

# The Gallery

SPRING EDITION 2014

DURHAM SCHOOL OF THE ARTS



# Building their way to the top: MS Science Olympiad's Journey to States

BY MAURA SCROGGS

Every week for months, eager middle school students gathered in room D210 to create complex contraptions and test their science skills. They readily created practice machines, and tested their contraptions to better their skills. Eventually, they headed to regionals with finished products in hand, and large amounts of science information stored in their memory. Their hard work paid off, as the middle school Science Olympiad team took 1<sup>st</sup> place at the competition. This means that 18 top students will compete again soon at the state tournament.

Science Olympiad, a team made up of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, met every week for months to prepare for the Regional Competition. They worked relentlessly to create the best performing contraptions and study science information for upcoming tests.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER ELKIN

**The Middle and High School Science Olympiad teams competed at the state competition in Raleigh on April 26. The middle school team got 11th place overall out of 50 teams, our best showing ever. Plus, DSA students placed in the top 10 in ten different events!**

All of this was made possible by the coaching of seventh grade science teacher, Ms. Tuson, and many parent volunteers. All this hard work was for the common goal of winning at Regionals and possibly at States.

"I was so happy!" exclaimed Graham Buhrman, an eighth grader. Buhrman, worked on bottle rockets and experimental design. To prepare for states he practiced his material for competition, which consisted of practice bottle rockets.

For some students, this was their first year on the team. Ms. Tuson explained that many students had previous experience, even as long as three years, others are rookies to the program. However, that did not alter the team's performance. "They won

by depth," Ms. Tuson explained. "It was their high placement across the board that got them their win."

Ms. Tuson also said it was great to see the student's expressions when the winners were announced. "They didn't get called for third place, or for second, so by that time they were really anticipating to be in first place," she said.

Ms. Tuson wasn't the only one excited by their win. "I was really excited, I just felt so cool," eighth grader, Jackson Astrakis explained.

However, their hard work is not close to being over. Many of the students will be looking over lesser-known subjects they were tested on at the Regional competition.

"Some will even have to rebuild tools and event materials", Ms. Tuson, said. Buhrman and Astrakis plan on preparing for states by rebuilding their bottle rockets.

## DPS leading the race to a Healthier NC

BY JUSTIN CHING

One million North Carolina residents losing ten million pounds. These are the lofty goals of the Healthier NC Foundation, sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

"The Healthier NC program is a way to get more members of the community active," Ms. LeMay, 8th grade science teacher and main coordinator of the Healthier NC campaign at DSA.

As of March 31, the DPS employees' group leads the campaign in the number of group members (193), with DSA's group in fourth (55). DPS as a whole has lost a whopping 118 pounds.

"Everyone's getting really involved, it's a great campaign," Ms. LeMay said.

Posters have been plastered around school, displaying staff engaging in their activities, both funny and sweet.

"The posters really sparked my interest in the campaign, the funny ones like the 'Biker Gang' and the 'Running from Zombies' were great," Cody Li, senior, said.

DSA teachers are biking, lifting, and running to contribute to the goal.

"I do the elliptical, and I have recently started running, which for me is a mix between wheezing and sprinting," Ms. LeMay laughed.

Any sort of physical activity is counted. Ms. Henslee's poster is her wrestling with her grandchildren, and Ms. LeMay's poster is her running from zombies.

"My daughter really nailed me on this

one, she told me, 'Mom! You're running from zombies, you don't have time to look glamorous!'" Ms. LeMay laughed.

Ms. LeMay took on the job of advertising the campaign at school when she first heard about it from Mr. Hawks.

"I have a degree in journalism and ad-

vertising that is just gathering dust, and I had a lot of fun making posters and telling everyone about it," Ms. LeMay said.

The strategy has worked, as made apparent by the number of DPS and DSA staff participating in the campaign. DSA's employees have lost 37 pounds, and have logged a total of 338 hours. The competition is not closed yet either, with sign-ups still going until the end of April for prospective participants.

"If I were a teacher, I'd definitely be participating. It's such a great idea and would give me a reason to work out, it seems like they all are working for a common goal, rather than to just better themselves," Li said.

