Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

Our staff has given tremendous time and effort to this edition with their articles and artwork. We are lucky to have such a creative and large number of contributors.

This year, we are also extremely fortunate to include artistic contributors. They will submit artwork in every issue. They will be extremely helpful because even though we will continue to include enter art and writings from other students, we no longer solely rely on them.

Though we have always had editorial contributors, we have not had an editorial director to help me edit articles. This new position has been filled by Connor Coughlin who is in eighth grade.

With this said, I believe that everybody will see how hard we have worked to on this issue for our readers. We truly hope that you enjoy reading this issue of Stroke of the Pen!

Yours truly,

Harrison J. Romero

Editor-in-chief of Stroke of the Pen
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Garrett McGuire, Grade 6
Biographical Profile of Hillary Clinton

Finn Chambers, Grade 6

Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton was born to Hugh Ellsworth Rodham and Dorothy Emma Howell Rodham on October 26, 1947 in Chicago, Illinois. The oldest of three children, she was raised in the affluent Chicago suburb of Park Lane. Her father, a business owner, believed that through discipline and education someone could achieve almost any dream. He instilled this belief into his daughter, although sometimes harshly.

Clinton attended Wellesley College from 1965 to 1969. She became president of the student body and was the first student to give the commencement address. Rather than giving her planned speech, she started her address by refuting the remarks by Senator Edward Brookes who was insulting peace protesters. She later attended Yale Law School from 1969 to 1973 where she was a member of the board of editors and graduated with honors.

Having had many Republican influences in her early life, in high school Hillary Clinton actively campaigned for Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. While attending Wellesley, she continued her political activities, working on campaigns for both Republicans and Democrats. During the summers, she held various political positions, including working on a subcommittee for migrant workers and on the election campaign of George McGovern.

After law school, Hillary Clinton went to work for the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) having been inspired to work in public service by a sermon given by Martin Luther King Jr, she attended with her youth minister in 1962. She did research for and helped prepare the Children Out of School in America report. This led to the enactment of the Education for the All Handicapped Children Act, now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

During her time with CDF, Mrs. Clinton worked her way up from staff attorney to board chair.

Hillary met Bill Clinton while attending Yale Law School. After a long courtship, she finally accepted his proposal. After proposing, Bill Clinton revealed that he had bought them a house that Hillary had earlier remarked that she liked. They were married on October 11, 1975 in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Hillary Clinton became the First Lady of Arkansas when Bill Clinton was elected Governor in 1978. During his term as governor, their daughter Chelsea Clinton was born on February 27, 1980. Bill Clinton lost re-election in 1980 but was re-elected and served from 1982-1992. As governor, Bill Clinton appointed Hillary Clinton to be in charge of the Arkansas Education Standards Committee.

Clinton joined the Rose Law Firm in 1976 and in 1980 would become its first named female partner. In 1977, Clinton was appointed to part-time chairman of the
Legal Services Corporation. She cofounded the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. She also served on the boards of The Country’s Best Yogurt (TCBY) and Walmart. She has been named one of the 100 most powerful lawyers by the National Law Journal.

During Bill Clinton’s campaign Hillary Clinton was a valued partner. She continued to support him during his presidency when she was named head of the Task Force on National Health Reform. This task force produced a plan that never came before the House or the Senate.

In 2000 she became a senator for New York. As a senator Clinton helped devote 21 billion dollars to redevelop the World Trade Center and secure aid for the victims and first responders. She sponsored many gender equality bills such as the Paycheck Fairness Act and many bills to help kids have better lives such as the Supporting Mentors, Supporting Our Youth Act.

In 2008 Hillary Clinton became Secretary of State. While Secretary of State she supported initiatives to provide opportunities for children and was a great advocate for women’s rights. She traveled frequently as Secretary of State; in fact, she was one of the most traveled Secretaries of State.

Currently, Clinton is campaigning for the office of President. She is the first female to receive the nomination for President from one of the two major parties. The main challenge she has faced during this campaign has been her use of a private e-mail server to store correspondence as Secretary of State. Some of the goals she has been for are closing the pay gap and making college debt-free for most Americans. Her campaign slogan is “Stronger Together.” Her running mate is Tim Kaine, a senator from Virginia.

