novels

By Yawa Gavlo

LIGHT NOVELS: the book version of manga or anime for teens and middle schoolers.

Do you love instant drama? Do you love empowering women taking their life into their own hands? Then, *Phoenix Against The World* (*Feng Ni Tian Xia*) by Lu Fei is the novel for you!

Phoenix Against The World is about a powerful 21st century female assassin by the name of Huang Bei. In the beginning of the novel, our female protagonist steals a mysterious jade called the Boundless Beast. For some reason (we, the reader, do not know) the jade transports the main character into another realm. Huang Bei basically wakes up from her sudden trip, and has to come to terms with the fact that she - the once powerful, deadly, and respected assassin - is now the weak, trash, good-for-nothing daughter of HuiWen Princess, the current elder sister. Our twelve year old protagonist was bullied, mocked, humiliated to the point that she died. Luckily for her, Huang Bei took possession of her body and will use her past life to turn the weak girl into a Peerless Genius. Throughout the novel, you’ll see how Bei deals with her shameless family and the problems they throw at her, regaining her reputation and standing on top of the world. By wits, skill, determination and the will to never surrender to the fate the heaven bestowed upon her, Bei will rise like the legendary Phoenix! Enjoy the light novel of this text; however, the manga version is also available.

Do you like comedy, romance, action, adventure, and friendships? Are you tired of elves, dwarves, and beat people you read about in manga? Want to try Eastern fantasy? Then *Douluo Dalu* (*Soul Land*), by Tang Jia San Shao, is the perfect novel to start with!

Our story begins with our protagonist, Tang San, jumping off a cliff into a lovely place called “Hell Peak.” The most powerful student at Tang Sect—the number one school of martial arts— dies within one chapter after committing a crime. Now our main character wakes up as a baby, reincarnated into another world called the Douluo Dalu Continent. But the unique aspect that sets apart Douluo Dalu from the other world is that magic and martial arts do not exist. In this world, every person is born with mystical souls. But Heaven, who is cruel, gave our protagonist blue grass as a mystical soul. But luckily, our main character has an excellent level of potential to rise above the rest of the crowd. Read to see how Tang San uses his second chance at life to fulfill his ambition to dominate the

world as the number one sovereign. This text is available in both Light and Manga versions.

SPIDER-MAN: FAR FROM HOME REVIEW

Update to the Spiderman Series

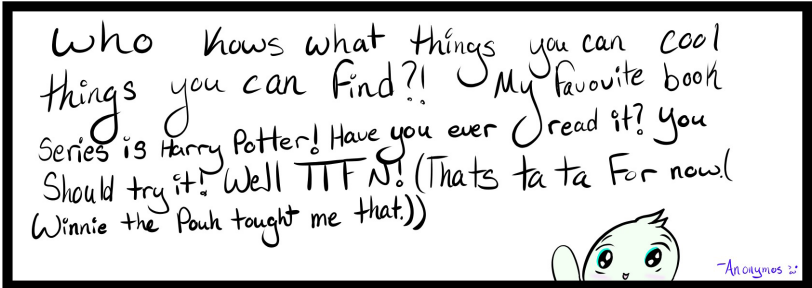
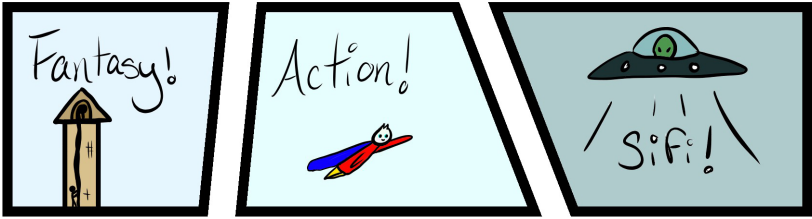
By Sergio Euceda-Cruz

Spider-man: Far From Home, directed by Jon Watts, is about Spiderman going on vacation with his classmates and trying to hang out with this girl that he likes. But Nick Fury says, “No, I need your help.” Spider refuses to help him, but ends up helping him anyway. He teams up with this man named Mysterio to fight these monsters. Through it all, Spiderman struggles to have a normal life while being a superhero.

