‘Heights’ cooks up a bit of Latin flavor
by Baylor Knobloch ‘14

What would you do with $96,000? This is the question that a group of neighbors faces in Lin-Manuel Miranda and Quiara Aelgría Hudes’s Broadway musical In the Heights, a story of power outages, coffee with cream, gossip sessions, fireworks, and young love.

The story takes place over the course of three days on a single city intersection in Washington Heights, NY. But everything gets turned upside down when Abuela Claudia finds herself with the winning lottery ticket, and everything gets turned upside down when Abuela Claudia finds herself with the winning lottery ticket, and getting out of Washington Heights is suddenly closer than ever before.

Casually referred to as the barrio (Spanish for “neighborhood”), Washington Heights is a predominantly Latino area north of Harlem, where Spanglish is the norm and the streets corners are never quiet. The theater’s stage was entirely transformed into an urban intersection, marked by a salon, a corner store, a car service, and a front stoop.

“There is an actual intersection in Washington Heights that this set is specifically modeled off of,” said Drew Himmelrich ‘14, who has impressively taken on the roles of stage manager, lighting designer, and set designer, jobs which are typically filled by three different people. “That’s never happened before,” set design teacher John Trout said of Himmelrich’s ambition. “Physically, in terms of space and height, it’s the largest set we’ve done in my time here.”

During the show, the barrio intersection bustles with hip-hop face-offs, Caribbean flair, sexual tension, Spanish slang, and fiery club dancing. Making the magic happen down in the orchestra pit is US music teacher Adele Dinerstein on keyboard, MS music teacher Mavee Royce on bass, student guitarists Baird Acheson ’15 and Evan Semenza ’14, and a host of musicians brought in from outside of school. “This show is a good 80% music—maybe even more,” Dinerstein said.

Along with the music are dance numbers, of which there are many. “The show is unique because there is so much student choreography,” co-choreographer Rebecca Shapiro ’14 said. Shapiro and Elana Liebow-Feeser ’14 got right down to work in the summer, when they took classes in salsa, Zumba, and reggaeton, a Latin-style hip-hop.

“Rebecca and Elana had the energy from the summer,” said MS Spanish teacher Di Bobrow, a native Puerto Rican who worked with the cast as a cultural coach, weighing in on accents, attitudes, and dance moves. Full of hip thrusts, high claps, lingering eyes, and tapping feet, the ensemble dances don’t disappoint.

Heights continued p. 7

Hunting bravely through a ‘wilderness of books’
by Phillip Merrick ‘15

Lamenting the loss of the art of browsing, the Lower School library has launched a new initiative to get it back. The Browse-O-Rama, begun this month, is an effort by librarians Laura Schlitz and Twig George to teach young students how to find the right library book, and it’s a big deal.

Lasting until the end of November, or maybe longer, this event is complete with bookmarks, stamps, face paint, and a Wall of Fame for successful browsers. On their visits to the library, Lower School classes enjoy special exercises in which they learn skills like taking time to really look through a book or how to properly judge a book by its cover.

“The art of browsing,” said Schlitz, the librarian for grades 3-5, “has to do with being able to go into a kind of wilderness of books and find the one that you want.” Children are encouraged to behave like the Browse-O-Rama mascot, the cat: stalk slowly and quietly through the bookshelves, pounce on and explore books that look good, and finally curl up and purr with the right book. The Browse-O-Rama motto is: “Sink your claws into the best book you’ve never read!”

When children exhibit good browsing behavior, they are rewarded with face paint on their eyebrows (so they can say, “I browse!”), or get to sign their name on the Wall of Fame along with a paw-print stamp. Good browsing behavior is “when kids feel successful about being brave and exploring the different books,” George said, “because it’s hard to go in there and face a shelf of books and not know how to go about finding them.”

So why such a big fuss? “We thought we should do this in as silly a way as we can,” Schlitz said, “because what we’re after is something that I think is important, but the last thing we want is to stand up in front of children and say, ‘Now, you must do this, and you must do that’—it’s like telling them to eat their vegetables.”

The Browse-O-Rama isn’t exclusive to the Lower School; parents, faculty, and older students are all encouraged to get in on the action.

In a letter to Lower School parents, Schlitz and George urged them to “model browsing behaviors. Tell your child how you pick your books. Do some side-by-side browsing.”

Browsing continued p. 5
Spotlight on Drew

We don’t normally do this, We don’t normally use this space to talk about a specific person, to paint a picture of praise or sing a sweet serenade. But Park doesn’t normally have a kid like Drew Himmelrich ‘14.