Many take the competition very seriously, 7th grade Social Studies teacher Mr. Mauerer ran a 25k recently.

"He's making us all look bad," Ms. LeMay joked.

Mr. Mauerer is one of the few staff who bike to school, rain or shine. He is also a member of the "Biker Gang" at DSA.

"I bike everyday, it's my only mode of transportation," Mr. Mauerer said.

Mr. Mauerer is also a vegetarian and recently won a "Veggie Party" from the Healthier NC campaign.

"I entered a raffle for it, I get a ton of veggies delivered straight to my door," Mr. Mauerer said.

Whether working hard in the classroom, or in the gym, DSA's staff has been accomplishing great things in both.

"I'm extremely proud of our teachers, they're really pushing to help reach this goal," Li said.

Although there are not one million DSA or even DPS faculty, and most likely not ten million pounds to lose between them all, their effort has made everyone proud.

"We are killing it," Ms. LeMay said.



PHOTO BY JUSTIN CHING

**Ms. LeMay poses in front of the posters she made for the Healthier NC campaign. Ms. LeMay will be receiving an award this Saturday for her work.**

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CONTRIBUTING CARTOONIST  
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# Meet the Teacher of the year: Sean Grier

BY ALEXANDRIA FERNANDO

The classroom fills with silence as students patiently wait for further instructions. Soft piano music soon begins to fill up the empty space of the classroom. In full volume, the beginning of the class warm up song is resonating.

At the front of the classroom the chorus teacher raised both arms as a signal for students to start singing. Then, as soon as the teacher swiftly guided them into the pickup note, immediately the students began to sing.

Teacher of the Year is an award given to a teacher by the school staff. Teacher of the Year is to open to all staff member, and different teachers are nominated for this award. Out of the ones nominated, staff members choose who is to be teacher of the year. This year, Sean Grier, one of the two chorus teachers, had been chosen as teacher of the year.

This year is Grier's fifth year teaching, and fourth year teaching at DSA. Grier teaches a total of six chorus classes. He teaches one of the two concert chorus classes, women's ensemble, eighth grade men's chorus, seventh grade men's chorus, one of the two sixth grade chorus classes, and chambers ensemble.

Placing his hand on his chin, pondering for a moment, Grier thinks of reasons why he loves teaching. Grier is passionate about being a chorus teacher. He en-

joys teaching in general as well as teaching students from grades six through twelve.

"I like teaching here at DSA. I like teaching grades six through twelve. I enjoy having a chance to work all those different types of students every day," Grier said.

Mr. Grier is an excellent teacher. He works hard in what he does as a teacher. He pushes his students to excel as musicians and to be the best they can be.

"I work really hard to be as inclusive as possible with all of my students. I try to find that balance of pushing them to excel and to be the best singer and musician that they can be. But I also try to make them enjoy being with me, enjoy being in my class, and enjoy singing with each other every day," Grier explained.

Freshman Alexis Betha has grier for concert chorus this year.

"Mr. Grier is really helpful. He's really good at giving you signing advice

Grier was honored with being awarded Teacher of the Year and was proud of this accomplishment.

"It's really nice, and it's just nice when other people that [you] work with acknowledge the things that you are attempting to do with the students that you spend every day with," Grier said.



PHOTO BY SOPHIA ELKIN

Sean Grier plays a lullaby tune for his sixth graders. The students learned how to pitch simple keys, short lullabies, and songs where the students can clap and dance with their hands.



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## Resonating with literature: Junior competes in Poetry Out Loud States Finals

BY KAILEY MORGAN

"How does it feel to be dead? I say. You touch my knees with your blue fingers. And when you open your mouth, a ball of yellow light falls to the floor and burns a hole through it. Don't tell me, I say. I don't want to hear," junior, Ardyn Flynt, recited. The poem, "Conversation" by Ai Ogawa, is another addition to this year's Poetry Out Loud.

Poetry Out Loud (POL) is a competition for students throughout the country to recite poems and win \$20,000. The event has three levels of competition: School, State, and Nationals. DSA has been competing in POL for three years and this year Flynt made it to the State Finals.