This movie was very enjoyable to watch; you can feel how Spiderman is feeling and you understand his struggles. It is a coming of age story teach us that you must prove yourself and at the same time live a happy life. The characters were well written; the characters played by Zendaya and Tom Holland had a good chemistry and Jack Gyllenhaal was great as Mysterio.

One of my issues with the movie is that there were too many jokes that ruined the past of this story. There were times I thought could be cut out without ruining the movie. Furthermore, it was kind of hard to feel for the backstory of Mysterio; it felt a bit short and rushed.

The best acts of the movie were the second act and the third act. There is nothing wrong with the first act, but the second and third just blew my mind. The film also had good visual effects, but they didn’t feel too obvious. I think Samuel L. Jackson was fantastic and in this film he got to do a bit more than in other movies he’s been in. Also STAY FOR THE END CREDIT: IT WILL SHOCK YOU. I give *Spider-Man: Far From Home* a B+.



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Wed. October 9 @ 4 PM

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TEEN MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING WORKSHOP
Thurs. October 24 @ 5:30 PM

TEEN CUISINE: HALLOWEEN CUPCAKE VARS
Tues. October 29 @ 4PM

TEEN CLUBS

Dates and times are subject to change

TEEN TIME
Fridays 10/4 & 10/18 @ 4 PM

TEEN SCREEN: HALLOWEEN THRILLER
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ask us about our FREE college prep programs this month!!

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POETS CORNER

Critical Thinking

By Netochukwu Ifeji

Laying on my living room carpet,
I see the way the eyes glisten after inhaling the
jive in the air,
The clothes on the back, the care given to the
hair,
The pen on the lips, the thought bubble typing:
.....
The pad in one hand, the roll in another,
A leg dangling over the black leather couch and
above it was the other.
It's time to think.

That 'duu duduu' in his mind,
The sound of the bug that flies,
Excited that nothing is going to stop it for a
while,
The faint motorcycle racing through the streets,
No matter what it is, you'll hear something from
feet.
To bikes to music to lights,
What to write? What, the 'duu duduu'?

It'd be hard to read the expression of someone
Lying parallel to me on my black leather couch
In this New York heat.
But I know what the eyes are saying.
The concept by which struggle is what keeps the
mind running.
Writing what you want, what you hear,
It burns clear and no storm is never near,
The flies get louder than the motorbikes that
steer,
And finally,

The legs detangle and hit the floor,
I try and sit up only to be met with those eyes,
Struggling, everything stopped. The bikes, the
lights, the fly.
The thought bubble is typing:
*Laying on a three seater black leather couch, I
see you...*

2020 Class of

Baby Picture:
Fri., Nov. 15th, 2019

Senior Quote:
Fri., Dec. 13th, 2019

Yearbook Advertisement Form:
Fri., Jan. 10th, 2020

Senior Directory:
Fri., Jan. 17th, 2020



DORIAN TO THE RESCUE

New Goalie With Goals

By Andrew Candio

There aren’t that many players who are willing to step up and change their role for the good of the team, and the fact of the matter is that there aren’t many players who are willing to step up to begin with. Many players can be selfishly possessive of their particular role on the team and not think about benefiting the team as a whole. This is where Dorian Ekeh comes in. Ekeh plays for the Elmont Spartans Varsity Soccer Team and was willing to change his role to better the team, taking on the goalie position this year. For those who know soccer and understand the complexity of such a position, there are so many elements a goalie must know to excel at this position. While playing goalie, there is so much pressure placed on you to make that save and prevent the opposition from scoring a goal. Ekeh has been able to handle the pressure by stepping up and making several saves for the team, but has also been one of their leaders on the team as he is on of their captains. I was able to speak to the amazing Dorian Ekeh and ask him about the position he chose to play:

Q: How crucial is your role on the team?

A: My role on the team is very significant. Coach Reggie appointed me as one of the captains this year, which is truly significant for me and also means that I must lead my teammates and be an example for them to follow.

Q: What has allowed you to be the best at your position?

A: One of the few things that allows me to be my best is that I play a sport for the Elmont Spartans every season which has taught me to stay dedicated and to work hard - not only for myself, but [for] the team’s benefit. It has also allowed me to stay sharp and in shape. In addition, I started out with the least experience in all the sports I’ve played, but I work hard and diligently to achieve my goals and that journey has made me humble because I realize the struggle it took to get to the position I am currently in.