This issue, the editorial staff was tied up with In the Heights—an interlude that we like to think of as a passionate, romanti- 
cic affair in the midst of our marriage to the paper. No matter how late we were 
at school, running back and forth between the publications office and the theater, the tech crew always stayed later. It was nice to 
have another group to go visit, their 
company making the dark halls a little 
less daunting, and the pizza dinners a little 
more entertaining.

Drew, their fearless leader, was more 
involved in the show than any of us can 
imagine. Every day we are amazed at how 
much he does. Yes, there are the titles: 
set designer, lighting designer, and stage 
manager—roles that are usually given to 
three different people, entailing an absurd 
amount of work. But more notable is his personal invest-
ment in the show, his passion for the pro-
duction and obsession with every single 
aspect of it. “If I could say anything to Lin-Manuel Miranda, I would tell him 
talk to Drew because he is obsessed with the show,” ensemble member Josh 
Schwartz ‘14 said.

“I don’t know if stage managers usu-
ally do this, but over the summer I read a book about stage-managing,” Drew said. 

“That was my beach book.” And if that’s not enough to melt your 
heart, then consider a day in the life: Drew started designing the set this past summer, 
when he and John Trout exchanged count-
less emails of Google sketches. “I work 
for Drew right now,” Trout said. “I’ve 
gotten used to it over the past two years.”

Starting off the year with a vision for 
the set, Drew got down to work on every-
thing Heights. He used his independent 
study, a science concentration in statics 
and suspension, to engineer the functional 
fire escape used in the show, and his free 
block to perfect the set.

During the musical’s in-school class, 
he worked as the production’s manager, 
keeping student actors in the loop and giv-
ing his input to director Peter King and 
music director Adele Dinerstein, putting 
their beach book knowledge into action. 
After school, Drew attended the daily 
afternoon rehearsals, calling out scene 
numbers and keeping everyone in line, 
all while programming the show’s lights 
and overseeing the set’s construction. 
During leaving school, the production 
 didn’t end for him—in his “free” time, 
he worked as the production’s manager, 
keeping student actors in the loop and giv-
ing his input to director Peter King and 
music director Adele Dinerstein, putting 
their beach book knowledge into action. 
After school, Drew attended the daily 
afternoon rehearsals, calling out scene 
numbers and keeping everyone in line, 
all while programming the show’s lights 
and overseeing the set’s construction. 

Drew, you have reached new heights, 
and we couldn’t stand the thought of your 
not taking a bow on stage. So here is your 
spotlight of sorts, with the editorial staff 
giving you a standing ovation. You de-
serve it.

Letters to the editors

‘Rightsizing’ affects more than classroom teachers

Thank you for the coverage in the 
November 8 Postscript of the issues 
concerning the Lower School and “right-
sizing.” Although your coverage was 
quite good, you failed to point out the 
impact of the reduction of classes on the 
full-time status of lower elementary teach-
ers in special areas of music and visual 
art. I am unsure of the effect on sched-
ules of the other special areas—Spanish, 
PE, and library. As the number of classes 
at each grade level has decreased, so has 
the contact time for the lower elementary 
specialists, thus impacting their full-time 
employment. The administration has made efforts to 
continue to offer full-time status by allow-
ing specialists affected by “right-sizing” 
to teach cross-directionally. This has not 
always resolved the problem.

Next year the impact of the reduction of 
class sizes reaches 4th grade (most likely) 
affecting the upper elementary 
specialists’ schedules.

—Bruce Bryant, Lower School Music
Is messiness progressive?

by Leah Smith ‘16

Park prides itself as a place that embraces debate, and where faculty, administration, and students are encouraged to question each other to maintain a spirit of inquiry. So it is no surprise, then, that a particularly sharply worded announcement caught everyone by surprise.

The announcement instructed students to keep the school clean, and pick up after themselves to leave a better impression with visitors. Can this sort of directive be reconciled with our philosophy?

But, the announcement did not ask us to be clean just for the sake of being clean, or to pick up trash because some higher authority wanted us to do so. It asked us to refrain from messiness to display a neater environment for visitors walking through the school. This isn’t an irrational reason because part of the admissions process involves showcasing our buildings and facilities.

To quote from the school’s philosophy: “...human beings are capable and desirous of rational self discipline and of acting towards others with respect, kindness, concern, open-mindedness and moral conviction.” If we occasionally need to be reminded to pick up our trash, this does not mean it’s a violation. Nor is it a system of punishment.

