It is hard to believe the 2017-18 school year is already a quarter over! This year has already brought many unique and memorable events for our community to enjoy. We started our school year off by celebrating Total Eclipse Day, something I am sure we will all remember. The next total solar eclipse to cross the United States will not take place until 2024. Others from our number have received distinguished awards and recognition. Two seniors, Matthew Hamrick and Isabelle Coleman, qualified as National Merit Semifinalist and will go on to compete for National Merit Scholarships. Our own Mrs. Berdy was named one of Birmingham’s “Smartest Women” for her direction of the Miree Center at Altamont. Many of our athletic and academic teams have had great successes already. Our community as a whole has also reached out to those around us. When Hurricane Harvey hit Texas, Altamont stepped up and began collecting supplies for schools affected. These supply drives are ongoing, as we collect items ranging from canned food to bug spray. We are exploring issues facing people all over the world. Our Global Initiative for this school year is Health and Human Rights. Our first speaker was Dr. Reuter who, in a forum-style discussion, was able to open a dialogue about this complicated and critical issue. She was able to clarify complicated UN legislation and the rights of the people when their government infringes upon them. This conversation opened my eyes to the difficulties of humanitarian action and Dr. Reuter’s suggestions were something I took to heart. While it may be uncomfortable to discuss issues as heavily debated as these, human lives and quality of life are at stake. We cannot afford avoidance.

It is amazing to see how much we have accomplished in such a short period of time, and I cannot wait to see what lies in store for the rest of the year!
An Open Letter to the Players of the NFL
Maya Guru

As many are no doubt aware, there has been an uproar in the media concerning certain football players that kneel or refuse to stand for our national anthem. These actions, while permitted under the first amendment, beg the question of why America’s richest and perhaps most fortunate citizens have felt the need to disrespect our anthem and our flag in such a way that makes them appear dismissive to the amount of benefits they have received from being in this country. Thus, I drafted an open letter to NFL players, as follows:

Dear players of the NFL,
You say you are oppressed. You say you live in a world where minorities cannot prosper. You say that America is inherently prejudiced against minorities. Consider this:
As a daughter of immigrants, I have seen first-hand how hard work and dedication can lead to prosperity for people of any color. America has not hindered my family; in fact, it has encouraged and facilitated our dreams in a way that no other country could. I find it appalling that one would think it is impossible for minorities to prosper in this country. You of all people should know this, holding one of the most overpaid roles in the nation. But of course, your lack of perspective obstructs this realization. I challenge all NFL players to quit kneeling and leave this country if they believe it is so prejudiced. I dare you to try to achieve all that you have here in any other nation. The day that this occurs is the day that I myself would kneel for our national anthem.
The next time you decide to kneel when you hear our national anthem, remember this: to say that you are oppressed in this great nation as the reasoning behind your blatant disrespect for our country is due to your severe lack of gratitude. You are hypocritical, being some of the most successful and wealthy people in America whose careers were facilitated by the freedom and equality of our nation while disrespecting all that has brought you here, to this point, where you kneel. You are disrespectful to the millions of Americans who have come here because of poor conditions elsewhere to reap the tremendous benefits that America has brought to so many immigrants. You are dismissive of the troops of this country who have risked their lives to defend you, and you cannot even stand up to respect their sacrifice.
I will conclude this letter with a question for all of those who continue to kneel after the above points have been considered. If you still truly believe that our country is so inherently prejudiced, how have you taken this idea and tried to do anything about it? Actions always speak louder than words, and yet you have not even attempted to act in accordance with your words. And if you mean to constantly speak out in a disrespectful manner against prejudice without even trying to eliminate it, you are actively making the problem that you perceive worse. When will the disrespect stop and when will this passion be channeled towards bettering society? When will you quit kneeling, and start doing?

Warmest regards,
Maya Sonpavde Guru

---

Student Service
Abby Lee

Service is one of Altamont's core values and something that students take pride in. Many dedicate hours of careful planning and volunteering, something The Miree Center emphasizes. Through the Center, students can exhibit their projects and work alongside each other to be their most productive selves and give back to the community. Here are some exceptional examples of students service projects.

Angie Sutton (Gold Miree Distinction)
"My project is a speech program at Epic for third through fifth graders. The class is every Thursday and each week we go over public speaking tips, different prompts, guidelines, and rules for their speeches. Some days we may pick out a quotation from a jar and they will have to write something about the quotation. I was inspired to complete this project because I aspire to be a teacher for that age group. Often, school systems
focus on the basics, the core subjects, but public speaking is an area that kids need to be confident in and [they need to] develop those skills early. I had a mentor named Jordan Davis. I used to go to Epic with him to see how he was serving them. When he graduated I took on his project without his knowledge. Over the summer I contacted the organization with numerous emails, even though they weren't responding. Eventually, I physically showed up and told them what I wanted to do and they signed off on it."