Q: How has the coaching staff allowed you to reach your full potential?

A: The coaching staff has pushed me to come out on top in whatever I do, even if it may not be soccer. They push me and my teammates to work hard and exceed expectations.

Q: Has your season met your expectations?

A: My season so far has not met the expectations that I had in mind. Although we started out on a rough path, I have faith that we will get back on track and end the season strong.



Q: What are your strengths and weaknesses and how can you improve?

A: I can be physical at times when it’s necessary, which allows me to beat my opponent in a competition of speed, endurance, [or] strength. One of my weaknesses is that I tend to get quiet at times and lack communication with my teammates because I am so tuned into the match. But communication is key in whatever sports you play. This weakness is something that I continue to work on.

Q: What are the goals you hope to reach throughout the year?

A: Most of my goals are academic goals aside from being the MVP of the soccer and lacrosse team. I hope to reach a 3.5 GPA at the end of the year. I would also like to [achieve mastery] in all of my classes, as well as on all my AP exams. A goal of mine has been to receive a full ride to a college of my choice and to excel at the next level of manhood and leadership as I improve steadily each day.

Q: Why is communication and leadership important for your sport?

A: I believe that without communication there is room for misunderstanding and confusion. In soccer, every last member of your team must be on the same page as the player standing next to them. Leadership also plays a big role in soccer. Players need a role model that they can look up to and can motivate them to try their best. Leadership provides order and allows the team and all of our routines to function properly; it is extremely important to have a leader so our goals can be accomplished and everything can operate in an efficient manner.

Q: What makes your game unique to other players?

A: My game is unique from other players because I can play every position with great skill. Most people may not be able to adapt to the challenges that come with altering your position in your sport, but I always tend to find a solution to the obstacles I may face, which allows me to adapt to any position on the soccer field with ease.

Q: What do you think are important qualities to excel in this role?

A: I believe that being optimistic and having a good measure of patience are two key qualities for a leader to have, especially in moments of challenge, which will define a true leader.

Q: What is your mindset for every game?

A: I try to maintain a level head because I have come to realize that in order for the team to function well, their captain must set an example for them to follow. One that is of strong courage and perseverance, which show my teammates that I should be followed.

When asked why he chose to play goalie, Ekeh responded: “I had to play goalie because I was the only one on the team that could get the job done.” He also said, “I had to step down from a position at right back that I was more comfortable playing and get acclimated to the tasks of a goalie.” And there you have it. Dorian epitomizes what it means to be a leader, as it is more than just having that title of “leadership.” Leadership is not a position or a title, it is an embodiment of a courageous team player who has stepped up their individual role. Considering this is Dorian Ekeh’s final year at Elmont, we can only wish him good luck as he embodies what it means to be a true leader. He has several college interests and plans to play sports in college, whether playing lacrosse, soccer or basketball. We can only hope he carries this same mindset wherever he goes. Always aim high and dream big Dorian; you have the potential to be truly great in the years to come.

ELMONT VARSITY CHEERLEADERS

Introducing Amaya Garvin and Faith Greene

By Amanda Mitchell

There’s a lot more to this group of special, talented, and entertaining individuals than their green and white cheer outfits. The cheerleaders represent our school in enthusiastic, ebullient, and joyful ways. They put a smile on everyone’s face at our games, pep rallies, and Homecoming events. Who are these individuals that are spoken so highly of? It’s the Elmont Varsity Cheerleaders! Some of our students here would describe our cheerleaders, as “energetic,” “extravagant,” “exciting” and many more positive characteristics. Here’s a secret! There’s a lot more to our cheerleaders than the uniforms and super perky pom poms. So what is it about the cheerleaders that makes them so special? Let’s get to know our cheerleaders. How do they put together one awesome routine? What are the challenges that come with being a cheerleader? Where do our cheerleaders get their inspiration from? If you want to find out, read on!