In fact, our school’s focus on fostering positive learning could only be helped if we enjoy our school environment—few would argue that a cleaner Commons is somehow worse than a messy one. And, rather than calling out individual students for leaving trash, the school chose to announce it, thereby giving everyone fair warning and knowledge.

But those visiting the school want to see the ethos of the school, and this begs the question: Is preparing ourselves, or somehow altering habits, going to provide an authentic image for visitors? Of course not. But it’s hard to sit up straighter, or rethought an answer, when visitors enter a classroom? In reality, messiness and knowledge.

The punishment process

by Daniel Moskowitz ‘15

Where I went to middle school detention was the primary punitive measure. It entailed sitting in a room silently during lunch, reading a packet, and answering questions about it. It didn’t matter what you were there for because everyone read the same packet. This is the approach of most schools, but that doesn’t mean it’s effective; it teaches nothing about what you did wrong besides what the consequences for doing it are.

Park is the exception to this system; we don’t standardize our punishments. Why should we? Here, consequences are decided “deeply specifically,” Upper School Principal Kevin Coll said. They are determined by looking at every factor: the offenders’ backgrounds, the contexts, why they did what they did, etc. Coll said that when thinking about a consequence, “our foremost questions are always: what’s fair and what’s going to be educational?”

Consequences, Coll said, are miles away from writing “I will not talk in class” 500 times on a blackboard; ”natural consequences” are the goal.

There is another major component to our handling of infractions. “The honesty that we expect from students is inherent in our philosophy,” Upper School Dean of Students Traci Wright said. So in the same way students own their education here, they also need to take ownership of their mistakes. The question of whether or not the person responsible came clean is “hugely important” when deciding how to move forward, according to Coll. “Trust is how we operate every day,” Wright said and a breach in that trust can be detrimental to the way our school runs.

A recent incident showed how important this process is. A few weeks ago, students were asked to park in the horse pasture to free up spaces for a large number of visitors. After this, it was discovered that students had driven in circles on the grass pastures, creating donut-shaped ruts. When no one came forward to take responsibility, all student drivers were told they would not be allowed to park on campus for the next event: they would have to park off-campus and be shuttled here.

Bob Peck, Director of Safety, Security, and Transportation, said putting restrictions on all student drivers “is the easiest way to find out who’s responsible because people have a tendency not to come forward” on their own. After the restriction was announced, the responsible students did admit their guilt.

As a means of finding the most natural consequence, the students were asked what they thought the consequences should be. They came up with speaking to juniors and seniors at class meetings about what they had done, and researching and repairing the damage.

So while perhaps our disciplinary system is just another example of the “Park bubble” because in the outside world, offenders won’t get to come up with their own consequences, it’s also an example of how everything here is a learning process.

Outside of school, it doesn’t matter if it’s murder or drug dealing; the consequences, including jail, are much more devastating. But by making discipline educational, we are able to keep kids from enduring harsh punishments.

In school, there’s no better way to stop students from being re-offenders than teaching them why what they did was wrong; if they don’t understand what was wrong about their actions, then they’ll have no real incentive not to do it again.

The desire to avoid punishment shouldn’t be the only incentive not to do something. Making sure that a student knows what he or she did was wrong is an integral part of staying out of trouble in the future. “As students are learning and as students are making mistakes or taking risks, we help them to understand the result and the impact of those decisions,” Wright said.

Party on, but keep it to yourself

by Peter Coulson ‘16

Rise your hand if you’ve ever seen people post photos on Facebook of parties to which you weren’t invited. Let’s see: one… two… okay, that’s just about everyone. Facebook exists for several purposes, including creating an intricately tailored façade of your life for others to admire, envy, or even despise. All Facebook users are guilty of it to one point or another, and by that I mean literally all 1.15 billion of them. Some do it unconsciously, and some do it consciously, and it’s not inherently bad—people just like to make themselves seem attractive. This ought to go without saying.

Personally, I’ve got nothing against parties. As long as you’re not being a complete idiot, party away; I don’t care. However—you knew there was going to be a “however”—I tend to have a problem when people post pictures of these parties in order to directly or indirectly provoke envy, jealousy, or fear of missing out. They’re distinct from parties for weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, and the like, which are worth celebrating; I’m going to call them Parties For the Sake of Partying, or PFSP.