This is Flynt's second year competing, as she performed her freshman year and now her junior year. She chose to compete again because of her enthusiasm for performing.

"I loved the experience of reciting poetry for an audience," Flynt said. "I enjoy finding the point that resonates with me and discovering a way for it to connect to an audience and make them feel something."

Not only her passion for performing, but also her love of poetry encouraged Flynt to compete. Although many students avoid poetry, as it can be ambiguous and difficult to understand, Flynt was excited for the challenge.

"[I like that] first when you read it, it's a jumble of words and grammatically incorrect sentences," Flynt said. "But once you read it for a second or third time, you can understand it. It's why poetry should always be said aloud."

Flynt had the opportunity to perform when Mrs. Van Dis, Writing through Literature teacher, decided to start POL at DSA. Her desire to include more poetry in her students' lives motivated Van Dis to enter the competition.

"I chose to do Poetry Out Loud because many students find poetry intimidating," Van Dis said. "Getting to know one poem very well is the best way

to demystify poetry and realize it's just writing about the human experience."

Flynt appreciates the addition to poetry in students' lives instead of the numerous essays and novels presented in English classes.

"I love POL for giving kids a chance to be exposed to a high form of literature," Flynt said. "At schools, we have to follow strict curriculum that doesn't have as much poetry."

Whether or not students win the competition, many learn from the process. POL helps students become comfortable speaking in front of an audience. It helps build their confidence and shatters comfort zones and performance insecurities.

"Every year, I witness students grow tremendously as public speakers," Van Dis said. "Also, I witness students becoming more comfortable reading and writing poems."

Although students mature from the event, it also has its weaknesses. Students must select poetry from the POL database and this limits their options and creativity.

"I wish the database was more diverse --- it should include more female and minority poets. That said, most students are able to find at least one poem they really connect with," Van Dis said.

The lack of diversity is not the only critique. Some students also wish for more freedom in performance style.

"I dislike that there's not as much Slam Poetry. It's a community on the rise and I think [adding slam poetry] would entice a lot more people to join," Flynt said.

Poetry Out Loud allows students to not only read poetry, but also learn to connect with it. As Van Dis said, "The most important aspect of preparation is helping students find a poem that speaks to them. If there's a personal connection to the poem, the recitation is much more powerful."

# AP Psychology: Open atmosphere fosters understanding over memorization

BY KAILEY MORGAN

Two assassins enter the classroom, surrounded by zombies. The paranoia seeps through the room as other assassins lurk outside the door, preparing to kill their next victim. Then, a sharp ringing slices through the air, and the killers and walking dead become students again, visibly relaxing.

AP Psychology is one of the most popular AP classes. Many students know the class for its popular game, Deception, where students and faculty 'kill' one another by placing stickers on opponents. This causes students to experience the side effects of extreme stress. Like the game, the class itself has students not only memorize different disorders, but also understand what it means to have one.

AP Psych does not consist of students simply answering questions from a textbook. Instead, the class encourages deep discussions and open debates. The teacher, Mr. Magrinat, is not lecturing his students, but asking for their opinions, and the lack of hand raising adds to the conversational feel.

Sparking debates are questions like, "is it nature or nurture that tells you what temperature you like?" Or "is two weeks enough time to classify someone



PHOTO BY CICI CHENG

**Senior Matt Jacobs participates in an AP Psychology game. With hands on activities, AP Psych encourages understanding over memorization.**

as depressed?" Students feel free to answer using personal experiences, and the honesty and intimate answers allow the students to connect with one another.

Reinforcing the calm mood is the large classroom, which has couches in the corner and sunlight pouring through the windows.

"The atmosphere is really relaxed and interesting. You are really engaged in the class," senior Maya Sugg said.

This atmosphere allows students to feel more at ease when discussing serious mental diseases, and few are afraid to share. Students discuss their personal and their families' battles with depression. Their personal stories make AP Psych relatable.