Amaya Garvin:

Meet Amaya Garvin! Amaya Garvin is an extravagant cheerleader from the Class of 2021! Garvin began cheering for the Junior Varsity Team during her sophomore year. Garvin is very outgoing, kind-hearted and enjoys participating with her cheer team. Garvin has such great skills that she brings to her team very often and is a big help when it comes to executing major stunts. She has a lot of great strength that she uses when lifting up flying members of the team. It all contributes to making the cheer routine so entertaining through it all. Even though Garvin loves cheering for plenty of games and events at Elmont,



she’s come to cherish the team as a whole in particular. “My favorite memory with my teammates is when we all met up and went to eat dinner together. We all had a great time with each other and I feel like we all bonded that night,” Garvin reflected fondly.

Besides the cheerleading team, Garvin is an active member of the Elmont Key Club and Rho Kappa Honor Society. Garvin has plans to study computer science in the future and plans on applying



“ZACH ATTACK”

Introducing Zachary Meikle

By Andrew Candio
Zachary Meikle is a wide receiver, outside linebacker, and safety who plays for the Elmont Varsity Football Team and he excels at all of these positions. Zachary Meikle understands the meaning of a leadership role and the responsibility he has as one of the key components to the success of the team. Each day Meikle continues to improve and to put his heart into the game of football; he truly epitomizes what it means to be a dominant player - mentally and physically. Meikle has an admirable passion for the game of football - and most importantly to the Elmont Spartans; he gets a hold of every opportunity given to him, seeing it as a moment to be great and to do great.



When discussing football and what motivates Zachary Meikle, you truly understand where that passion for the game comes from, as he takes time to watch films and analyze his mistakes and his accomplishments aiming to improve. However, what is most admirable about speaking to Zach is his humility which he displays as he discusses the trials and tribulations it took to earn his position. He has excelled at these roles, contributing to his team significantly, but to truly understand Zach’s mindset, I asked him a few questions:

Q: What is the difference between this season and last season?
A: The biggest difference is that I have to be a leader; it’s my turn to step up and it’s my senior year, so it’s my last opportunity to get the chip and impress scouts.

Q: How have you improved compared to last season?
A: Compared to last year, I have gotten a lot stronger by working hard and eating right all off season. I’ve also been able to learn more about my position and the game of football, which has allowed me to get increasingly better.

Q: How crucial is your role on the team?
A: As a returning starter, my role on the team is crucial because I have to set an example for my

teammates on and off the field. Another major part of my role is producing on both sides of the ball. In order to be successful throughout the season, I need to give it my all in both Defense and Offense.

Q: What keeps you going every time you are on that field?
A: The thing that keeps me going every time I’m on the field is my own determination and passion. I set very high expectations for myself and try my best to make sure that those expectations are met, but the fact of not letting my brothers and coaches down truly gives me that drive to be my best.

Q: How have your coaches helped you improve?
A: My coaches have helped me improve by providing advice and guidance while also pushing me to do better. They have been there through times of struggle and not only help me, but the team; they are crucial to the team’s success.

Q: How has the support of friends and family allowed you to achieve your goals?
A: The support of my family and friends have of course helped me achieve my goals, but my own work ethic has proven to be the most vital. The same work ethic that I happened to pick up from my parents allows me to continue and do my best.

Q: What makes you unique compared to other

players?
A: What makes me unique compared to other players is that I’m not afraid to work by myself in order to get better. What also sets me apart from others is that I capitalize on my mistakes by improving and making sure I don’t repeat those mistakes. And, another important asset to my success is that I’m also very humble which allows me to give 100% no matter the skill set.

Q: What is the goal for this season and what will it take to reach it?
A: My goal for the season is to get to Hofstra and win. To reach that goal we have to work hard as a team. We’re only as strong as our weakest link.

Q: Is there a special ritual/routine you have or do before every game?
A: I just try my best to stay focused and tune out any distractions which can prevent me from doing my best, but I also like to stay hydrated.

Q: What else do we need to know about Zach ?
A: I love my team, coaches, and this sport and this year the Class of 2020 are going to do big things in sports - we’re leaving our mark.

