

THE MUCKRAKER

the students' voice since 1997

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PAGE 1



As the year draws to an end and we finish our last exams freedom, sun, and beach might be all we can't stop thinking about. What approaches us next year is not something we want to spend our summer worrying about. However for many students, preparing for the coming year is a crucial step to success. We hope to help you tackle the coming year with a few warnings and pointers from our journalists.

Cheers,

The Editors



Our MSA Experience

All students in Germany know that when it comes to 10th grade, there is a huge exam waiting for them in spring, the MSA (Mittlerer Schulabschluss). The MSA consists of four parts: the group presentation, English, German and Math. The 10th graders this year took their last exams (German and Math) in April and are finally over with the MSA. For those of you who are upcoming 10th graders, and also younger students, here are some of our opinions about this year's MSA and tips on how to succeed.

For the English portion of the exam, John-F.-Kennedy students take a standardized test called the PLAN test towards the beginning of the year, unlike students at other Berlin schools, who take a standard English MSA test as issued by the Berlin government. We take a more difficult test, because being a German-American School, the students at JFKS are better in English than the students in German schools. However, we believe this to be unfair as we are therefore more likely to get a worse grade on the English portion of the MSA. This means that if a prospective employer were to look at the MSA grades of a JFK student and see a lower grade on the English exam, they would not realize that

we had to take a more difficult exam and that is the reason for the lower grade. According to the school administration it is unfair for us to take the standard English MSA exam because we are better at English than other German students. But shouldn't our grades reflect our level of capability?

Regardless of this however, the PLAN test is nothing much to worry about if you are a native English speaker. The test consists of a reading comprehension part, as well as a writing part, which count for the English portion of the MSA. There is also a science portion, which is used for those D3 and D4 students in lieu of their German grade because they won't be taking the German MSA exam.

In our opinion, the group presentation was the most interesting part of the exam. In a group of 2-4 people, we chose our own topic that we are interested in and give a 20 to 40 minute long presentation (depending on how many people are in your group; 10 minutes per group member). We highly recommend that you pick a topic which you are sincerely interested in and want to learn about.

continued on page 2

The poems of the the winners of the Earth Day poetry contest are exclusively published in this issue. Read the inspiring works of the talented students in our school.

on page 4

For all students who have heard numerous things about the AP system and don't know what to believe, an experienced 11th grader reveals what it is really like to be a Diploma student

on page 5

The S.C. has something exciting news for us all once again. Make sure to read their newsletter in this issue of the Muckraker

on page 6

A fascinating MSA presentation reveals the mystery about scizophrenia

on page 2

JFKS LIFE

continued from page 1

Also make sure to verify that there is enough information to be found about your topic prior to your decision. Our group topic was about the evolution of different ethnicities and how humans have evolved to look so different. It was a fascinating topic. For example we learned about why East Asians have thick, black hair, why Blacks generally have longer limbs, and why Caucasians have various hair colors. Although our group started working rather very late, we worked diligently and managed to get a good grade on our presentation. This doesn't mean it was easy. We still recommend you start working on it at least a month in advance, preferably far earlier, because procrastinating on this huge presentation was very stressful. When it comes to the grade, in our opinion, it largely depends on which teachers you get. There are three teachers for each presentation and at the end they will ask you questions relevant to the subject (or sometimes not so relevant...). If you get unlucky, some teachers can ask rather difficult questions and thus bring down your grade, or simply be stricter at grading the presentations.

The 10th graders took their last part of the MSA exams, German and Math, in April. The general consensus this year is that both of the tests were actually pretty easy, easier even than the practice exams they had been studying with.

The Truth about Schizophrenia

As confusing as being a teenager can be, what you see, hear and otherwise experience has an unwavering certainty to it. Yet what if that gets undermined and confusing? The world of a schizophrenic differentiates so much from ours, it is nearly impossible to even imagine what it would feel like to suddenly hear a voices in your head, whose presence is unknown to others and doesn't make any sense or abruptly have a visual conception, bordering the line between reality and delusions.

Schizophrenia is a severe and highly occurring mental disorder which affects 1% of the world's population, and still remains somewhat of a mystery today. It is a disorder that involves abnormalities in the brain which will cause a patient to have a hard time connecting thoughts, emotions and observations. A person will experience an internal chaos going on inside of their heads showing signs of peculiar social behaviors.

The German test consisted of one article about Bollywood in Germany, one excerpt from a book about a man who likes old movies, a graphical representation of data relating airports in London, and a writing part about Fast foods versus homemade foods. Everybody thought it was fairly easy, even those who have partner tongue German.