Although some are easier to identify with, other rare disorders

seem impossible to believe one may have. Fortunately, Magrinat makes the topics relatable to students by providing scenarios where one may experience the disorder. With his storytelling method, one almost feels as if he is inside the mentally ill person's mind.

"I feel like he has an excellent teaching style. It's a good balance between definitions and examples," senior Molly Campbell said.

The class also incorporates videos of people with mental illnesses students learn about. Watching videos, like one man's addiction to sniffing gum he finds in the streets, allow students to become more aware of the reality of the illness. By combining what is learned in class to real life, Psych is separated from other academic classes.

The open atmosphere of the class and free discussion make AP Psychology not grounded in memorization of terms, but of understanding them.



PHOTO BY CICI CHENG

**AP Psych does not consist of students simply answering questions from a textbook. Instead, the class encourages deep discussions, debates, and games.**

## Tuning into tranquility

BY ISAAC DEUTSCH HUSTON

As you walk into the classroom the first thing you notice are the pianos. All uniform, black with white plastic keys, benches made from dark wood and black leather, each with a student on top of them. Headphones are plugged in so all the students can practice. The quiet



PHOTO BY CICI CHENG

**Mr. Davis, Piano-Multi teacher, instructs the students as they continue learning to read and play music.**

think-think-think of the keys settles in. Although each is from a different song, together they form a rhythm of their own.

This is the Piano-Multi class also known as Piano 1. The first class that many students will take at DSA, it is taught by both Arthur Davis and Boyd Gibson (separately).

"Students at DSA cannot take piano until 7th grade. It helps to get a recommendation from whoever they took sixth [grade] music with," Arthur Davis said. Because of this, most students taking the class are in 7th or 8th grade.

Students in this class have taken a test that makes sure that they can both read music and play truly basic piano. The most important requirement is "A willingness to learn," as Mr. Davis said.

The pianos in this room are truly works of art. They can play at full volume for the entire room, or just for a single person, wearing headphones, to hear. Once they begin to work, they are, for the most part, left alone.

On each of these pianos is a computer, which contains all of their sheet music, and will take note of the keys they play, helping them to realize when they have made a mistake.

Another interesting thing about this class is its testing system.

"We have tests every other Friday," Mr. Davis said. "Sometimes they play for me, sometimes I play for them." The far more serious test are the recitals, which each student must do at least once every year.

This class has a free-flowing and light-hearted spirit to it. Both the students and Mr. Davis joke around, although the music is never left untouched. A student is allowed to learn any music that they wish, be it from the book or elsewhere.

Students are allowed to write on their sheet music, as long as it helps them learn. "If they're learning," is Mr. Davis' main method of teaching, although he expects his students to have learned their books of sheet music by the end of the year.

The main goal of this class is to bestow upon the students a little bit of music and joy.

"I love to teach piano," Mr. Davis said. "It has brought me a lot of happiness and joy, and I would like to share that."



PHOTO BY CICI CHENG

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## Stepping Outside the (Black)Box

BY JUSTIN CHING

Inside the very depths of the Carr Building, besides the noise of the woodshop class and the thumps of the air conditioners, future DSA actors are born.

Mr. Martin teaches the Intro to Theatre II Class for seventh graders as well as several other Theatre Pathway classes.

"I want [students] to develop some enthusiasm for theatre, I want them to

the play, it gets really enjoyable. It lets you be a whole other person," David Hall, who played Jim in the play, said.

The class not only prepares students for future endeavors in theatre, but also just helps them get out of their shells.

"Just be yourself and don't try to be someone else, that may sound kind of weird in a theatre class, but you have to still be you in the role that you're playing," Darsjot Singh said.

Mr. Martin commands the room during the reading, reading the narrator's lines and helping out the students when they stumble on words.

"There's a good sense of togetherness in the class," Hall said.

The whole class is full of eagerness and initiative, when casting comes around



PHOTO BY CICI CHENG

**Mr. Martin watches over his Intro to Theatre class. These students will be the future actors of DSA.**

see it as an exciting opportunity," Mr. Martin said.