It is clear how serious Zachary Meikle’s demeanor is when it comes to the game of football. He clearly defines what it means to be a leader. No matter what role Zach is placed in, whether it be playing wide receiver for the Elmont Varsity Football, running a 200m for Track, and playing middle for Lacrosse, he’ll always excel with the way he carries himself with his ability to transform an environment around him just by stepping on the field, which is quite extraordinary. You’ll be able to spot Meikle on the field as he wears number 9 and performs at a high level for the Elmont Spartans. Elmont Varsity Football has been great for many years, and hopefully with the new additions and the role Zach holds, the success can continue. We can only be in support and attendance as we wish Elmont Football, and Zach Meikle, good luck throughout their season.

Continued from Page 10

to Stony Brook University, Binghamton University, and Penn State - all excellent choices. Garvin is an excellent student athlete and she is very much supported in her future choices by all of Elmont. We wish you all the best!

Faith Greene:
Faith Greene is another one of our amazing cheerleaders here at Elmont from the Class of 2021! Faith began cheering for the Junior Varsity during her sophomore year. Just like Garvin, Greene contributes to her team by being a part of the major stunts and using her strength to hold up other members. She believes that in order to establish these stunts and pyramids successfully, it not only takes the skills of the flying members, but also requires the trust of the base.
Greene has a lovely heart and it’s noticeable to plenty of the other members on the team. She has also come to adore her team. “The best part of Cheerleading in general is forming bonds with girls you may not get to speak to everyday.

A best friend is defined as someone who is your closest friend,” she explains. After her amazing cheer experience this year, Greene can safely say that these girls have her back.
Besides the cheerleading team, Greene is an active member of the Senior National Honor Society, Elmonts Leading Ladies, S.A.D.D, Track and Field, Soccer, Marching Band, Model United Nations, T.A.W.K, Big Brother Big Sister and serves as the Key Club Treasurer. What a busy girl! In the future, Greene has hopes of attending Howard University to study biology and focus on becoming a Dermatologist. She has done some research on her intended career and she’s preparing herself for what comes next. Here at Elmont, Greene is 100% supported and we wish her all the best!

Well that’s all the cheerleaders we have to introduce this time around. Aren’t they amazing? Thank you to Amaya Garvin and Faith Greene for the exclusives and thank you to the entire team for a great performance at Homecoming and Pep Rally. We look forward to what’s in store for the next season!



BREAKING NEWS *School Day Extended!*

By Bernadine Baptiste

The Elmont Phonyx received breaking news on Friday, October 18, 2019, that there will be a new class required to be taken by all students at Elmont Memorial High School during the Spring semester. The class will be iPad behavior 101.

Many students may be wondering why such a class is necessary. What teachers see every day is the answer. There have been numerous times when teachers have caught students inappropriately using their iPads in class. Examples include utilizing YouTube (sports games, Fortnite, etc), using drawing apps, and substituting the iPads as shields for phone usage.

Action was taken after many teacher complaints about the grades of their students slipping, the lack of attention being paid to their lessons, and class work not being completed. Math teacher, Mr. Marino, says: “I think this new class will be useful for students who think watching YouTube while I’m trying to teach Algebra is appropriate.” The class will be an added 10th period from 2:59 p.m. to 3:42 p.m. All grade levels are required to take this class on iPad etiquette (seniors will be required to take one session in the spring).

The class is mandatory to be taken at least once during your high school career to graduate. A strong focus will be on staying on task in classes, keeping the iPad flat on desks to avoid breakage, keeping screen brightness up, having Bluetooth on, etc. The class is also determined by teacher recommendation, so students may be recommended to take it more than once if the teacher feels as though it is necessary.

Students have the option of opting out of the class ONLY by filling out a lengthy no less than 2500 word report on why s/he should not have to take the class. Attached to the report must be an unedited version of the student’s browser history and cookies. This form must be signed by all teachers and parents of the student before being forwarded to the superintendent of schools. Opt out forms can be found in the main office starting in late October. New schedules will be distributed in all English classes starting the beginning of Marking Period 2.