I remember that in first grade, everyone learned that it wasn’t nice to distribute birthday party invitations in school unless everyone read, and that it wasn’t nice to talk about play dates in school because “they’re for people at parties for weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, and the like, which are worth celebrating; I’m going to call them Parties For the Sake of Partying, or PFSP.

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Traditions

Students and teachers tell us why they love Thanksgiving

“My three-year old cousins drive my aunt insane.”
—Aaron E. ’17

“My mother always makes red cabbage because my grandmother likes it. It’s literally the WORST substance in the world.”
—Annika S. ’15

“My three-year old cousins drive my aunt insane.”
—Brooke G. ’16

“Big family dinner!”
—Soleil B. ’20

“When you make sweet potato casserole you have to put marshmallows on top. Some people don’t, and they’re wrong.”
—Paul Worley, MS

“Constant football.”
—Max R. ’16

“I always look forward to my aunt’s sweet potato pie.”
—Brooke G. ’16

The Labyrinth Club

by Helen Moos ’16 and Salecia Poles ’16

Over the past year, a vacant lot near Druid Hill Park has undergone a drastic transformation: where weeds and trash once covered the ground, something special for the neighborhood now stands.

The Labyrinth Club works on a once-abandoned lot that they have sponsored through the Adopt-A-Lot Program, a Baltimore City initiative that encourages projects like the Labyrinth Club to revitalize one of the 10,000+ vacant lots in the city. Our lot is located at 2718 Reisterstown Road, not far from the original Park School. The project started last year during the Centennial when we began cleaning the lot and making plans for a labyrinth and garden. Since then, we have been awarded over $2,000 of grant funding from the Mitzvah Fund for Good Deeds and Baltimore City’s Parks and People Community Greening Grant Program.

During the spring and summer we visited the lot every other weekend to plant garden beds, mosaic the front wall of the site, install trellises, and plant morning glories that bloomed all season long. With each visit, we talk with locals who appreciate the positive change the newly-renovated lot has brought to the Liberty Square community—one passerby even described it as “his own little area of peace.”

The Labyrinth Club is also a great opportunity for Park students to connect with Baltimore City through community service. We find the emphasis Park places on service to be an important part of the school philosophy: we want students and faculty to become part of the greater Baltimore community and engage in efforts to improve the quality of life for city residents.

We think it is imperative that students develop relationships with people who may not be directly associated with Park and with whom we may not otherwise have an opportunity to work. The philosophy states, “To achieve a richer understanding of the world, one must participate in it,” and we strongly believe this.

The topic of being involved is often discussed and seems to be understood, but we want the process of becoming physically involved to be given more weight; we want this to become an actual part of the school’s curriculum, and to really connect students with helping those less fortunate.

We could do more when it comes to community service, and while it isn’t required, activities like the Labyrinth Club provide an outlet for students to get out of the school and into the surrounding community.

Portuguese Club

Você fala Português? Portuguese isn’t offered at many schools, but it’s one of the fastest growing languages today. Sara Philips ’15 and Eva Schneiderman ’15 meet every Thursday X with faculty leader Paul (Pablo) Vilhmore to explore all things Portuguese.

“Portuguese is hard,” Schneiderman says, “but it’s really fun.” Aside from learning vocabulary and grammar and working towards basic conversational skills, Portuguese club also concentrates on Portuguese and Brazilian culture, most recently focusing on television and film.

They are working towards getting an in-block class together in the next few years that would have a balanced focus on language and culture similar to that of the club.

Stage Combat

Every Friday at X, the Macks-Fidler Blackbox Theater is taken over by a handful of students, finely trained in the arts of fencing, martial arts, and many other combat styles, all perfectly adapted for the stage.

“[Stage Combat] is the closest thing to Fight Club Park has ever had,” leader Annika Salzberg ’15 admits modestly, disabling, without the slightest glance, a novice member of the club who has snuck up behind her.

With faculty leader Peter King lending the occasional profound stage direction, Stage Combat is the perfect club for anyone interested in learning how a few words and a bunch of clumsy teenagers can result not in disaster but in an expertly choreographed fight scene to rival even the finest of slow-motion action movie climaxes.
Science department finds its raison d’etre

by Hannah Block ’15

The Upper School science department has found its “it.”

According to science teacher Julie Rogers, the “it” of the modern language department is oral proficiency, while in English the “it” is writing, editing, and revising. In math, the “it” is habits of mind.

“But what is it that science would want to hang its hat on?” she asked. “We’re thinking problem solving and research skills are exactly that.”