**Interview with Mike Kelly**

**Harrison Romero, Grade 8**

Mike Kelly is our local Congressman in Pennsylvania’s Third Congressional District. Recently, I was able to contact him via email, and even though he may disagree politically, I was happy to put our differences aside and even happier to receive the answers to my non-political questions:

**Do you have any regrets concerning things you have ever said or done? If so, what are they?**

Kelly expressed his belief that all politicians have something that they regret from some point in their life. “I don’t think you’ll find anyone in public life (or private life for that matter) that didn’t wish they had said or did something differently at certain times.” He goes on to give advice by telling others to do the same and admit their mistakes and hold onto them, because it is not good. “However, and I’d encourage others to do the same, you can’t dwell on mistakes and have to move on [from them].”

**What obstacles have you overcome in order to become as successful as you are now?**

Mr. Kelly describes his personal life, explaining that that he has had to work hard no matter what. “My family and I have been blessed most of my life but we’ve also worked very hard.” He, like many athletes (including myself), learned how to overcome obstacles from sports and coaches. “My background in athletics, particularly football, probably taught me most on how to overcome obstacles.”
When in your life did you decide that you were interested in becoming a Congressman?

For all of Kelly’s life, he has been involved in his community. “I’ve always been involved in civic affairs in my community in Butler. I served on our local school board, city council, and both city/county redevelopment and housing authorities.” “However, I never did think I’d be serving in Congress. My motivation for running for Congress was when the government took over General Motors in 2008 / 2009, they tried to take away one of my dealerships though they had no right to. I fought it legally and won, but some of my fellow auto dealers weren’t so fortunate. That was when I realized how big, arrogant and out of control our federal government had become. That’s when I decided to run in the 2010 election.”

Is there anybody specifically that encouraged you to become involved in public service?

Kelly did not explicitly mention the person who encouraged him to become active in public service, but he talks about the town in which he grew up that had an influence in his decision. “In the town and time that I grew up, public service, whether it was coaching a little league team or running for public office, was not only encouraged, but expected.”

What would you consider to be your greatest accomplishments?

Kelly not only mentioned accomplishments but also personal accomplishments because those matter equally to him. “A happy marriage, four children, and currently, ten grandchildren. Also, a successful business that has given family sustaining jobs to hundreds of people.” Kelly says that he is honored to serve his constituents. “I’m also proud that I’ve served my community and region in a number of ways in my adult life.”

What advice do you have to give to young students today?

As advice to students, Kelly talks about the importance of helping others. “Do the little things right and give. By giving, I mean serving others. Things usually fall into place when you put others before yourself.”

From your point of view, how do you believe the government is being run? What ideas do you have to improve it?

Rep. Kelly discussed his concerns about the Executive Branch and the role it plays in our lives. He believes that it is too large and that policies should be decided by the states. “At the federal level, the Executive Branch is still far too large, burdensome and does not truly serve the people of this country. You can visit my congressional website at kelly.house.gov for a comprehensive overview on a number of issues.”

During the course of a day as a congressman, what responsibilities do you hold?

Every day, Mike Kelly is responsible for making sure the voices of the citizens of his district are heard. He represents them in Washington and in Pennsylvania. “It varies daily. Our number one job is to serve and take care of the people that elected us to office. We do this through a variety of constituent services; however, I also have legislative responsibilities that include writing legislation, voting on legislation, and committee work.”
Donald J. Trump was born on June 14, 1946, in Queens, New York to Frederick and Mary Macleod Trump. Frederick Trump was an accomplished builder and real estate developer. Donald was a very energetic child, so his parents sent him to the New York Military academy in an attempt to channel his energy in a positive manner. Trump did well at the academy, becoming a leading student and a star athlete. He graduated in 1964. He was accepted to Fordham University, but he transferred to the Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania. He graduated in 1968 with a degree in economics.