Otulissa Zhu (Silver Miree Distinction)
"My Miree project is online English tutoring for kids in China. I started it at the beginning of 11th grade and I have been doing this consecutively for a year now every week. I pair each tutor from Altamont with a kid I knew in China. After an introductory session where I introduce them, they have tutoring sessions each week. This mentorship really helps these kids learn English, and is necessary for them to develop good conversation skills. Part of the project is a fundraiser. For each class the tutors teach, they get paid $10, but instead of the money being pocketed, it goes to various organizations. Some of the money goes to the orphanage in China that houses the kids we tutor. Most of the kids in the orphanage were abandoned due to disabilities. We help them get lots of books, including maps and radios specifically for children with impaired vision. Some of the money also goes to STAIR which is a local program for 2nd graders in Birmingham from large public schools that don’t have many resources. This program offers after school tutoring and a place for them to hang out with their friends. We recently donated $1000, which will go to buy books and other school supplies for them. Another $200 went to The Miree Center, to students who are just starting their project, and for when the school has speakers."

Jeet Patel (Gold Miree Distinction)
"My project is a continuation of Lydia Edwards’ project with the Students Today Leaders Forever (STLF) organization. When Lydia Edwards started the program, I signed up to go with her on this new trip. While on the trip, I fell in love with the organization and its mission. When we came back I asked Lydia if I could take over the project when she graduated. My role is to coordinate with the school and the STLF organization to plan a service and leadership trip. While on these trips, we either perform service in a city, are on the road heading to new city, or participating in leadership exercises with the STLF staff. The guiding principle of the organization is to go and perform service in other communities and create a chain of individuals that help each other out. My role has evolved to where I plan and help lead different exercises. The first couple of months I did struggle with figuring out how to start the project. However, I continued working on the project by learning from Lydia and STLF staff, I recently participated in two trips in one year!"

Project Week Review: Italy
Henry Chang
Yeataly, Eataly, and, my personal favorite Litaly—variations on the name of one of the West’s most historical and artistic countries: Italy. For this year’s project week, I along with 18 other Altamont students, visited Italy. The trip not only included numerous museums but also the immersion in a completely different culture. Compared to the modern-day Birmingham, Italy has a more compact and public lifestyle. No one has a private yard, or a treadmill. Instead, Italians visit and exercise in the public parks. Due to the high volume of traffic, most Italians walk everywhere and utilize public transportation. The country retains their historical architecture by integrating it into the rapidly developing modern world. By walking through the street, I saw a mixture of ancient Roman temples and modern architecture. Italy is also world renowned for its cuisine, including variations of pastas, breads, meats and confections.

Despite the exhaustive walking, my trip to Italy was a life changing experience for me. Travelling from United States to Italy was not fun. It involved staying up for more than twenty hours and sitting on a plane for the majority of the time. However, upon arriving in Naples, I realized it was all worth it. Immediately after leaving the airport, we were submerged into the Italian culture. The streets are jam-packed with cars with scooters crammed in between. Friends on the sidewalks greet each other by kissing cheeks. Shortly after arriving at our hotel in Naples, we visited the Naples Archaeological Museum. The museum houses multiple artifacts from Pompeii, frescoes, and multiple bronze statues. The following day, we toured the ancient city of Pompeii that was covered in ash by the explosion of Mount Vesuvius. By walking through
the ancient city, we experienced the daily life of a Roman citizen. We visited ancient houses, bathhouses, theaters, and other public facilities. After our time in Naples, we travelled to an olive farm where we had a firsthand experience on harvesting olives from the tree. The most memorable part of the harvest was when Mrs. Awad climbed the olive tree and did not want to come down! Soon after, we travelled to Rome. Rome is a completely different city than Naples. While both are brimming with people, Rome has a larger collection of historical structures integrated into the streets. In Rome, we visited the famous Colosseum where countless gladiators fought to the death, as well as the Capitoline Museum. During our visit, we saw the lower level of the Colosseum, which consisted of multiple rooms for storage and other purposes. My favorite part of the Capitoline Museum is the statue of Baby Hercules which is an extremely deformed depiction of the Roman hero. We then visited the Vatican City where we saw the iconic Sistine chapel as well as many works of art. Our last day in Rome, we had free time to explore the Via del Corso. The Via del Corso is the main street in the historical center of Rome that connected Porta del Popolo to Piazza Venezia. After walking to the Trevi Fountain, we finished our trip on the Spanish Steps.

**Project Week Review: BBB**

Otulissa Zho

This year for project week I went on Mr. Wigul’s BBB trip. This trip provided me with many great experiences and memories. Here are some of the highlights:

The first hotel we stayed in was The Shack Up Inn. This is one of my favorite places during the entire trip. The Shack that my roommates and I shared was called “Claremont.” From the opinions of others on the trip, I think we got the best Shack. We had a kitchen, a bathroom, and two separate bedrooms with queen-sized beds. There was a souvenir board where past guests left their gadgets.