“Last year the science department wrote a document proposing a broad program of research both in and out of classrooms,” science teacher Jeff Jennings said. “This document talked about a variety of ways research exposure can be further incorporated into our program.”

Two new classes aim to put some of the proposed methods into action. Rogers and Jennings are co-teaching Ecological Research—formerly known as Advanced Ecology—in the first semester. Rogers and fellow science teacher Dr. Stephanie Larson will then lead Biomedical Research in the second semester.

“I chose to take [Ecological Research] to extend the knowledge of the land around me, particularly because I feel so compelled to protect our environment,” Naomi Roswell ’14 said.

“I plan to work in biology, so this class is a perfect starter for me,” Matt Stefanak ’15 said.

“Each of the two classes will teach the content and skills needed for conducting long-term and short-term research,” Rogers said. The courses will go further than the “cook-book style experiments, where the answer is than the “cook-book style experiment,” Roswell said. “We have also spent a bit of time talking about statistical analysis—an important aspect to being an educated participant in the larger community of ecological researchers.”

“Most recently, we’ve been looking at different methods of estimating population sizes,” Roswell said. “We started off by using different methods to estimate the number of lima beans in a bag and then determining which method is best. Now, we are moving from a population of inanimate beans to fish [bluegill minnows] in our own pond.”

“We’ve worked around campus for a large portion of the year focusing on microhabitats—small determined spaces—and observing their abiotic factors, such as temperature or light, and biotic factors, such as species living in the microhabitat,” Stefanak said.

“Some things have gone well and others have run into challenges,” Jennings said. “This is the nature of research and it’s actually a valuable lesson about the difficulties of conducting research.”

“I expect we’ll run into serious, unforeseen issues with the bluegill experiment,” Rogers said, “and their end of-the-semester project will require patience, flexibility, and perseverance at a bare minimum.”

Students will design their own experiment to answer a question about the school’s campus. Questions students could research, according to Rogers, include: “What species of lichen do we have on campus, where, and why? How many deer are using the campus and how are they using it? What types of foraging for seeds by birds invite the greatest competition and why?”

In the spring semester, the Biomedical Research course will focus on research techniques more central to biology and health, expanding the focus of the science department.

The Ecological Research course focuses on broad principles of ecology as approached through three angles: lecture, reading and analyzing primary literature about particular ecological questions, and unique research,” Jennings said. “We have also spent a bit of time talking about statistical analysis—an important aspect to being an educated participant in the larger community of ecological researchers.”

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Learning to lobby for a cause

by Leah Fishman ’16

From Sunday, November 3 to Tuesday, November 5, over 400 teens from across the country gathered together in Washington D.C. for a conference organized by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). I applied and was selected to go with 87 other delegates from B’nai B’rith Youth Organization (BBYO), a Jewish youth program.

The first two days consisted of speakers presenting about the American-Israeli relationship. Sessions included Sanctions Against Iran, The Peace Talk, Anti-Israel Lobbying, Hezbollah, and Syria. College students involved in AIPAC led sessions on more practical subjects in the political world: Public Speaking, Elevator Speeches, and Publicizing—Twitter.

As interesting as all of these sessions sound, the two days turned out to be hour after hour of AIPAC-trained adults lecturing 60 students on the wonders of AIPAC. It wasn’t as informative or interesting as I’d expected it to be.

On Monday afternoon, we were split up by district to work on writing proposals and speeches to take to our congressmen. On Tuesday morning, I went with 16 high school students from Beth Tfiloh Dahan Community School to speak to our congressmen, John Sarbanes, about supporting bills that keep the American-Israeli relationship strong. Because Congress wasn’t in session and no congressmen were actually there, we had to settle for meeting with one of his assistants.

Our appointment ran late and we ended up stranded on Capitol Hill. AIPAC managed to accidentally leave 20 people in D.C., so we all crammed ourselves into taxis to go back to the hotel.

Besides the whole being left in D.C. ordeal and the constant lecturing, I did find it to be a useful time to learn about how I can personally make a difference. As a high school student, I can make my voice heard by just writing a letter to my congressperson.

Although I didn’t actually meet with Sarbanes, the fact that 20 high school students came to his office to discuss Israel was notable and helped improve the chances of his continued support of Israel in the future.

Stalking the right book takes skill

Browsing from p. 1

“A lot of people are getting involved in this,” George said. “Upper School teachers are bringing their classes in to browse, and Upper School Principal Kevin Coll came by to browse... it’s huge.”

