

The Muckraker

**How the College
Craze**

Makes us Vulnerable



Winning the War

Why we must
join the fight

Activities

All the things
you never
knew you
could do here

YA Novels

The problem
with books for
teenagers

Expectations

How the right
ones can change
your life

The Muckraker

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Speaks

The Muckraker is back. Though a little late for a March issue, the new team of editors was eager to publish the received articles as soon as possible. In this issue, we introduce the works of many new journalists. For now, our goal is to widen our gaze and look at the world (especially around school) through a broader lens than simply the one of the stressed out JFKS-junior, as most journalists in this issue are 11th graders. We therefore encourage every student, regardless of age, grade level, or language preference (yes, German articles are allowed), to break away from taboo topics, address points of criticism, and shout out any nagging problem concerning school through the written word in the form of articles for our independent student newspaper. Discover The Muckraker as an opportunity, a place to let off steam about JFK-related matters; a platform to share your thoughts with an entire student body.

To start off Issue V, we present to you a wide variety of topics, from unknown activities, hidden rooms, and misconceptions about prom at our school, to how the college craze makes us vulnerable and why we should join the war. Enjoy, dear readers!

Yours truly,

The Muckraker Editors

Final Note: A big thank you to the previous managing editors, Leo von Kleist, Kilian Justus, and Chaeky Song, in addition to layout editor Julia Keller.

It's time for fresh blood.

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We are an independent student newspaper. The opinions expressed here in no way reflect those of the John. F. Kennedy School.

All the things you never knew you could do around school...

BESIDES ALL THE regular classes, all kinds of different activities are actually offered by quite a few teachers and students at JFKS!

Unfortunately, many students have no idea some of these even exist. If you're looking to pursue your hobbies or spend time with people (who are) interested in the same things you are, here's your chance.

Girls' Handball: Sport activity for all high school girls interested in working out and playing handball. When? Tues 16:00 Where? Old Gym Contact: Fr. Aurich

MUN (Model United Nations): Student lead debates on international social and political issues (beginners welcome) When? Wed 9th and 10th period Where? W309 Contact: Fr. Hövermann/ Mr. Lang

Diversity Club: Students celebrating their different cultural and ethnic heritage When? Tues 6th Period WHERE? Contact: Mr. Draft

Yoga: Relaxing and strengthening sport for any high-schoolers in need of a break. When? Mon 6th period Where? Gym Contact: Mrs. Cross

Community Service: A chance to find out about a variety of projects and simple assignments you can do to help the people around you. When? Wed 20 min break Where? W30 Contact: Mr. Weiss

Quiz Bowl: For anyone interested in trivia games. When? Mon 10th Period Where? W301 Contact: Mr. Blessman

Rowing: For girls and boys who want a sport out on the water. When? Tues/Thurs 16:30-18:30 Where? Schülerruderverband Wannsee (Bismarckstr. 2, 14109 Berlin) Contact: Hr. Schulz (especially if you're a beginner)

Lacrosse: For girls under age 16 ready to train and play the game with the long stick. When? Tues/Thurs 16:00-17:30 Where? Sport Field

Contact: Mr. Baildon or Melanie Porcella (email: mericans@aol.com),fitness)

Green Team: For anyone committed to protecting the environment. When? Fri 20 min break Where? Library (Green room) Contact: Juliana Garaycochea (julianagaraycochea@jfk.me)

Women's Chorus: An all girls, acapella choir for anyone who loves to sing. When? Tues 6th Period Where? G102 Contact: Dr. Curtis

Gay Straight Alliance: For students who want to work on promoting tolerance toward all directions of sexual orientation. When? Wed 20 min break Contact: Mr. Baildon (for more information)

Badminton: For any highschoolers who like this racket sport. When? Mon 16:00-16:45 Where? Old Gym Contact: Fr. Kaiser (email: skaiser@jfkberlin.org)

Boys' Basketball: A chance to shoot baskets and play games with boys your age. When? Wed 16:00-18:00 or Mon 16:00-18:00 (depending on the skill level) Where? Gym Contact: Hr. Hoedt

Math Accelerated for Grades 7-9: Want to go beyond just regular math class and learn fun new skills? When? Thurs 6th Period Where? B220 Contact: Fr. Möller

Math Accelerated for Grades 10-12: If you are really passionate about mathematics, this is the place for you to be. When? Fri 6th Period Where? B220/B115 Contact: Fr. Moeller

If you're not sure if the activity suits you, ask the teacher or student in charge, or just stop by to see what goes on. Is this list missing something you're involved in or has inaccurate information? Just let me know! I hope you enjoy what JFKS has to offer.