At night, quite a few people would come to sit on our porch, under the faint blue porchlight, around the dim candle, far from the sun, beneath the stars and the moon.

Red’s Lounge was another favorite place I saw on this trip. I loved this place as much as the Inn! It was here that everyone gobbled ribs, sausages, pork, and beans. It was also the place where I first felt the true pulse of blues. “The King Fish” was the performer’s stage name. Now, he was only 18, yet was already a fabulous blues musician. Listening to the tunes, I drifted into a deep reverie. The music was loud but calm; several friends and I danced as music flowed, and I felt alive and free.

We then visited Rowan Oak, the home of Faulkner. The decorations weren’t sparse but rather minimalist. In the glass containers were the early editions of several of his works. In a room upstairs hung several sketches, all based from the scenes in The Sound and The Fury. They illustrated the stream of consciousness with noir and confusion.

Mrs. Hemingway, before the trip, asked us to try to find the grave of Caroline Barr, which is in the same graveyard as William Faulkner’s. She was an important figure in Faulkner’s childhood. So that’s what we did- we tried to find the grave. I eventually located it with the help of the caretakers of the graveyard. The irony was, though Faulkner was close to her, her grave is quite far away from Faulkner’s. I sat down near her grave, and thought of Dilsey, the sage character in The Sound and The Fury. Books, Blues, and BBQ was a memorable trip for me and I will cherish these memories and experiences forever.

**ATHLETICS**

**Volleyball**

Caroline Lee

Altamont Volleyball team undefeated in the area and looking for more tournament wins!

Led by Coach Brooks, the Altamont volleyball team is on a great path so far for the Fall 2017 season. As of Monday October 16th, the team is keeping a strong record of 24-5 and is 4-0 in Area 10. The team has a great start and is looking to return to the Elite 8 championships, like they did last year. Last Tuesday, the team
Continued from Page 4, Volleyball

defeated Area 10 opponent, Cold Springs, who was ranked #7 in the area. The next day, they won two matches against Indian Springs (3A) and Wenonah (5A). This past weekend, the volleyball team won 3 out of 4 matches at the West Morgan Round Robin Tournament thanks to stat leaders Claire Lynton, Marinna Dorolek, Kendall Smoke, Kalia Todd, and Tiana Shelton. Lynton led with 35 kills and 15 blocks. Senior, Marinna Dorolek, led with 80 digs. Junior, Claire Lynton, led the team this past week in stats with an impressive total of 60 kills, 92 digs, 21 blocks, and 8 aces!

Freshman, Sophie Cornelius, shares her thoughts on the season. "I think we have had a great season, and I'm looking forward to see our team advance in the upcoming tournaments." She also shared her favorite part of the season. "My favorite part of the season was our match against Indian Springs at home. I loved seeing the crowd and the student section, and it is always good to beat Springs!" Kendall Smoke also shared her thoughts on the upcoming tournaments. "I am proud of what we have done as a team this year, and I expect that we will advance very far—hopefully even farther than last year."

Watch the volleyball team Monday, October 23rd in the Area 10 Tournament and Friday and Saturday in the Super Regionals Tournaments. Go Knights!

Update: as of publication, the Girls have advanced to the Final Four of the State Tournament!

Cross Country
Asher Desai

It’s a cool, dry, autumn morning in Bremen, AL. A cold front just arrived the day before, and it’s difficult not to notice the contrast between the weather of the preceding days and this one. Hundreds of eager runners are milling about the fields at Cold Springs High School. Classic rock songs are blasting on the speakers in the football stadium, which has a track in it as well. A finish line has been erected halfway down the straight on one side. After an extensive warm-up consisting of light jogging, mobility drills, static stretching, and a pep-talk by one of the team captains, the racers are ready. The gun sounds with a crack, and in an instant, a horde of determined athletes storm across the starting line, all with their eyes set on a small bottleneck. The expansive field narrows to a space no more than a few yards across, and the pace slows as the runner jockey for positions. The mass of runners makes their way through a field overgrown with kudzu, and a line of parents, coaches, and other athletes wait eagerly for the runners to pass by, cheering until their voices become hoarse. The race strings out as the separation between the faster and slower runners becomes increasingly evident. The course snakes through more fields and forests covered in kudzu, and runners must power up a multitude of hills. It is the Kudzu Hills Invitational.

Each year, our boys and girls enter this meet with high expectations. It’s a fast course, and most set personal bests. They did just that. On the girls’ side, eight out of the ten fastest runners on our team set their season’s best time here. On the boys’ side, there were two school records, and a superb team finish as well. The winning time for five kilometers for the girls: 19:22, and for the boys: 16:16.