The math exam was surprisingly also very easy. It was mostly just basic math, with a formula sheet provided. As far as we can remember, there was a problem on geometry, measuring the surface area of a roof, a graph on exponential growth, basic algebra etc. We don't know if the test next year will also be this easy, but as long as you understand the things you learn in your math class and prepare well for the test, it won't be a big problem.

By and large we found the MSA to be not that big of deal; less of a difficulty than it was hyped-up to be by our teachers, but more so than what we were told by the 11th and 12th graders. Overall, as long as you prepare ahead of time and do not procrastinate (well, not too much), you'll be fine.

Chaeky Song and George Fryermuth

Possible symptoms of a schizophrenic include hallucinations and delusions like hearing voices or seeing people who aren't there, having a disorganized daily routine, and paranoia.

For our MSA presentation we prepared a survey asking people at our school (ages 12 through 18) if they knew what schizophrenia was. Over 90% said they had heard of it and 90% of those thought people with schizophrenia could live normal lives depending on the severity and with enough support. What's important to understand is that it IS in fact possible to live a relatively normal and healthy life even if you are suffering from such a horrible disorder.

During our research, we went to a "self-help group" or "group-therapy" where patients shared their experiences about schizophrenia.

continued on page 3

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How to join the Muckraker Staff

1. Come to our weekly meetings in the 20-minute-break on Tuesdays in B214
2. Send in your articles to themuckraker@gmail.com
3. Drop a note in our mailbox or approach us randomly in the hallways

JFKS LIFE

continued from page 2

It was great to see how almost all of them had learned to deal with it and had accepted the fact that they were suffering from such a disorder. One of these patients explained how she had developed voices in her head after misusing various drugs. A few bad choices were enough for her to actually hear real voices of people who weren't there.

As overlapping schizophrenia is to many other mental disorders, as unclear or scary our findings of it might seem, society has progressively been adapting to the idea of it and evoking an ever growing interest. Breaking headlines and scoring movie titles, Schizophrenia has turned into a relevant and significant topic today.

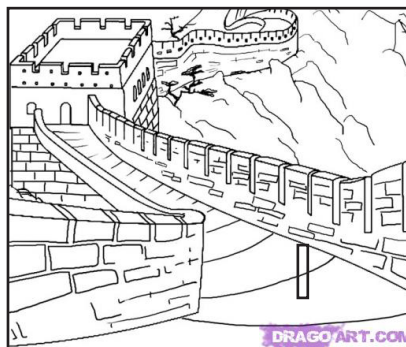
Clara Frick and Matilde Borio

A Trip to China

A few months ago, three High School Orchestra members accompanied merely by two violas, a violin, a handful of suitcases, and a very excited teacher, embarked on a journey halfway across the world, and returned one week later with all that plus a treasure of memories. Clara Hartling, Marcel Ünal, and myself had been accepted to play in 2013's AMIS (Association for Music in International Schools) High School Honor Orchestra in Shanghai, China. The trip was, put quite frankly, incredible. After missing our connecting flight in London, and taking a day longer to reach Shanghai, we finally arrived in the bustling, magnificent city. For me especially, it was incredibly exciting, since I had never been in Asia before. Shanghai is frequently dubbed the world's "hottest", "fastest", and "most-happening" city, and for me, it definitely remained true to its title. Our AMIS orchestra festival was scheduled for Thursday through Saturday, however we had luckily planned and early arrival, in order to experience the city as real tourists for a couple of days. Mrs. Loewen had arranged that we spend these sightseeing days with two other groups from the festival, which proved to be a wonderful opportunity for us to make new amazing friends with several students from the International School of Brussels and American International School of Vienna. We toured the city and ate a lot of delicious, exotic food. Travelling on the world's fastest train, the Maglev, was definitely a highlight –it reached a speed of 300km per hour! We also went on a night cruise along the Huangpu River to see those iconic, beautiful, colorful lights of central Shanghai, and –not meaning to sound superficial– shopping was also definitely a great experience. In Shanghai or China in general, where fake Louis Vuitton purses and Chanel boots are available for an equivalent of 5 Euros, it is considered strange to buy something at the given price. Bargaining is key. For anyone who knows me, they might be able to recognize the difficulty I had with this... I felt so guilty at first. Nevertheless, I soon became accustomed to this Chinese normality.