- Corrie Mathiak

We're Winning the War

MAYBE SO, MAYBE not. And which of the wars? In a figurative and literal sense, there seem to be so many. The battles for human rights, gender equality, fair global food distribution, peaceful and cooperative internationalism, animal rights, education, and a sustainable life rage on. Some of the fights are slow and challenging, some of them are being won.

The issues that define our generation are weighty and need to be confronted by every human who walks the Earth, because the truth is: humans are the only truly expendable beings here. As you read the words on this page, an area equal to 150 football fields of forest is being cleared, billions of animals are being exploited for human use, and a multitude of gruesome wastes are being dumped into the ocean. All the while, every fifth child goes hungry. And why? For human convenience, profit, and pleasure.

If Homo sapiens sapiens, apparently the most enlightened and significant species on this planet, went extinct, every other organism would benefit. Nature would have ample time to restore what has been lost and rejuvenate what has been weakened. The oceans would become pristine, the air would become clear, and a lot less suffering would be inflicted. Naturally, however, speculating and wishing will not solve our problems.

Thus, we must decide collectively what war we choose to fight. We must ask ourselves what is most important and how we can change it for the better.

We, as students of humanity, are constantly enveloped by the horrors of our world. No wonder it shapes the way we think. The regurgitation of information about this issue and that problem, this dispute and that terrorist, this tragedy and that war can be disheartening

and distressing. But it's not all bad. The media may have a tendency to emphasize unsettling events, especially because these are by no means unimportant and people need to be informed about them. However, advances are being made all around. Whatever issue you decide to stand for, an organization to combat it exists. Choose which war to fight.

We, as citizens of the world, have to empower ourselves to change the course of our own lives, that of our children, and that of our children's children. We have a responsibility for our fellow and future earthlings, our planet's welfare, and most of all, ourselves. Choose an active path; don't be afraid to swim against the current. We, as people with easy access to a vast amount of information, an abundance of products, and countless privileges, can easily forget what goes on in the parts of the world we don't see, don't hear, don't think about. It's time to turn the tide.

Be an activist. Be an educator. Be a revolutionary.

- L. Malin



Young Adult Novels

FOR CHRISTMAS LAST year, my brother gave me a bookstore gift card. Finally finding the time to redeem it, I went downtown last week, looking for something – and left the shop with a DVD.

Though usually part of the group visiting the bookstore to find new reading material, I felt like none of the available young adult novels were anything new this time. None of them caught my attention or attracted my curiosity for longer than a second. It seemed like all storylines resembled each other and from the blurb alone it was clear who would end up with whom. While all fantasy books revolve around mortal girls falling for supernatural, overly beautiful creatures (preferably vampires), science fiction novels tell the story of teen heroes saving a government controlled, apocalyptic world. And dramas? They depict the life of two young people seemingly not fit for each other, yet somehow their relationship works out in the end (until one tragically dies). After putting all novels back on the shelf, I left the young adult section in frustration.