In contrast was the Alabama Crimson Classic. A grueling afternoon meet held in nearly the hottest part of an already hot day, it was also poorly operated. The fastest time was forty-nine seconds slower than that of Kudzu Hills. “The course was a new one for us, and I don’t think it was very well marked” says Mr. Rediker, the head coach of both the boys’ and girls’ teams. “The meet directors also had some college students running out on the course as we were racing. I thought it could have been a little bit better.” As to the markings, four runners in the boys’ race (from other schools) made a wrong turn. Despite this confusion, our teams showed well. The girls’ team placed eighth and the boys’ team placed seventh, each against a field with multiple 7A-classification schools. “For the guys…what I thought they did really well with was running together in different groups. For the girls’ team, the same thing. We had groups of girls running well together.” Mary Allen Murray, who placed 24th, said this: “It was a run to shake off the rust from taking all of Project Week off. There was a lot of rust to shake off, but after that meet I’m getting back into the hang of how it feels to run a 5k race.” William Denniston, the co-captain of the boys’ team, also recognized the difficulty of the meet: “It was a tough course; it’s always
The Altamont School

Continued from Page 5, Cross Country

tough running on a Thursday afternoon, [because] it’s hot, and nobody wants to be there, but we definitely had a good race.”

In terms of season progression, the girls’ team has had a few struggles with overuse injuries, and that is simply part of the sport. Murray says, “Injuries in general can make people feel pretty down about their season, but I don’t think it will be an issue for State coming up because with the kind of runners we have, even if they’re in pain, they’ll run through it.” While there have been struggles, after having Project Week to recover there is a visible rebound. The boys team has had a steadier progression. “[The season] is going very well,” says Denniston. “We’ve got a bunch of hardworking guys coming out here and having a good time with a very good team dynamic.” They still have a glaring issue with the lineup: the spacing. A good cross-country team’s first through fifth runners are close together, but the boys’ team has a one minute gap between second and third, and an even larger gap to fourth. Nevertheless, there is time for improvement before the end of the season. About the state meet, Denniston added this: “We’ll win the state championship because we them boys [sic].”

What it’s like to be an Altamont Debater

Anna Kate Lembke

Debate. You’ve heard about it. You are probably tired of hearing about it if you are friends with anyone on the debate team. It may seem like the most tedious activity possible, or it might be a mystery world that you can’t quite comprehend but are interested. But what really goes on during those long weekends at local high schools? What could possibly motivate teenagers to spend dozens of hours every month researching complex political issues in order to spend their weekends screaming at other teenagers about them? Sometimes even I don’t fully understand it, but here is a look into the world of debate.

My Account of the St. James Debate Tournament:

Getting dressed in the school bathroom is like putting on your game uniforms, except instead of jerseys and helmets and sneakers, we wear black clothes and pearls and uncomfortable shoes. Give me a black skirt and blouse and I am ready for battle. All dressed in dark clothes, we load the cheese, trudging up the steps and dropping down in our seats. The nerves begin to settle in as we drive towards Montgomery for the first Alabama local debate tournament of the year. Thoughts race through my head, the most commonly occurring one being “why would I ever sign up for this”. The dread flows through my body. I do not want to debate. All I want to do is sleep for 12 hours and watch football the next day. But at this point I do not have a choice. My fate is sealed. When we arrive at St. James, we hop off the bus, nerves bubbling up as we walk across the high school parking lot and approach the cafeteria of high schoolers clad in varying degrees of professional wear. We enter the cafeteria, and my eyes search around looking for familiar faces. While debate is the main purpose of these tournaments, developing friendships is also a key component of tournaments. I walk into the cafeteria; almost instantly it is game time.

Rounds are the most fundamental aspect of tournaments, but also the least fun. Rounds are nerve wracking and unpredictable, as they are usually judged by an unqualified parent. Rounds require a kind of vision and way of thinking that I do not fully grasp yet. In these rounds, we yell at strangers and friends alike about missile defense systems in South Korea. War is discussed and both sides are accused of creating it. People talk slowly, quickly, sometimes making sense and sometimes not. No one is perfect and that shows in every “um” and poorly answered question. Every round is a unique game that requires an intense amount of concentration and work to win. I arrive back at the school on Saturday morning. It is 5am and I am already tired of debate before it has even started. It is still dark outside when I arrive back at the school to drive back down to Montgomery. There is nothing, quite literally, I would like to do less right now than debate. I spend the hour and a half bus ride fading in and out of consciousness, trying to make myself excited about debating and failing. We arrive at school, eat donuts, and begin rounds again.
Continued from Page 6, Debate

The break rounds start. The already high-strung group of high schoolers are frantically checking their Tab-room accounts, trying to see their pairings for octo-finals. I get the fateful text on my phone and now it's really game time. This is where the politics of debate comes in. As the sixteen teams get their break round pairings, you see debaters running over to their allies, desperately pleading for flows of the teams they are about to compete against. This is also where you make your enemies. The teams you beat in break rounds almost always become your fiercest rivals, a hatred that compares to all rivalries in sports. Chandni and I proceed from octo-finals, to quarterfinals, to semifinals, beating each team and advancing. Winning is one reason debate is so fun.