The Intro to Theatre II Class is designed to get middle schoolers involved in theatre. The classroom is a cool, well-lit area, with piles of previous play programs piled on the bulletin board, and the word "flibbertgibbet" scrawled on the whiteboard. Already it is apparent this is no ordinary class.

"It's exciting, you really never know what's going to happen, it's a funny, suspenseful class," Brea Kendall said.

The class's main curriculum is reading plays, discussing them, and then acting them out. The most recent play was The Rainmaker. Although these students are preparing to be in high school, it's key to remember they are still adolescents. When a scene about making out came around, the whole class burst into laughter.

"Once you get into the good parts of

for the reading, hands shoot up faster than one could mouth the word "go".

"I have great classes this year. It's been one of the best groups of students that I've had," Martin said.



PHOTO BY CICI CHENG

**The class watches their fellow students perform, as they are both the audience and the actors.**

Middle school can be one of the most troublesome time for kids, a hormone-riddled gossip covered struggle of three years, but for these fifty minutes every day, these students are able to step out.

## Leap onto the dance floor in Intro to Dance

BY ALEXANDRIA FERNANDO

The upbeat sound of a rhythmic drum fills the entire dance studio. The class agenda is written on a white board in black expo marker across from the door. It reads 'warm ups (sitting & standing),



PHOTO BY CICI CHENG

**In Intro to Dance, students learn first position, parallel position, and traveling.**

technique review, action dances (partners, then groups.)' Students are everywhere. Seven students are scattered at the back of the dance studio, and the rest rush to dress into their dance clothes. But as soon as the final bell rings, all students line up in an orderly fashion along the back wall and wait patiently for the teacher's instructions.

Sixth graders choose their music elective, but not their additional electives. They must participate in the 'wheel'. Introduction to dance is part of the 'wheel'. In the 'wheel', all sixth graders are required to take introduction to dance, visual arts, health and physical education, and theater for each quarter as well a year-long music class.

Introduction to dance gives students a basic understanding of modern dance, and helps them decide if they would like to continue dance as a class.

Beginning procedures in are simple.

When students first enter the class, they must look at the white board for the class agenda. After students finish reading the class agenda, they dress out.

"When they first come in, the first procedure is to read the agenda for the day and find out what's going on, and then, to dress out... I have the intro students sit along the back wall before we do anything else just to keep them organized and to calm down a little bit," dance teacher Sarah Bean explained.

In introduction to dance, basic dance skills are taught. First position and parallel position are taught. Traveling, staying in one position, the difference between straight leg and Pilates, floor rolls and chasse are taught as well.

"Technical things we teach include different leg and foot positions... What we're working on right now is the concept of actions, so taking different actions and executing them in interesting and full ways," Bean said.

Introduction to dance is a class students take where they learn more about modern dance. It is a class that can help students decide if they would like to continue dance or not.

"Our goal is to give them a really good sense of what modern dance is really all about at DSA. We want them to have a taste of what technique is like, to get a taste of making their own dances, to get a little bit of experience



PHOTO BY CICI CHENG

**Sixth graders learn new moves in Intro to Dance. This class will help them decide whether or not to pursue dance as a pathway.**

with improvising and performing, and then to decide whether or not it's something they're interested in doing more of," Bean said.

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# Living with anxiety

BY CLARE SZIGETHY

I can't breathe. My hands are going numb and my heart is too fast. Why is it so warm in here? I need to stand; I need to move. I can't. People are staring again and now they're talking. What are they saying? They want to know what's wrong. What do I say?

This is my thought process on any given school morning, afternoon at home, or night before bed. Basically, whenever I have a panic attack. Which is often.

Panic disorder is defined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) as reoccurring panic attacks accompanied with a month or more of fear of another panic attack and a change in behavior because of the attacks. According to the National Comorbidity Survey Replication Adolescent Supplement, 2.3% of teenagers reported having the disorder at some point.

While it is still unclear if this is the specific anxiety disorder I have, it's close enough to my experience. One of the problems with mental health is how uncertain it can be.