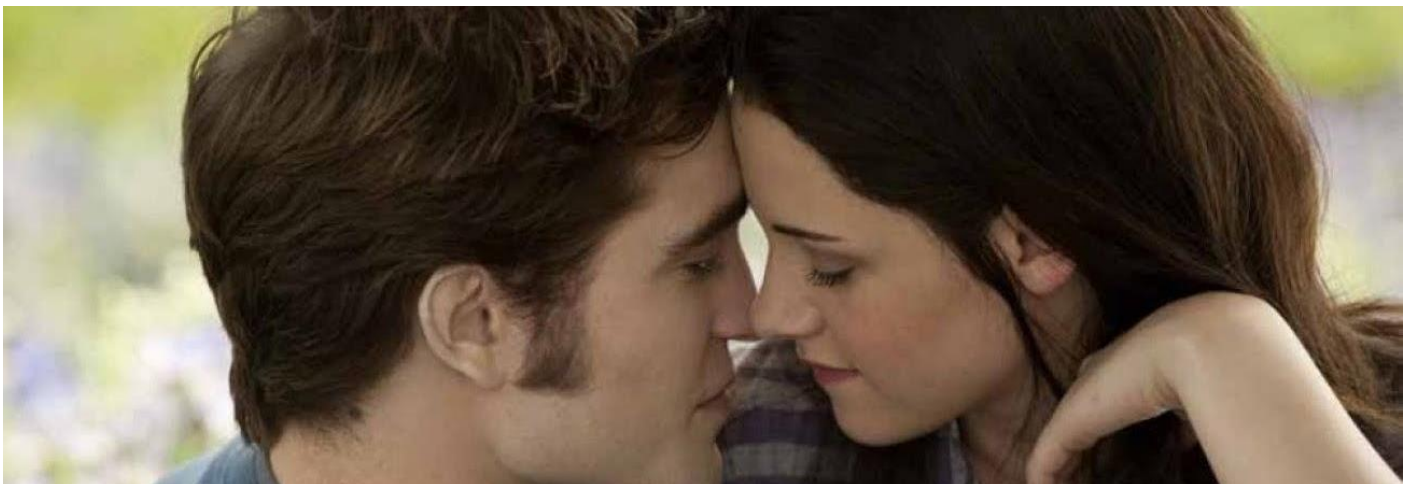
Are authors running out of ideas? Why is every book trying to tell the same story, with the same predictable, happy ending? Why does no one yearn for the unexpected plot twist or some suspense in their reading? While spoilers relating to the next episode of a TV show are widely loathed, no one minds the foreseeable endings of today's teen literature. The overall

lack of complexity and demand for it result in a genre of fiction that leaves the experienced reader with an unfulfilled and frustrated feeling, because the authors fail to engage their audience for a longer period of time. Are young-adult-minds simply not mature enough to deal with more complex content?

Unfortunately, I fear the reason for all the parallels is simply that they give teens what they want to read. YA novels portray a perfect world, or at least one where children allow it to become better. Maybe we need to hear that. Books transport us to a different place, where we find anything is possible. There, hope never ceases and every problem has a solution. The authors of teen literature, usually between 20 and 35 years of age, are familiar with the modern problems of young adults and relate to them easier than older generations, who grew up facing different issues. Consequently, their works appeal more to young audiences and find popularity in modern book stores.

During the troubled teen years of worries about school, family, friends, and love, literature or movies offer an escape into another world. For a while, we get to forget the struggles we deal with every day. Instead of finding characters dealing with the familiar issues, we choose an idealistic reality and, for a moment, give all our attention to the story of Edward and Bella.

▪ Celestine Landt



How the College-Craze Makes us Vulnerable

TO THOSE FAMILIAR with clichés, the measures which Britain adopted to get its hands on China's tea may not be too surprising. To those who aren't, they may be more so. The Commonwealth's craving skyrocketed in the 1830s, when English traders established a sphere of influence in Asia. China's markets became swiftly flooded with Indian opium, and soon, the country's south was ravaged by addiction. Britain's monopoly on the drug made China dependent on trade with the crown, and with the self-explanatory practice of 'gun-boat diplomacy' to its aid, the west began comfortably molding the once so great Empire into their own marionette state.

Partly thanks to Karl Marx, opium continues to bear a rather sinister connotation to this day. The drug itself is extracted from poppy, farmed on a large scale by the Afghani Taliban, and belongs the family of narcotics, known for inducing a sleep-like condition in the consumer. Many reasons exist for abusing opium, but perhaps the most eminent one is the flight from a disagreeable milieu or social life. Marx used the term in a similar way, describing religion as "the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, (...) the soul of soulless conditions (...) the *opium* of the people." in the wake of the atrocious living conditions created by the industrial revolution. A more broad definition of *opium* would then sound somewhat like 'a foxhole in an unpleasant environment'.

Foxholes, however, are a double edged sword, and can prove just as much a trap as a sanctuary. Confronting onerous circumstances requires courage and tenacity, but will inevitably lead to more improvement than resignation. Among the many side effects of opium, therefore, is *vulnerability*. For this reason, a preemptive admonition on the substance in its non-literal sense remains a worthy cause. With the Easter egg-hunt not entirely faded into distant memory, let us search for the contemporary narcotic, and let us begin,

fittingly, in our back yard. The present-day opium is a phenomenon more depressing than dopamine disorders and more widespread than venereal disease after the Columbian Exchange. It is the college craze.