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After these few days, our group of JFKS, ISB, and AISV students was driven across the city to our second hotel, which was not in the center of the city's touristy, financial district, but closer to the workers' district, in which we saw many exotic practices, such as drying dead ducks on washing lines. The hotel hosted all members of 2013's High School Honor Orchestra, and therefore served as a great opportunity for us to meet people from international schools all across Europe and Asia and a few from Africa. The rehearsals were amazing experiences, despite the tiring amount of hours spent playing the instruments. The guest conductor was John Bergin from Northern Ireland and we played Mozart's Divertimento, Dvorak's Serenade for Strings, and Albinoni's Adagio in g-minor (even managing to throw a Harlem Shake in there). After the first long day of rehearsals, we went to see a Chinese acrobat show. I was extremely excited until our festival organizer told us, "By the way, someone might die." Yes, it had actually happened a few months before we went; An acrobat died doing one of their dangerous stunts. The Chinese did not cancel or change the show, they carried on performing the same show as though nothing had happened. So, naturally, I was pretty terrified. However, despite my initial fear, the show turned out to be one of the most impressive, incredible things I had ever witnessed (and nobody died this time, in case you were wondering). The orchestra's concert was a huge success, and we were all terribly sad to say goodbye to our new friends after such an amazing week. I would strongly recommend visiting this vibrant city, and also the AMIS festivals, whether they be for orchestra, band, or choir. They are great opportunities to make lifelong friends who share your passion. This year's AMIS High School Honor Orchestra festival in Shanghai, China was an experience never to be forgotten.



JFKS LIFE

Earth Day Poetry Contest

To add to the smoothie sale (donations are going to WWF) and the green frog pictures the art department kindly made for us, JFKS GOES GREEN organized a poetry contest for Earth Day. We received some wonderful results and have decided that there will be two winners this year, Richard Bryant from 10e and Christian Weigelt, 11a. Thank you to all other wonderful contributions we've received!

The winners should please come to the Green Room on the 31st of May, 20 min break, to pick up their green bags!

The Good old Days

This is our Planet,
It can't help itself,
We ruined it too much,
With all our wealth.

Years ago we should have stopped,
We could have changed our fate,
But now look around you,
It's getting too late.

Do you remember those days,
When the grass was green,
The seas were blue,
And the sky was clean?

Remember when the seas were clams
The winds were soft,
The weather just right,
And the sun was bright?

Now the worlds in chaos,
Was our destiny card already dealt,
We do not know,
But the least we can do is try to help.

Richard Bryant 10e

Nature's Rouse

It is like a blank paper,
a few birds, endlessly circling
through an oblivion of blue.
A constant wind murmurs monotony,
the howling cry, for color it prays.

Though, when all at once, the earth
it rises, some hues of green change,
and fight the endless greys!
At the shore of brink failure, the
earth shakes, and Color was born!

Fierce, red streams of liquid, burn
down all the constancy, all
the lost words, and create, true blue.
And in the vain, the green grew;
thereby, the art was, fulfilled.

Christian Weigelt 11a



picture courtesy of: google.images.de

Comments, Replies?
send your opinions and articles to:

themuckraker@gmail.com

JFKS LIFE

The AP System and You

It's the last quarter of school and, as Abitur students write their Prüfungen and AP students fill in bubbles and packets, our student body begins to relax one bit at a time. Our schedules reflect an attitude that is so familiar during the last few weeks of the JFKS school year: Three- to five-day week-ends, canceled classes, and warm weather create a wonderfully lackadaisical finish to the year. This isn't purely a time of blissful relaxation and lapse into summer ignorance, however. It's also the time where many students start thinking about next year's classes. Whether you are a 7th grader choosing electives, or a 10th or 11th grader choosing your Leistungskurse or Advanced Placement (AP) classes, next year should be on your mind. Drawing on my now-completed 11th year, I hope this article can help prepare other students for their own AP challenges.

At the beginning of 11th grade, "Abitur" students will often see a typical diploma schedule (full of holes and long breaks) and come to the conclusion that "the US high school diploma is easier than the Abitur." Indeed, Abitur students who pass an 11th grade US History class also receive a high school diploma; so surely the Abitur is 'superior' to the High School Diploma? Well, sometimes. In both systems, what you get out of your diploma depends on the work you put into it.

In the Abitur system, you will take two – and only two – Leistungskurse along with a number of Grundkurse, and your grades are used to compare one Abitur to another. Meanwhile, under the diploma system, advanced placement classes and the accompanying workloads are completely determined by the individual student. In this way, the students can use the system in a way that suits their own strengths and weaknesses. You can take as many or as few AP courses as you want, and in whichever subjects.