“It’s really cool,” said Sam Gauck ’21, “because I think that it’s the whole school, and that everybody can just go in there and browse.”

Most importantly, the Browse-O-Rama helps Lower School students take the first step in getting excited to explore new things in the library and learn to take risks with books. “It gives kids a chance to find books they don’t usually read or look for,” said Harry Genth ’21, “and it opens up their horizons to good books.”

“I think it’s pretty overwhelming sometimes to walk into a library with 20,000 books when you’re just starting to read and don’t know where to go,” said M. Stefanak ’15 records tree species distribution on the south side campus.

“M. Stefanak ’15 records tree species distribution on the south side campus.”

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The stance on pants: Are Leggings Legit?

by Samantha Max '14

Disclaimer: Samantha Max was wearing leggings when she wrote this article.

Trends come and go, but one thing seems to stay the same; disagreement about what is fashionable and what is not. One type of garment in particular, leggings, has been the source of much controversy at school lately.

Leggings made their first appearance in fourteenth century in Scotland, where men wore "trews," tight cloth pants, during the winter when it became too cold to wear kilts. Native Americans, hunters, fur trappers, and mountain climbers wore leather stockings for extra warmth. In the Wild Wild West, cowboys wore buckskin leggings while riding to protect their legs from chafing and from snake and bug bites.

Women and girls wore linen leggings under their dresses in the mid-nineteenth century to serve as a barrier from the itchy crinoline material used to give their dresses volume. In 1959, DuPont, an American chemical company, invented Lycra and forever revolutionized the fashion industry. Women began wearing legging-like pants in the 1960s that were similar to the Capri pants donned by fashion icons such as Audrey Hepburn, but even tighter.

With the aerobics fad of the 1980s came a surge of leggings to the fashion scene. Singers such as Cindy Lauper and Madonna wore them in music videos paired with long sweaters and shirts, leg warmers, sweatbands, and canvas sneakers. Actresses wore them in popular movies such as Flashdance. In the 1990s, girls began wearing them with short skirts and dresses. And in 2006, after a short respite, leggings made their comeback on the runways of Fashion Week, and have since earned a spot in the wardrobes of women of all ages.

However, these tight, stretchy garments are not welcome by everyone. In recent years, leggings have sparked debates nationwide. Some people love leggings and wear them regularly, while others feel that they are a lame excuse for pants.

According to Upper School Science teacher Elliot Huntsman, leggings are not pants, at least not in the traditional sense, because "pants cover up key parts of your body, mostly for warmth, but also for whatever standards our society sets of propriety. Leggings often violate those standards of propriety." Huntsman feels that leggings, if worn with a top that does not cover at least "three inches past the crotch," are not appropriate, because they "can really convey too much information."

Upper school music teacher Stephanie Larson said "the contour definition that results from wearing leggings is enough to make me slightly uncomfortable." Leggings, typically made of a cotton, spandex, and Lycra blend, are tighter and thinner than most pants. If worn with a short shirt, leggings can mold to the body in ways that other pants cannot. "It leaves little to the imagination," Larson said.

Leggings are much more expensive than jeans or corduroys, which makes them accessible and cost-effective, but can also compromise their quality. In certain lighting, cotton leggings that seem to be opaque can suddenly become completely see-through. Thin leggings can reveal panty lines, and even the color or pattern of underwear that a person is wearing.

According to the school website, there is no dress code in place. "Students wear clothes that are comfortable and appropriately respectful of a learning environment." While, for some, leggings are a perfect representation of this statement, for others, leggings can be a distraction, or even a source of discomfort.

"At the end of the day, I don't want to see the outline of your crotch or your butt," Larson said. "I would never wear them, because I know you would look at my butt."

For those who do wear leggings, many people have different opinions about how they should be worn so as not to be inappropriate.

"Cover your butt," Upper School Music Chair Adele Dinerstein said.

"You should wear a long enough shirt," Elana Liebow-Freiser '14 said. "It doesn't necessarily have to cover your entire butt, but it should be long enough."

Most students, however, feel that wearing an exceptionally long shirt with leggings is not imperative.

"You could wear a bigger shirt if you wanted to," Elie Cody '15 said. If opaque and styled with a loose, long shirt, leggings can look presentable and appropriate while still being comfortable.