I know what you're thinking: opium, if anything, was the likely cause of this ridiculous proposal. But let's, for a moment, examine the consequences of being admitted to college. Foremost, one expects a sharp rise in public esteem, so the whole enterprise is really quite enjoyable. Wanting to *go* to a good university is very different from wanting to *have gone* to one, and though few admit it, prestige and recognition are a major drive of scholarly ambition. In a sense, college is one more rung on the "look what I've got!" ladder, following new *iPhones* and *Superdry* T-Shirts. The difference, though, is that this next step is almost unanimously supported by the adult world, and thereby anchored more deeply in society. Higher education is an integral part of job-applications, counselors are rated by 'how many kids they get into what school', and in most sitcoms, a permanent seat is now occupied by the archetypal rotund 'soccer-mom' in search of a new destination for her offspring and her open-house day brownies.

Moreover, think what you like of J.M. Barrie (the man who penned *Peter Pan*) but by the time a human individual is roughly seven years old, it should know that 1.) 'Neverland' is not a real place and 2.) one day it, too, will have to grow up. Both of these facts are often understood only superficially, so let's dig a little deeper.

The first point is rather simple: College offers an escape from nagging parents, diversion, new experiences, and future friends. But the grass is always greener on the other side, and just as paradise remains hidden outside of Milton, so the 'perfect college experience' is largely a thing of fiction. Given, you are likelier to encounter any of the above listed than fairies and ticking crocodiles, but, as the proverb goes, *hope for the best, expect the worst*.

Concerning the second point: it's called the 'ivory tower' for a reason. An undergraduate

enjoys a comfortable distance from the sometimes harsh reality of every-day adult life, more so than, say, a young cement-mixer. The former typically need not trouble himself with things such as accommodation or food, receiving financial aid from his parents, scholarships or the state. If plagued by social problems or the like, he can turn to his Profs, counselors and friends. In fact, directly surrounded by other people as he is, a downwards spiral into depression or such is relatively unlikely to go unnoticed. In other words, the pampering continues. But even more comfortable perks come with the all-inclusive college deal. A degree is not rarely a free ticket to high-paying, often highly coveted job positions. In effect, if all goes well, an admission to a recognized school ensures a bright future and eliminates elements of uncertainty. More bluntly put, it enables a smooth transition from stability to more stability.

As in any institution, the adoption of a critical stance towards and healthy amount of distance from college is thus advisable. Simultaneously, it is not the universities that are the great malefactors, but the mentality surrounding them. Socrates taught us that ‘the unconsidered life is not worth living’. Likewise, the unconsidered path of education is not worth pursuing. Reserve a moment, preferably in the bathtub, to question your motives. In doing so, many will arrive at the first of the aforementioned aspects; anticipation. Really, all it reveals is the incapability of the subject to attain (oh, heavens, what a hackneyed concept!) *happiness*. Boxer, Orwell’s diligent stallion, never did reach his long-desired retirement; likewise, someone who is fundamentally dissatisfied with life now won’t be magically cured by higher education. Just as the lack of present fulfillment gives rise to opium addiction, so it does to the college craze.



This, of course, is nothing bad in and of itself. However, *depending* on stability will make us depend in a broader sense, too. The problem here is that the wish for a secure foundation becomes an Achilles Heel, rendering us prone to blackmail, brainwash and bombast. Most totalitarian systems promise their subjects stability. At the same time, many stayed in Germany after 1933, for fear of a loss thereof. Dissent was often refrained from in the GDR for fear of social or commercial relegation. The stability joker can therefore be played the nice and the not-so-nice way. Unless you yourself quit the game, that is.

Something is missing here. It is the courage to break free from the shackles of convention, to remain stoic in relation to institutions, to fight the pathos of the establishment. It is the readiness to be a dissident like Václav Havel, to be jailed like Nelson Mandela, to defy hypocrisy like Patrice Lumumba. College is by all means recommendable, but not essential. To all but opium junkies, lasting satisfaction should be no thing of the future, but of the *now*. These lessons are being conveniently tucked away behind the veil of the college craze, and that is what makes us vulnerable.

▪ Frederick Leo

dials and those threatening lightning bolt signs on them lined up in a row, and a large cabinet at the end. This box holds a two hour battery that will light emergency exits and other small lights in the case of a power outage, so we can find our way out of the school.

One of the most fascinating parts of the basement was the “Kriechkeller” which is just tall enough for you to crouch on your hands and knees, but otherwise very spacious. According to the Hausmeister, there are multiple cellars such as this one all over the school.