I had my first panic attack roughly three years ago, though at the time I did not understand that it was a panic attack. I instead classified it as hypersensitivity, because that's what it felt like. Any noise, any sudden movement or touch was too much; sometimes even strong smells would overwhelm me. I realized later I was hypersensitive because all these things scared me.

However, "scare" is too simple a word for it.

Panic attacks consist of intense fear along with four or more of these symptoms: shortness of breath, sweating, chest pains, trembling, dizziness, numbness, tingling, nausea, and chills or hot flashes. Limited symptom attacks (LSA) happen when the terror is accompanied by less than four of these symptoms.

I have panic attacks and LSAs, though at school I normally only suffer from

LSAs. Panic attacks aren't specific to panic disorder, and are a common feature of all anxiety disorders as well as some other illnesses such as depression. Panic disorder is simply the reoccurrence and behavioral change.

Behavioral change is a vague term, but it means I avoid the atrium during

triggers. A primary trigger is what sets me off, like a slamming door or school bell. The secondary trigger is subtler; things going on at home or fighting with friends might stress me. Then when that door slams, I react severely because already my anxiety is higher than normal.

I end up curled into balls in the hallway

writing an article. But anxiety is a common problem, especially at DSA. I have several friends who had panic attacks, and I am constantly hearing about more people who struggle with anxiety.

A teacher I know who has panic attacks said it is like a heart attack. I've never had a heart attack, so I hesitate to agree, but sometimes I use the comparison anyway to show how serious a panic attack feels. It doesn't matter how many I have, each one feels like it's going to kill me.

Panic attacks are not the same for everyone. For some people they will have one or two attacks in a lifetime and move on. For some it will be several because of a specific person or place. And for others it will be chronic with only vague triggers.

Anxiety disorders, which range from panic disorder to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), are the most common type of mental disorders in the USA. They affect about 40 million people.

It's been about three and years now since my younger sister found me in the middle of a panic attack. And it's been less than a week since my last attack. And yet I can never explain what a panic attack is like.



PHOTO BY CLARE SZIGETHY

On a few extreme occasions I end up wandering around the bookshelves in an attempt to simultaneously avoid people and calm down. This was before I ended up abandoning the library completely and spending my time in quieter places.

the morning and lunch because it is so noisy and crowded that sometimes just walking through can trigger an attack. Or how, I've avoided every pep rally since sophomore year for the same reason.

*"But anxiety is a common problem, especially at DSA. I have several friends who had panic attacks, and I am constantly hearing about more people who struggle with anxiety."*

A couple weeks ago when I was having an attack every other day or so I couldn't even sit in the library in the mornings. Once I tried before I was ready and ended up running out in a panic. A teacher found me curled up in the hallway and invited me into her room for the rest of the morning.

Noise is not the only "trigger" I have: I divide things into secondary and primary

frequently or covering my ears. Through the intervention of my father, my guidance counselor, and a generous teacher I also have an empty classroom I can stay in when it all becomes "too much."

Another strategy I have is if there are too many people talking at once I will try to isolate each conversation. I try and pinpoint where everyone is by the sound of their voice, and it helps remind me things aren't out of control.

I use these techniques because if I missed school every day I had a panic attack or bad anxiety, I would have dropped out of school by now.

Recently, I gave a presentation in my writing class that ended up centering on my anxiety. It was supposed to be about a week in my life, and so I decided to focus on my panic because it affects my life severely.

My teacher said I was brave for sharing, which I think is nothing compared to

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# Exhaling education

BY JACK LEINBACH

\$36,000,000,000. The amount of money spent on marijuana annually in the United States. Timelessly used by adolescents and forever tabooed by law, marijuana is the most popular substance abused by high schoolers. But why?

Teens have and always will experiment with drugs and alcohol but marijuana is particularly popular. Students argue that they use the drug because of their bad grades, while teachers claim that their bad grades are because of the drug.

According to a study done by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 23% of twelfth graders used marijuana monthly in 2012, while 7% used marijuana daily.

"I think some kids smoke weed for fun and because of peer pressure, but most people are going through a tough time and they use it use as a release," Sammy\* said.