A rising 11th grade student, for example, who has been struggling to keep up with the slew of JFK classes, can take only one or two AP classes of interest. If you can focus on those, take the year slow, and do your best to succeed in those selected classes, you will have done well. Naturally, most students choose a reasonable number of interesting AP classes, (the average at JFK is three) and do a reasonable amount of work throughout the year. A more ambitious student, however – one who's not afraid of stress and consistent late nights of homework – can load up on APs and try and cling to his or her sanity once the onslaught of end-of-the-year AP tests commences. Regardless of who you are, every AP class will require your genuine dedication. If a student knows he/she has a lack of motivation and only chooses a small number of 'B-side' AP classes, (4 hours per week, as opposed to 6 hours per week) that student can still run into serious problems once

the year gets going. If you don't take your AP classes seriously, your grade will show it. It's a common mistake to think "I only have two AP classes... I don't need to work that much." Wrong! You should still be prepared to do college-level work in both of them. Just because you might not be loading up on APs does not mean you don't need to work hard in those classes. Every year, certain B-side AP classes fill up with people who find the subject interesting, as well as those who chose the class as the "lesser of all evils." But, honestly, a class stuffed with students who refuse to do the required work ruins the experience for everyone, and usually ends with pathetic attempts at the AP final test for those who never asserted themselves. In consequence you should know that every AP class you've signed up for requires dedication and hard work. Take every AP class seriously. Don't label one as 'easier' than another. Respect it and act like you belong there! You don't need to be a genius in the subject. You don't even need great grades. What you do need is to participate; put in the required effort, and do your best. Otherwise get out.

This may sound harsh, but this is exactly the stance taken by the administration for the coming year: Remember those 'individual evaluation - recommendation forms?' Admittedly, I too mistrusted these ranking evaluations until I listened to a rant from a friend about his AP class being ruined by large numbers of people, who really shouldn't have been in that class. It wasn't that they were not capable of success. They just didn't try. Slackers often get sympathy from fellow students – however not in AP classes. In an Advanced Placement course, the standards are different; individual success on the college level. What does this mean for the prospective AP student? 1) Choose what you are interested in, or what you would like to succeed in; 2) look at your schedule and tell yourself, "I can do this," and 3) ask yourself "Will I really do this?"

Make sure you have not set your bar too high. It is better to work hard and succeed in one or two AP classes than to get overwhelmed and give up trying in three or four. Good luck, juniors and seniors, I hope your year is as enjoyable as it is educational. Stay on top of things, but don't worry, we're all in the same boat – and summer comes faster than you think.

Max Sherwood

JFKS LIFE

“ICH BIN EIN BERLINER” Seminar Day 2013, June 24th

The 50th anniversary of John F. Kennedy’s infamous “Ich bin ein Berliner” speech marks a pivotal point in German-American history, where cultural boundaries were surmounted. This year, the John F. Kennedy High School Student Council will host its annual Seminar Day on June 24th around Kennedy’s well known phrase.

Since the message of Kennedy’s speech reaches far beyond the borders of Berlin and the times of the Cold War, we interpret Kennedy’s words as a celebration to the importance of multiculturalism, freedom, understanding, and the joining of global cultures.

On this account, we are looking for any kind of workshop related to cultural diversity. Whether you are an expert on the European Union or Japanese sushi – you are highly welcome as a speaker. From the sport field to a classroom with beamer or whiteboard we offer any location for any activity.

You will be asked to hold your seminar twice, each lasting 60 minutes (please let us know if you will need both hours for your seminar). During a one hour break in between we will offer a reception to seminar holders and students will meet for a community activity. You may present your topic in English or German.

No matter if you are a student, parent, teacher, or simply like to share your knowledge – we would be very happy to have you as a presenter on Seminar Day.

If interested, please contact us at studentcouncil@jfkcs.org. We have provided sign-up forms in High School secretary Frau Barmeyer’s office or we can send the sheet to you electronically. The deadline for sign-ups is Tuesday, May 28.

With best regards,
The JFKS Student Council, Seminar Day host



Easy Sudoku

						8	2	
	2		3	7			5	
1			8		4		7	3
	7	6	9			2		4
			7		2			
2		8			1	7	3	
4	1		6		5			7
	5			3	8		9	
	8	3						

Hard Sudoku

6					1	3		
	9						1	
	3			2	9		4	
		7		5	6			
							2	
					3	9		
3		1			7	4	8	9
	4			1	8	7		
7	6							