Another room contained only one main item, namely a hydraulic pump, which uses pressure and oil to operate the school elevator.



Although it can also be pumped by hand, the machine consumes much less effort and saves time.

Next on this extraordinary basement tour comes the storage room. In this very large room, there are shelves and boxes with computers and a variety of tech supplies. In other words, all of those old computers and monitors we had in the library before are most likely down there. So if you ever see the tech crew carry a significant amount of supplies through the library and down to the basement, you know where they are headed.

Finally, the Hausmeister showed us the ventilation room. It provides fresh air for the library and all the chemistry rooms, in order to prevent you from breathing in all of the gas and chemicals used in those labs. The ventilation room is also used as a storage room with boxes filled with old book covers, books, book racks, white boards, and even a smart board! Who would've known that all of this was in there?

Whether you've been here for one year or since Vorschule, now you know a little more about our high school. Special thanks to the Hausmeister, who showed us around and went above and beyond in answering all our questions. When asked how long it took him to learn everything, he said it took him over a year because of the size of JFKS!

- Elsa Kienberger and Aqueena Crisp



Will You Go To Prom With Me?

Prom is an integral and iconic part of our high school experience. This is the one night to get to know some of your classmates outside of school and have fun together.

According to historians, “proms” existed in colleges as early as the late 1800’s. They were, of course, not the way we have come to think of prom today. They were small tea and dance parties. A little later, proms began to signify a time of firsts, an introduction into society, similar to a debutante ball. Commonly, they were the first adult social events for teenagers, the first time going out after dark and the first real dress-up affair; a milestone in the process of growing up.

However, one can also understand why some may be against prom. The whole occasion is expensive: consider the tickets, which cost around \$70 at JFK, the dress or the suit, and the means of transportation. And to many it is connected to stress. Media has made our expectations unrealistically high. It pressures us to have the perfect night, a date, and a Hollywood-style happy ending.

But that is not what prom is about.

This isn’t a competition. It’s not about finding the perfect outfit or date or ride. Prom has become more liberal in its philosophy. More and more people go “stag” or with a group of friends. This is about dancing and having fun and cherishing the last moments of the school year with your friends and classmates, and for seniors, before they leave high school behind forever. And all this in a special atmosphere

You’ve probably heard that there is still money missing for your prom, juniors. Take advantage of this opportunity to go to a formal, exclusive, and exciting dance before your senior year! You can bring friends from other schools and even make song requests. Prom may well be something you will remember the rest of your lives.

So, 11th graders, will you go to prom with me?
With all of us?

▪ Anonymous



Expectations

Our world is dominated by the media. We're influenced by so many sources in our lives, it's hard to distinguish if we ourselves chose to do something ourselves, or if something or someone else made us think of it.

Imagine it being like in the movie *Inception*. Remember when our main cast, Mr. Leonardo DiCaprio revealed his darkest secret, that he [spoiler alert!] himself implanted a thought into the head of the love of his life, which ultimately led to her death? I'm not saying it was all his fault, but you can't deny he had some kind of responsibility for her suicide. Now, take a step backwards and look at the grand schemes of things, (consider period) yes, like the English teachers always tell you to do. What does it this part of the plot remind you of? The answer is simple: what we experience on a day-to-day basis. The whispers and the looks and the gestures. *Oh my god, does she/he even have a brain? Is that much fat even allowed? Is she on her way to the graveyard, she/he looks like a skeleton.*

Words hurt. They always have, no matter how strong you wish they didn't. But words can be a cure as well, better than the strongest liquor. Nowadays, not only the possibilities to express your feelings through words via WhatsApp, Facebook, E-mail, Comments, etc. have expanded, but also through videos, emoji's, and pictures. We live in a digital world that uses its space for entertainment and positive energy, but sadly also for discouragement and inappropriate criticism. Some people can cope with it, which is amazing, really, but the majority can't. I have never encountered a person who was 100% truly and deeply content with who they are. Ever. Some might seem so more than others, but at some point there's always something people believe they lack, be it high scores, time, or the perfect body. Whatever we do, swiveling around us is a constant pressure to do better, to compare among each other, to be the best. The most prominent and obvious of these supposed flaws is that of body size. Just look around you: this model; that size, this ad; that expectation. In my seventeen years on this earth, I've known at least four people suffering