Every girl, at one point or another, has woken up at 7 A.M. on a Monday morning to a 68-degree bedroom, when the idea of crawling out of bed and squeezing on cold, denim skinny jeans seems unbearable. For those morning when you wake up exhausted from only five hours of sleep and wish you could stay in your pajamas all day, the perfect solution is a stretchy cotton-spandex blend that molds to your legs like an extra pair of skin.

"I get that they're comfortable," Larson said. "There are many things that I find very comfortable, and if I were them to school, it would be terrible." Students disagreed, though. "People ask me why I don't wear jeans." Melissa Miller '14 said. "I'm the kind of person that likes to move around a lot, and jeans or other kinds of pants are really restrictive."

"I think people can wear what they want," Beth Weissman '14 said. "No one else should have a say in it."

Leggings are the clothing selection of choice for students and teachers alike, but opinions vary about their "appropriateness," raising hackles on both sides of the argument.

Pop quiz: Are leggings pants?

"Yes, they are." —Ian Simon '15

"No, they're not." —Micah Saltzberg '15

"No. But that doesn't mean that they can't be worn as pants." —Dani Bieler '16
The Dismemberment Plan releases long-awaited album

by Max Morrison ’16

Uncanny Valley. The Dismemberment Plan’s fifth album, released mid-October, follows a 10 year breakup of the band, and a 12 year gap since their last album. Having been critically acclaimed in the indie-rock genre, previous albums have proved to be seminal to the genre’s structure and development. The Dismemberment Plan has been a largely anticipated album for music media and myself.

Originating from the Washington D.C. hardcore scene, the Dismemberment Plan was formed in 1990. Morrison on vocals and guitar, Jason Caddell on guitar, Eric Axelson on bass, and Joe Eisley on drums—was formed January 1, 1993. Since their first experimental, hardcore, and pop-punk record was released, the band began pulling away from dance music and indie-rock, distinguishing themselves throughout the next three albums.

Their breakout album, the critically acclaimed Emergence & I, garnered much attention for their creative pop sound, experimenting with a complex structure of dissonant and strange melodies for the verse, and catchy pop hooks for the chorus, with dancey drum grooves throughout.

Change, the last album, which came out two years before the band’s breakup, is the neighborhood’s natural grounding assurance brings to life the character. Usnavi’s long-time crush is the neighborhood’s natural beauty Vanessa, who works at the hair salon, trying every day to make it out of the barrio. Li-bow-Feeser’s sexy hip swings and hair flips make her hard to resist, which is probably why “the boys around the wayolley at me when I’m walking down the street,” she sings in her solo, “It Won’t Be Long Now.”

Vanessa works for Daniela (Rebecca Shapiro ’14), the corner’s ‘saucy hair-salon owner and conventional, atmospheric, and slower, but still kept the energy of previous works. Dismemberment Plan left on a good note with critical acclaim but not too much of a fan base, that is, until more people discovered the cult-followed band through the Internet. The question is: could The Dismemberment Plan please new fans and come back with all the energy they used to have? The answer is yes and no.

After seeing the Dismemberment Plan on October 20 at the 9:30 Club in Washington D.C., just five days after the album release, I was convinced that the group still had it. But, after listening to their new album, I’m not sure if I’m as much of a fan. I don’t dislike the new album; I think it’s decent. “Decent,” however, is less than expected. So what’s different with their latest album, Uncanny Valley? The album sounds a lot like what you might expect based on the evolution of their previous albums. Uncanny Valley is calmer, and less rockish. Rarely does Morrison climb into the upper register of his vocal range with the urgency heard before, such as on “Time Bomb” and “Following Through” from Change. The album is also more electronic, with strange synth effects, such as opener “No One’s Say- ing Nothing” that has an oscillating synth, and “Go and Get It,” which features a heavy, synth bass sound.

“Living in Song” features the typical Dismemberment Plan structure through a fully composed verse switching to a catchy and lavish chorus. “Mexican Christmas” is the most energetic, and features very impressive drum playing. “Invisible,” however, is classic Dismemberment Plan because of its melody, song structure, and lyrics. The song shares the introspective aspect of Morrison’s previous songwriting: “Now I’m bit ing my nails and I’m calling it dinner.” Unfortunately, the lyrics are where most other songs fall short. “White Collar White Trash” and “Go and Get It” both have unimaginative lyrics: “We go and get it/We go and get it/We go and get it.” Other lyrics are too abstract to be coherent, and don’t seem to mean anything at all.

On the other hand, Morrison’s vocals are a positive. Although the other instruments don’t shine as well as previous albums in terms of technicality, and although Morrison rarely fully utilizes his range, his voice still has an earnest tone that sounds honest and individual to him, with a nice vibrato.