Fun and peer pressure are popular reasons for marijuana abuse amongst teens. The controversy, however, lies in the stress release factor. For years the validity of this reason has been debated between students and teachers, and children and parents. Naturally, students blame homework, tests, and school induced stress for why they turn to marijuana Friday night, claiming that it allows them to release that stress. Teachers and parents believe this is simply a poor excuse to have fun with friends.

"I believe students experiment because their peers do it, and of the

drugs available it is perceived as the safest," Ms. X said. "Teens claim that it is a stress relief from school, but it's absolutely a social decision only."

Contrary to what teachers believe, many students claim that school related stress not only pushes them towards marijuana, but to partying as a whole. This includes drinking, smoking, and the use of other drugs.

"Honestly, yeah I would probably drink and smoke even if school didn't stress me out, but it definitely adds to the frequency in which I do it, and I think my peers would agree with me," Kathy said.

Although some students claim to relieve stress through drinking as well as smoking, drinking is viewed as more of an activity to do with the sole intent to have fun.

"I really only drink at parties, but I smoke more often and for a larger variety of reasons. For example, sometimes when I finish homework at night I'll smoke to relax and sort of in celebration for finishing my homework," Jimmy said.

Although some students resort to marijuana to ease the tension after a tough day of work, it is rare that they begin using the drug because of school. Out of those interviewed, all non-users claim that they would only try it out for recreational purposes with their friends.

"I don't smoke but mean if I were in that situation with my friends I probably

wouldn't back out, but I definitely wouldn't start out on my own for any reason," Mary said.

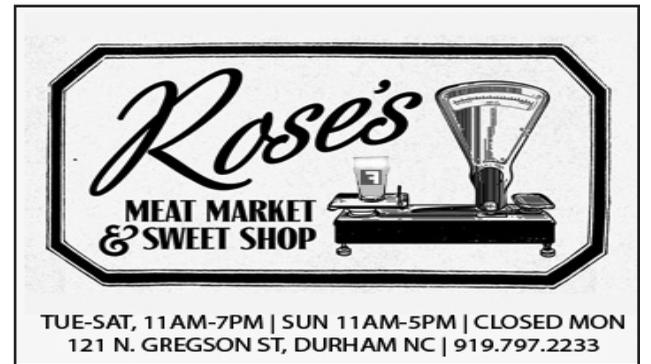
Students that use marijuana by themselves primarily do it for relaxation purposes, or to ease the tension in a strenuous situation. However, there are other factors that contribute as well.

"Yeah there are times [when I smoke alone], but it's got to be a really special reason, like it's report card day and I know I've screwed up so I just want to calm down. Other than that it's recreational and with friends," Mickey said.

Many students are also under the impression that marijuana does not affect their study habits. Although the drug does not exhibit immediate effects, and may not even affect students' grades, brain changes are inevitable to an avid user, especially a teenager.

The teenage years are possibly the most important for the human brain. During this time, the brain is developing in ways that improve long-term memory, critical thinking, and efficient decision-making, according to an article by the National Public Radio. This same article says that the teenage years are the "last golden opportunity to make the brain as healthy and smart as possible."

A recent study done by Duke University showed that adults who used marijuana as a teenager experienced significant change in IQ, some losing up to 8 points from childhood to adulthood. Even



though the effects seem repulsive, many teens continue to look over them.

Something that has become more popular in the last few years is the use of marijuana before school. Students will meet up with friends prior to the school day to indulge themselves.

"I have some friends who smoke before school but I personally think it's kind of stupid to do it. It makes me kind of mad to be honest, they're just wasting time," Benny said.

Teachers are in agreement with Benny in believing that it is a waste of their time as well student's time when kids are high at school. Teachers are also very aware of when students use the drug. Not only can they spot day to day effects, but patterns emerge when it becomes a long term issue.

"On a daily basis I can tell because of the droopy, red eyes as well as their speaking and academic ability," said Ms. X. "Long term I have seen students drop entire letter grades when they show up high a few times a week. It's pretty sad."