from eating disorders, not counting the dozens of people wanting to, planning to, or already on a diet. The causes for the extreme cases can vary; pressure in school, at home, from friends, and so on. In many cases, especially that of Anorexia, most feel as if they are in utter lack of control in their lives and complete failures or underachievers, and to compensate for that, say no to others and themselves when it comes to food. They hope that at the end of the day, at least "that"- that number on the scale- can't be "taken away", at least "that" is going right. But is it? Is it the right thing to do to starve yourself? Not to enjoy the little sweets of life? Lose all strength to live and laugh, so that your hipbones, your shoulder bones, or your rib bones show? Spend all your time focusing on counting calories and exercise so that you resemble a model photoshopped to perfection? You may not notice that someone around you suffers from it, but the protruding of bones or the cover of flesh are not necessarily signs for or against anorexia. All this pressure could also result in bingeing and/or purging. Bingeing might first seem to be a complete turn-over from anorexia, since it implies eating food in huge quantities and being unable to stop, but both of these mental diseases at the core stem from dissatisfaction with oneself; you could even say self-hatred. We get bombarded with images of how we should be, and fun fact, only 5% of the World's population naturally has the body so many yearn for. That is, for the lack of a better word, screwed up. The goal of life should not be to appear as society demands one should, but to live your life as you see fit, and know is healthy, happy, and good. It doesn't matter if you're worse than others in some sport, class, or exam, or if you have blue, brown, green, or gray eyes, or if you're tall or small, or fragile or strong, or if you're vegetarian, vegan, pescatarian, or none of those. What matters is what you make yourself to be. Think of yourself once in a while. Try to be the best thing you can be every day. Don't judge yourself by red numbers on a paper, or a scale, or measuring tape. That positive energy yogis and hippies and vegans talk about spreading – it isn't bullshit. Try it out, and you'll see. Start with your words, and go on from there, because words matter. They always have and always will.


▪ Juliana Garaycochea

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The Muckraker

What happens at the ski trip stays at the ski trip...
or not.

How the 8th grade got to see two teachers in a new light and what the students thought of 13 days in Zillertal



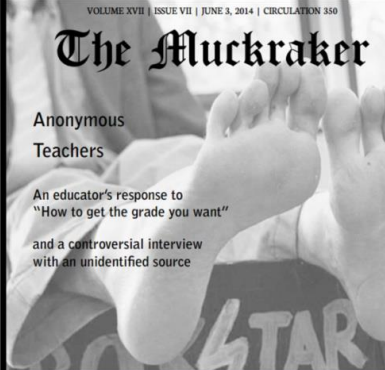
SAT 2016 Everything that's being changed about the second most popular test for college	Sporthall Have we been at risk the whole time? Why it is closed. Again.	Lacrosse The German team's fight for recognition among other countries	BERMUN A look inside one of JFK's most popular after-school activities
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VOLUME XVII | ISSUE VII | JUNE 3, 2014 | CIRCULATION 350

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Anonymous Teachers

An educator's response to "How to get the grade you want" and a controversial interview with an unidentified source




Elite School? How JFKs compares to other schools	European Youth Parliament EYP: The new MUN?	AIDS Charity Event Have fun and save lives!	Evil Sugary Foods An open letter to concerned parents
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The Muckraker

Jonathan Lethem

Bestselling author visits JFKS



Faculty Five American teachers are leaving us; they will be missed	Crime Scene A report on phones and money stolen from girls' locker room	Statistics Exploring the relationship between studying and scores	Philosophy Determinism and the illusion of free will
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The Muckraker

Exclusive Interviews

Adoption with Kristin Vanderkin-Jus	Palestine with Tamara Arii	College Counselor with Hilary Campbell	Library with Lucy Scott-Keller-meier
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It's time for fresh blood.

VOLUME XVIII | ISSUE II | NOVEMBER 2014 | CIRCULATION 350

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prejudice against diplomats • new band director • what's the point of school? • said state of the weight room

High Times in Class




VOLUME XVIII | ISSUE III | DECEMBER 2014 | CIRCULATION 350

The Muckraker

Into the Woods • scientific analysis: the breadbasket • where do thoughts spring from? • JFKS FACS

Illuminati Confirmed




VOLUME XVIII | ISSUE IV | FEBRUARY 2015 | CIRCULATION 350

The Muckraker

English MMA: changes • inside the teacher's lounge • religion: escape for the weak? • bathroom vandalism

JFKS: Popping the Bubble



John A. 2015

Thank you for reading.

-Chaeky, Julia, Leo and Kilian