Uncanny Valley is an OK album, but pales in comparison to the rest of The Dismemberment Plan’s discography, because of the nonsensical lyrics and less urgent nature of the songs, it’s harder to connect to.

Yet, the record was never boring, thanks to nice drum grooves, general catchiness of the album, Morrison’s voice, and good production, which kept the tracks from sounding too routinely muddy or loud. Overall, I enjoyed listening to the album, but was rarely blown away. I look forward to the Plan’s next effort. I just hope that it doesn’t take another 12 years to make.

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Sports: more than playing the game

by Sara Lerner '15

Nothing frustrates me more than hearing the words, “Park athletics are terrible.” One of my favorite aspects of Park has been being part of an athletic team. Every day I look forward to practicing and competing with my teammates. I have never been the strongest player on my team, but that hasn’t limited the experiences or knowledge that I’ve gained from being a Park athlete.

The program’s emphasis on skill building, teamwork, and leadership, allows everybody to have the opportunity to be an important part of the team.

Park’s teams are not just about winning, but rather the overall experience. At the same time, students who want to play their sport at a collegiate level are given the preparation necessary to make this happen.

The athletic program encourages and supports athletes with their schoolwork and other extracurricular activities. “The fact that we value the ‘whole child’ [is one of the best parts of the athletic program.] We acknowledge that our student athletes are also passionate about many other things,” said Robin Cardin Lowe, Girls’ Athletic Director. “We support participation in other activities even though it pulls on our program.”

This is such an important quality in an athletic program because it allows me to focus on my academics and extracurricular activities other than sports while still growing as an athlete.

The lessons I have acquired from Park teams are immeasurable. As a member of a Park team, I am able to learn and work together with my teammates to achieve a common goal. You push each other and help each other to become the best player one can be. Teams also cultivate and promote inter-grade bonding, which has visible effects on and off the field. Your team becomes a network of cohesive friends and you have each others’ backs no matter what. Whether the result of your game is a win or a loss, your teammates stick together under the leadership of your captains and coaches who are mentors on and off the field.

Some of the most important things I have learned from this school have been on the field. Park Athletics have offered so many learning opportunities and helped me grow into the person I am. When describing myself, one of the words I would use is “athlete.” This is not because I am necessarily highly skilled in each of the sports I play, but because of the important role that sports play in my life. This school’s athletic program has offered me incredible opportunities and nothing makes me prouder than saying I am a Park athlete. So, please, next time you hear someone say anything negative about Park Athletics, tell them why they are wrong.

Concussions: Where are we headed?

by AJ Kohn '14

Concussions are a problem at every level of athletics. From high school to the pros, concussions are a new, unfortunate trend. About a third of the Varsity Soccer team, and a large portion of other teams, suffered from concussions this year.

According to the NCAA, there are an estimated 1.6 million to 3.8 million sports-related concussions a year, and athletic trainers are being taught to recognize the signs so that the players can get proper treatment. But while these head injuries are being spotted more quickly, they aren’t being stopped.

Concussions have been shown to have a lasting impact on the brain, causing Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative brain disease apparent in individuals who have suffered from multiple brain injuries or concussions.

And this isn’t just a problem at the high school level. For players in the National Football League, life is pretty good, especially if you are a star, or Pro Bowl performer. You are cheered on by tens of thousands of fans every Sunday. You are well known by many people around your town, given the best tables at restaurants, asked for autographs and, best of all, paid a whole lot of money.

But what happens after the football player’s career ends, and the cheers fade? Until recently, it was this part of pro football that no one really followed. With what we now know about concussions and CTE that can occur as a result, these seemingly invincible athletes are in serious danger.

The NFL recently settled a lawsuit brought by a group of retired players who claimed the organization had withheld information about the long-term effects of concussions. They settled for a whopping $765 million, and that was called a win for the NFL, since most thought they would have to pay more.

While more organizations and boards of education recognize that concussions are an issue, and treatments are improving, not enough is being done to prevent these devastating injuries.

How can we prevent concussions from happening in the first place? Sure newer equipment may be of some help in the future, but according to an ABC news report, even the best helmets don’t slow down the contents of the skull when the head is struck, and won’t be able to protect against concussions at a significant level.

The real answer is in addressing the way that sports are played. The days of smashmouth football and colliding headers in soccer are soon going to come to an end. We have to change the way we play the games, or else the development of this disease will continue.