In out-rounds, your hard work is rewarded. Each team you beat is confirmation of the long nights that went into preparing for a topic.

At about 10:00 pm we head for finals. Exhausted and ready for the end, Chandni and I walk into the finals room and set up. The round is more low-key than all of our previous rounds (no spectators and the judges make it clear they want to leave as soon as possible), and suddenly my adrenaline that had been propelling me through the previous nine rounds evaporated. We did not debate particularly well and we dropped on a 2-1, something that I would have been far more upset about if it had been three hours before when I was still hyped up for my rounds. But at that point, I was ready for sleep.

I don’t know why it is that debate is such a rewarding extracurricular when the majority of the work is done at home in pajamas and there is only one winner out of sixty teams. But I love this activity, no matter how much I dislike it at some points.

Thought Experiments
Matthew Hamrick

Thought experiments and paradoxes have confounded humans for centuries. When a question has no answer, it can be irresistible (or frustrating!) to try to dream up every possible solution! In this article, I’ll share three that have interested me the most. Tell them to your friends; it’s fun to see what they answer...or see their reactions when they start thinking about them.

The Ship of Theseus

Theseus, the legendary king of Athens, was a very successful naval commander. In fact, the people of Athens preserved his ship in a memorial for hundreds of years. Naturally, the ship would have undergone wear and tear over time, so the people of Athens replaced rotting boards to make it look pretty.

This situation calls into question the problem of identity. When you replace one board of the ship, is it still the same ship? Maybe you’re thinking “Yeah...duh it’s the same ship” but let’s continue this thought. What if you replace two boards? Or three? What about when you get to half of the boards being new or even all but one being new boards. What happens when every single board is new? Is it the same ship? If you’re still thinking, “Yeah, of course it’s the same ship,” then think about it this way: none of the old ship’s components remains. It’s like the old ship was moved out of the port and was replaced by a new ship. What happens to the Ship of Theseus? Confused? Don’t worry; there is no concrete answer. Just remember, because new cells displace old cells in your body every seven years, maybe you truly aren’t the person you were ten years ago.

If you’re interested in the problem of identity, here’s a related question. Imagine you have a “heap” of sand. Maybe it’s as big a car. If you take just one grain of sand away, it’s still a “heap” right? What if you take away another grain? Still a “heap?” What if you take away grains of sand one at a time until there’s exactly one grain of sand left? Is that one specific grain of sand “a heap of sand?” To those who say, “No, of course not,” my question for you is: at what point is the “heap” no longer a “heap?”

Schrödinger’s Cat

The cat in the box! Schrödinger’s experiment is a pretty cool thought. Schrödinger’s cat was an effort to explain the “superposition” of subatomic particles. Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger proposed, in 1935, the following situation. A cat is placed in a steel box along with a hammer, a vial of poison, a Geiger counter (a device that measures radioactivity), and a harmless,
radioactively decaying substance. When the radioactive substance finishes decaying, the Geiger counter will go off, the hammer will smash the vial of poison, and the poison will kill the cat. However, radioactive decay is a random process, so the contraption goes off at a random time. Because of this, we don’t know whether the cat is alive or not until we open the steel box, and until we do, we must assume the cat is both alive and dead at the same time. The state of being alive and dead at the same time would be the cat’s “superposition.” Only after we open the box, before or after the radioactive decay, and observe the cat would we be able to say with certainty that “The cat is alive.” or “The cat is dead.” The superposition of the cat no longer exists with that knowledge, and any assumptions of the state of the cat before opening the box are illogical. One must assume the cat is alive and dead at the same time. In the same sense, you can’t know the position of an electron around its nucleus unless you observe it. Before that, you must assume that it’s in every possible state it can be at the same time, and any assumption without observation of the electron is, again, illogical.

Regardless of your feelings for chemistry, this paradox is fun to think about. Though, wouldn’t I have to assume that you both like and dislike chemistry?

The Trolley Problem
This problem has two distinct scenarios. Read carefully!

**Scenario A:** Imagine you’re crossing a bridge over a trolley tracks, and suddenly you hear screaming below you! You look down and there are five people tied down to the tracks! On the other side of the bridge, a trolley is rolling down the track at a very high speed. If it continues to hurtle toward and under the bridge, it will run into the five people. However, you see a lever nearby, and if you pull the lever, a junction will switch the train to a parallel track, and you will save the five people. If you do this, though, the train will run into and kill a person tied down to the parallel track. Do you pull the lever? You don’t know any of these people and there’s no way to slow down the trolley.

**Scenario B:** Imagine you’re crossing a bridge over a trolley, and suddenly you hear screaming below you! You look down and there are five people tied down to the tracks! On the other side of the bridge, a trolley is rolling down the track at a very high speed. If it continues to hurtle toward and under the bridge, it will run into the five people. However, a very fat man has walked up next to you to see the commotion. If you push the fat man off the bridge onto the tracks, his massive bulk will stop the trolley, and you will save the five people. If you do this, though, the fat man will obviously die. Do you push the fat man? You don’t know any of these people and there’s no other way to slow down the trolley.