\*All names were changed to preserve anonymity

# Sixth graders take arts for a spin

BY IZZY SALAZAR

The end of the nine weeks doesn't mean much to 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders. There are the usual freak-outs over report cards and getting in last minute assignments, but they don't have to worry about finding a new classroom, meeting a new teacher, getting to know a new set of classmates, and memorizing the new route they're going to take to their class at the end of every nine weeks.

It's the sixth graders who have to worry about these things every new quarter. For each of them, sixth or seventh period means the 'wheel' of electives: visual arts, theatre, gym, and dance. Each class lasts nine weeks and in each of them students are given a taste of each of three particular art forms.

The elective wheel was started so that sixth graders could experience as many of the school's arts as possible. This way it would give students more exposure to arts, and make choosing a pathway in high school much easier.

"We changed it so 6<sup>th</sup> graders could try new things and it made our school more

focused on the arts the first year," David Hawks, principal, said.

The wheel has been required for four years. Older students are thankful for the options it exposed them to for later classes.

"The wheel's worthwhile because I had a lot I wanted to do, and if it was semester long classes I wouldn't have known what to do," Christina Boxberger, 7<sup>th</sup> grader, said.

Some students are not as satisfied with the choices they are given in the wheel.

"We can't try all the electives that are in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. I'm probably not going to do anything in [the wheel]," Lindsey Rogers, sixth grader, said.

Some wonder if the wheel is worth it for students who already know what they want to take.

"Kids who choose to attend D.S.A. typically already have their mind made up as to which art they would like to pursue or where their talents lie. However, there are a few who need this wheel experience to figure it out," Douglas Graves, theatre

teacher, said.

Teachers who teach a part of the wheel appreciate that students are forced to take an elective they may not have chosen on their own, giving them an experience they would not have had otherwise.

"I realize that not all of these students would have chosen to take a theatre class- so, my main goal is to show them that theatre is a lot of fun and is a discipline, which takes a lot of hard work to be any good at," Mr. Graves said.

But some people just like it for the



PHOTO BY JUSTIN CHING

**Sixth graders work diligently during Ms. Maynard's 7th period arts class. Visual arts is a part of the arts cycle they have to go through every quarter, including Theatre, Gym, and Dance.**

variety, enjoying being able to take different classes.

"It's fun because you can test everything and find out what you're good at," Rogers said.

**ACROSS**

- 1. Red Army homeland
- 5. Tiger Woods' real name
- 8. Zuckerberg or McGuire
- 11. Watson or Stone
- 12. Andy Jackson's nickname Old \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. 1st National Park
- 16. Call of \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. Autotroph dust
- 20. The Roaring \_\_\_\_\_
- 21. Where mean wizards go
- 23. Johnson or Carnegie
- 24. Perón's 2nd wife
- 25. Head editor Clare \_\_\_\_\_
- 26. George W's alma mater
- 28. The Triple \_\_\_\_\_

# Jack's Fun Page!



**DOWN**

- 2. Prestigious street wear brand
- 3. Two sport all-star (2 wds)
- 4. Wonka's second victim (2 wds)
- 6. Duke freshman phenom
- 7. Papa or bathrooms
- 9. French Revolution weapon
- 10. Musket blade
- 13. #42 Jackie \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Site of The Masters
- 17. Watch company or artifact
- 18. Perkins or Lamar
- 22. Last name Charles or Allen
- 27. KY Derby site Churchill \_\_\_\_\_

What your favorite color says about you  
BY BRYONA BORDEN

*Peaceful*  
*Content*  
*Tender*  
*Loving*  
*Affectionate*

**DEFENSIVE**  
**POSSESSIVE**  
**STUBBORN**  
**PERSISTENT**  
**INDEPENDENT**

*Desirable*  
*Dominant*  
*Excited*  
*Desiring*  
*Enthusiastic*

*Fantastical*  
*Enchanting*  
*Magical*  
*Thoughtful*  
*Inquisitive*

**Strong**  
**Enduring**  
**Firm**  
**Determined**  
**Tenacious**

**MYSTERIOUS**  
**INTRAVERTED**  
**SOLITARY**  
**PATIENT**  
**WITHDRAWN**