Schedule created by Ms. Tierra Thomas

ELMONT MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
“A Nationally Recognized School of Excellence”

BELL SCHEDULE

Warning Bell: 7:51am

Period	Time		
1	7:55	--	8:38
2	8:42	--	9:25
3	9:29	--	10:13
4	10:17	--	11:00
5	11:04	--	11:47
6	11:51	--	12:34
7	12:38	--	1:21
8	1:25	--	2:08
9	2:12	--	2:55
10	2:59	--	3:42



NEW IPAD APP REWARDS STUDENTS FOR NOT PAYING ATTENTION IN CLASS *YouDistract Added to Self Service*

By Malik Hyman

We all know that classmate that consistently watches YouTube in class or the one who shops for sneakers online while the lesson is happening. Maybe it’s you or maybe it’s someone else. The video-sharing service, YouTube, hosts a wide range of videos, of which, there is something for everyone; and the iPads automatic connectivity to the Internet provides endless websites for mindless surfing. 2K and Fortnite are some popular iPad search options among our unheeding students.

Recently, though, the app YouDistract has been added to Self Service, the Sewanhaka School District’s App Store. An unexpected addition by the school district, this app in fact rewards students for not paying attention in class and earns them points for not doing assigned work. I was able to recently test it out, and let me tell you... it gets pretty addicting!

It all starts at the sign-in screen. Your username is your @sewanhakaschools.org email and password is your school ID number. Every student already has an account preset by the district. As soon as you login, it introduces you to its concept: the more time you waste in class, the more rewards you get.

You start off basic. You give the app access to your activity and every minute you are on the Internet or YouTube (and not OneNote or Google Classroom), it tracks you and you earn badges based off of class time wasted. It gets even better. After a certain amount of minutes wasted, you have the opportunity to gain access to actual App Store apps and games, including downloading premium games for free. You can pick up that \$6.99 Minecraft for \$0 and that \$2.00 racing game for nothing. You also have a wide range of music from the iTunes Store. You can cop that new J. Cole or Jay Critch to further enable your misused time in class.

The tier system also gives users a sense of progression. From Newbie to Master, there are many ranks and several rewards that come with them. Master Rank is what you are aiming for. This gives you access to essentially the entire App and iTunes Store.

I had the opportunity to ask Nathan Moges, an avid user of the app and scholar in time wasting, what he thought of the new addition to self service. He said: “The app is honestly a life-saver. How could you call it any less? I already don’t pay attention in chemistry, but this takes it to the next level.”

YouDistract is available for download from Self Service today. Their motto is, “If you’re not gonna pay attention, you may as well get rewarded for it.”

SCHOOLIE GETS TOP NOTCH REVIEW *Gordon Ramsay Gives EMHS Lunch a 5 Star Rating*

By Kayla Galiotte

I am proud to announce that Elmont Memorial High school’s lunch is hitting the charts! What we all call “schoolie” has influenced and astonished the one and only Gordon Ramsay! For those who are not familiar with Mr. Ramsay, he is known for conducting competitive food competitions on TV! He is known for his shows *MasterChef*, *Uncharted*, *Boiling Point*, and many more. He opened up restaurants that are striving around the world and he even earned seven Michelin stars! Michelin stars are not easy to get. They are rewarded in particular cities. Michelin stars help businesses reach exposure, which can lead to the expansion of their business. Restaurants across the globe work hard to earn a Michelin star. Gordon’s net worth is about 190 million!

You must be thinking, how does someone famous like that find our school? On a quest to rate school lunches and services, Gordon and his team traveled to over 50 schools in New York and then narrowed their list down to the top 20 schools in Nassau County, Long Island.

Ramsay’s team consisted of Bobby Flay, Gilda De Laurentiis, Tom Colicchio, and Jose Andres - all outstanding and experienced chefs. Their goal was to find a school with spectacular dishes, as well as good services. They like their food well-seasoned and done quick.

You are probably wondering what delicious dish got us booming up the charts? Well, he tasted our wonderful nachos. He enjoyed the well-cooked beef. Ramsay stated, “The beef is well cooked and spiced properly. I would definitely serve this as an appetizer in my restaurant.” WOW! Can you believe that, ladies and gentlemen? So before you judge our school lunches, remember that the one and only Gordon Ramsey enjoyed it and gave it a 5 star rating!



He isn’t that kind to all schools.



If there’s an issue you’d like to see discussed in this section feel free to email elmontphonyx@gmail.com. You will not get a response though, as that is a fake email and this is a fake section of the newspaper. Please note that articles in this Elmont Phonyx section are phony; this section is meant to be light, funny, and satirical.