There are many different ways to answer these two scenarios. In both scenarios, it’s five lives against one life, so a strict utilitarian would pick killing the one man, as that option maximizes happiness. However, the circumstances of pushing the fat man over the bridge’s railing to his death may cause other people to choose to let the five people die. Another way to look at it is if you play a hand in changing fate, you are responsible for the death of the one man; whereas if you let the other five people die, it’s not your fault. Others would think that there is an obligation for you to save innocent lives. There are many variations of this dilemma, and other circumstances, such as the fat man being evil or your best friend being on the parallel track can complicate your decisions.

---

**The Black Hat / White Hat Problem**
Matthew Hamrick

In a faraway land, there was a prison. In this prison resided an evil warden, many guards, and one hundred inmates. One day, the warden dreamed up a dastardly game for his enjoyment, which would put his prisoners’ lives at stake. He would use his overly long 100-step staircase that goes deep underground and have them play a game. He wrote down the following instructions onto a sheet of paper.

**Set Up of the Game**
1. Every prisoner will be blindfolded (cannot see), bound, (cannot move limbs), and gagged (cannot speak) already.
2. Exactly one prisoner will be placed on exactly one step each, facing outward. They can see all the way down the staircase.
3. Each prisoner will then have a hat placed onto his head. The color of the hat can be white or black. There is no set number of white hats and black hats, and it is truly random whether a prisoner has a white hat or a black hat. The hat should sit on the prisoner’s head such that no prisoner can see his own hat.

**Execution of the Game**
1. The head guard will begin on the highest stair of the staircase.
2. He will then remove the blindfold and the gag and ask the prisoner a simple question: “What color is your hat?”
3. The prisoner may have as much time as needed to deliberate his answer because his struggle and indecision is pleasing to the warden.
4. The prisoner may answer only “black” or “white.”
5. If the prisoner is correct, his imprisonment is terminated. If he is wrong, however, the head guard may shoot him on the spot. The head guard will then move down a step after the previous prisoner’s fate is sealed.

**Stipulations of the Game**
1. “Blindfolded,” “bound,” and “gagged” mean exactly what they sound like: there should be no chance for a prisoner to see out of the blindfold, to move significantly, or to make any discernable noise due to a failure of the blindfold, gag, and chain.
2. The prisoners may only say the word “black” OR “white” in a monotone voice when answering to the head guard. If an answer consists of anything else, the prisoner should be shot on the spot. The prisoners may not inflect their voices when calling “black” or “white” to communicate with each other either; if caught, the prisoners responsible should be shot on the spot.
3. Any sort of signaling will be caught and signalers will be shot.
4. Black and white hats are identical (in weight, texture, etc.), aside from their colors.
5. No guard is allowed to assist the prisoners in the game.
6. No prisoner’s senses are impaired.

The prison warden called over the head guard to review the plan to him and asked that the head guard spread the details among his subordinates. Fortunately for the prisoners, the plan took time to be put in action. In the meantime, the subordinate guards accidentally leaked out information little by little until the prisoners knew every detail of the plan. There was no time to waste. The night before the game, they held a meeting and devised a strategy such that at least ninety-nine of the prisoners are guaranteed to survive.

**What plan allows the prisoners to succeed?**

Note that when I heard this puzzle, it took me many hours to solve. But it’s a fun brainteaser. Give it a try! A full answer will be revealed in the next issue of the *Acta Diurna*, so you have plenty of time to think about it. Puzzle sourced from William Tang.

**Heritage Panel**

Amrita Lakhapal

Heritage Panel, a program sponsored by the YWCA, empowers youth to be leaders by creating change in their schools and making the school environment a more inclusive place. The program begins with a fun, yet intense, two-day training session. The group becomes closer over these two days through fun games and team building exercises. This year, our Heritage Panel, composed of twenty-two students and seven teachers, participated in our two-day training session on October 12th and 13th. We discussed important issues such as race, gender, cultural background, and exclusion that affect all of us, but are often neglected. My favorite activity we did involved both culture and race. The panelists broke off into groups with the race or ethnicity that we identify with, and then discussed stereotypes and myths that are often associated with our race. Through this activity, I was able to learn about issues and stereotypes that affect other cultures that I was previously unaware of. Now that we have completed the training, the Heritage Panelists will be visiting classrooms to share what they
The Altamont School

Continued from Page 9, Heritage Panel.

learned through presentations and stories of personal experiences involving injustice. Teacher-moderated discussions will follow these presentations. In these presentations, students are encouraged to think about how their actions affect the culture and environment at their school, and what steps they can take to improve this. Be on the lookout for Heritage Panel to come to your classroom!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The British are Coming (and the South Koreans too)!</th>
<th>Maddie Thomas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| In the mid-1960s, America witnessed a cultural sensation unlike any other previously seen. As well as other aspects of British culture, British rock groups became widely popular all over the United States. Many say this phenomenon originated when British bands tried to replicate the sounds of American rock and roll and blues musicians. However, since the bands couldn’t create an identical copy, they ended up creating a fusion between assorted American and British music styles. The acts that could appeal to a younger generation became wildly successful, and often the essence of “Mod” culture became a staple in the most popular British bands of the British Invasion. However, bands that balanced both musical creativity with a youthful aesthetic proved influential as well (think The Beatles). Many of the bands from the British Invasion have even been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, which only further proves the influence these bands had on youth culture. Bands such as The Beatles, The Animals, The Who, and The Rolling Stones have remained wildly popular even into the 21st Century. However, the British are not the only peoples who have sent Americans into a culture craze, especially in recent years. |}

In July of 2012, South Korean artist Psy released his 18th K-Pop single- “Gangnam Style” (강남스타일). By August, the video had made a name for itself by settling comfortably into the top position in YouTube’s Top 100 Music Videos. By September, the song topped iTunes charts in almost 32 countries. On December 12th, 2012, sixth months after the video’s release, “Gangnam style” reached one billion views on YouTube- an amount previously untouched by any other creator.

I can remember the craze that was going around. Everyone knew the chorus, everyone knew the dance, everyone had seen the music video. It was a fad, and it stayed that way for a while. Nowadays, “Gangnam Style” isn’t really considered popular, but it certainly hasn’t become an overused joke. It’s more of something that you remember, fondly, as a part of your middle school or early high school years. There was something about the absurdity of the video that appealed to everyone, and a well put together pop song will always have a following of some sort. When considering the genre of K-pop (Korean pop), one must realize that the songs within this range are not strictly pop. K-pop bands focus on a mixture of audio and visual elements to make music, and it’s become popular to incorporate genres such as Western pop, rock, electronic dance, folk, and classical on top of traditional Korean music- which is where the genre holds its roots.

“Gangnam Style” was an anomaly for its time. It was a song that’s popularity wasn’t constricted due to a language barrier- it was appealing to any audience. The music video made people want to dance, laugh, and be happy, as any pop song should. However, another South Korean band seems to have made a ripple in the pond of American culture as well, and this one much more recently.

Earlier this year, the K-Pop boyband BTS beat out four other artists for the BBMAs Social Artist of the year award. BTS was the only band who didn’t hail from North America, and it was the only band in the running. The artists they were competing against could be heard on nearly any radio station at any point in the day (Justin Bieber, Selena Gomez, Ariana Grande). Yet they were beaten out by a boyband originating in South Korea. BTS’ victory speaks to the appeal of their music. The messages in their songs aren’t confined to only a Korean-speaking population but are instead embraced by a global fanbase. The choreography, the lyrics, the rapping, the music videos, and everything else that makes BTS globally known artists appeals to youth culture all over the world- especially in North America. It’s the same case as it was during the British Invasion, teenagers have fallen in love with BTS’ aesthetic, their sound, and their message. In fact, BTS has
been compared to The Beatles because of their impact on American culture (although they deny any claims that they’re similar bands, insisting that the Beatles are an act that can only be considered in its own light).

After doing more research on this topic, I’ve found that BTS is not the only Korean band to have achieved something like this. While I had previously mentioned the impact of Psy’s “Gangnam Style” on American culture, other Korean bands have also beat out influential American artists in large scale competitions due to their extensive fan-bases. For instance, BIGBANG was named the Best Worldwide Act at the 2011 MTV EMAs (beating out Britney Spears). The band Girls’ Generation earned the first ever Video of the Year award at the YouTube Music Awards (beating out well known artists such as One Direction, Justin Bieber, and Lady Gaga). It can’t be disputed that these victories over American and British artists are due to the fanaticism surrounding K-pop bands, however the discussion lies in why these bands are so popular on an international scale. In a world where nearly, every song on the Billboard’s Top 100 is in English. It’s refreshing to know that the 98th spot is held by BTS' single, DNA, a song that is almost entirely in Korean. If this trend of the rising popularity of foreign music in the American industry will stay around is yet to be determined. However, with the appearance of Justin Beiber’s new song “Despacito,” as well as ‘Mi Gente” by J Balvin and Willy William, it seems like foreign music may become a staple in the American pop industry.

Global Initiative: Q1 Reflection
(reprinted from “Gateways,” the blog on http://altamontglobal.weebly.com/)
Niko Tsivourakis

Whenever we do anything at Altamont, we try to keep one eye on the plan and one on the big picture. The original intentions of the Global Initiative were—and remain—to broaden horizons and to cultivate empathy. We live in a big world, that is richer for and complicated by diversity. If we are to truly fulfill our mission, we must make dedicated efforts, within the classroom and without, to prepare ourselves for life in such a world. A broad view and a position of inquiry endears us to others and it models how we would like to be perceived. They aren’t a perfect panacea for our nation’s and the world’s ills, but they encourage restraint and dialogue. In a time that is culturally and politically charged, with passionate—often toxic—rhetoric spewed within echo chambers and at strangers, we need these values to moderate our emotions and buttress our perspectives.

We live in this complicated world, but that doesn’t mean that we must be at the mercy of it. We are not merely characters written into some grand narrative; we have choice. If Altamont does its job, we will send you out equipped and emboldened to write new narratives about defending equity, fighting injustice, and leaving your sphere a little better for all.

As we explore human rights, we look at the daunting task of creating fundamental rights for all humans, regardless of constructs and divisions. Really, as Dr. Kempin Reuter eloquently illustrated, we’re exploring just how difficult it is to come to any consensus when a bunch of people with unique beliefs meet at a table. Should a right for someone here be a right for someone everywhere? Do we have the right to impose our values? Do the answers ever get easy?! Perhaps thinking in the micro is a wiser approach.

How do we make something so lofty and daunting manageable and achievable? We take a second to think. We treat our neighbors well and remember, as Challenger Deep teaches and countless others have echoed, that everyone is going through something. We listen to our friends, strangers, and the past so that we can be present. We subject ourselves to one another. We identify rights that we believe in, decorate some silly felt, and make a monument to our diverse values—a patchwork of principled pieces that create a brilliant whole. In doing so, we model a better narrative—one that celebrates many protagonists. And when we fail—and we will fail, we look to that silly felt to remind us how to be better. Then we lift each other up and keep pressing forward.

Continued from Page 11, Global Initiative
In All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, Robert Fulghum relates a handful of anecdotes that apply a 5-year-old's class rules to an adult's--one could argue even a nation's--experience. In the chapter “Credo,” he reminds us that “… it is still true, no matter how old you are - when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.” Simple enough?

Honors Reading Seminar Book Review
Annabelle Davis

This month, students participating in Honors Reading Seminar attended Mr. Wagyu’s seminar on Yu Hua's To Live. The novel's narrator speaks to a man about his life experiences, and his story begins in 1937 at the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War and continues through the Chinese Civil War between the Nationalists and the Liberation army, the formation of the People's Republic of China under Mao, and eventually the Cultural Revolution. The old man with whom the narrator speaks is named Fugui, which translates to "good luck," which is both an ironic and an unironic name for him, as at the beginning of the novel he gambles away all his money, but his lack of wealth eventually saves him from Mao's wrath (many wealthy people were killed once the People's Republic of China took hold). However, Hua's novel never speaks out directly about any specific political parties or events. Hua's novel questions the experience of living in revolutionary China without actually confronting it. He does this by relaying the experiences of the common man in China during these times of political strife, and the direct effect that this strife had on the individual. Though Fugui gambles all his money away, the more significant losses to him were his family members, whom he loses to poverty and illness. At the beginning of the novel, Fugui's father uses this allegory for the family wealth: "our Xu family ancestors raised but a single chicken. When that chicken grew up it turned into a goose, the goose grew into a lamb and the lamb became an ox" (36). When Fugui gambles away the family's money, they are "left without even a chicken" (36). At the end of the novel, although Fugui has lost his whole family, he is finally able to purchase an ox, which symbolizes his restoration of his family's name. He calls his ox by his name and refers to imaginary oxen by the names of his family members because if the ox "hears that there are others working the fields, he'll work harder and won't feel so depressed" (8). The ox is Fugui's companion, his way of keeping his family with him, but it also represents his success despite hardship and the energy it takes to keep going. Fugui's story inspired senior Otulissa Zhu to investigate into her own family's experience during this time, and found that her great grandparents had a story very similar to that of Fugui: her great grandfather had a tendency to gamble, and he would wake every morning to steal the chickens' eggs and sell them for money to gamble. He was enlisted into the Second Sino-Japanese War. He, too, lost his wife. She committed suicide because of the burden of poverty, whereas Fugui's wife died of malnutrition. Otulissa's great grandfather lived to age 94, and he, like old Fugui, serves as a symbol of strength and perseverance despite hardship. His story speaks to the accuracy of Hua's depiction of life as a common person in China during the 1940s and 1950s. To Live is a powerful representation of the hardship and suffering of the individual as a direct effect of political struggle.
ITALY!!

Just take the picture already!

GELATO BREAK

Mount Vesuvius

hold on... it's blurry...

just take the picture already!

GELATO BREAK

Pompeii

Colosseum Picture!

GELATO BREAK

my nice tech...

VATICAN

Pasta! Gelato!

MORE GELATO!!!

we don't want to go home!

Ciao!

USA
Comics by Fion Chang

Suggestions?

Email
ehardwick@altamontschool.org
for more information.

Printed 10/31/2017