Trump then decided to follow his father into a career in real estate development, bringing with him grand ambitions for the family business. During breaks from college, Trump worked for his father’s company, Elizabeth Trump & Son, and officially joined the business after graduation. Trump was able to expand his father’s company’s holdings by convincing him to be more liberal in his use of loans. In 1971, Trump was given control of the company, which was later renamed the Trump Organization. He moved to Manhattan, where he began to make connections with important people. Trump soon became involved in large building projects in Manhattan that offered high profits.

Trump continued to expand company ventures. He was constantly expanding his empire, creating hotels, casinos, and real estate developments. However, some of Trump’s projects failed and the real estate market declined. Independent sources reported that Trump was 900 million dollars in debt. Although he managed to climb back with assistance of the banks and bankruptcy laws he was relieved of his debt. This tarnished Trump’s reputation but assisted him in rebuilding his organization.

In 2000 Trump briefly decided to run for President but dropped out after doing poorly in the California primary. Shortly after his failed campaign, he starred on the show The Apprentice where contestants compete for a job in the Trump Organization. The show was successful, even inspiring a spin-off, Celebrity Apprentice.

In 2015 Trump announced his candidacy for President. He led the Republican polls for the majority of the race, competing against sixteen other Republican candidates and became the presumptive nominee when John Kasich dropped out of the election on May 4, 2016. He was officially nominated on July 19, 2016 at the Republican Convention. He won the nomination despite making many controversial statements. He currently is competing with Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee, in the upcoming Presidential election on November 8, 2016.
Suicide Squad Movie Review
Finn Chambers, Grade 6

Suicide Squad is a DC Comics movie about Task Force X. Amanda Waller (Viola Davis) assembles Task Force X, of expendable operatives, who are violent criminals that protect the country from deadly threats in exchange for lesser criminal sentences. The team is comprised of Dead Shot (Will Smith), a high profile assassin who is notorious for never missing a shot, Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie), the Joker’s partner, Captain Boomerang (Jai Courtney), Killer Croc (Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje), El Diablo (Jay Hernandez), a troubled soul with an interesting hobby and anger issues, and Slipknot (Adam Beach). On their very first mission, they face an incredible challenge that not only tests their strength but also tests their loyalty to their team members and government.

Overall, Suicide Squad is a great, fast-paced, action movie; however, it does not have the deepest plot. People who enjoy comic book based movies such as Guardians of the Galaxy will not be disappointed.

Athan Diniaco, Grade 8
Biographical Profile of James Dashner
Northern Wincek, Grade 8

James Dashner is a young adult, American author of speculative fiction novels, of which most are science fiction, adventure, and survival sub-genres. Dashner has five siblings and was born in Ashnell, Georgia, on November 26, 1972. He grew up in a Mormon family with a mother and a father. He received his high school diploma from Duluth High School in 1991 and received his master’s degree in accounting at Brigham University.

Currently, he is married to his wife, Lynette, with whom he has had four children, and they reside in Utah.

James Dashner’s best known series is the Maze Runner of which two movies have been made so far. The five series he has written thus far are: The Jimmy Fincher Saga (2003-2005), The thirteenth Reality series (2008-2012), The Maze Runner series (2009-2016), The Infinity Ring series (2012-2014), and The Mortality Doctrine Series (2013-2015). James Dashner has won many awards, including, in 2008, the Whitney Award in Best Youth Fiction for The 13th Reality. In 2011 he won the ALA Best Fiction for Young Adults award for The Maze Runner. In 2012 he won the Young Reader’s Choice Award in intermediate grades for The Maze Runner. James Dashner grew up in an extremely warm climate which inspired his idea for the sun flares in his series, The Maze Runner. Dashner wrote his first book, A Door in the Woods, in 1998, which was published as the first book in the Jimmy Fincher Saga in 2003.

Biographical Profile of Alyson Felix
Ella Harrington, Grade 6

Alyson Felix is an Olympic runner who won nine medals. She is the most decorated woman in U.S Track and Field history. Alyson was born on November 18, 1985 in Los Angeles, California. She was raised by her father, a minister, her mother, a teacher, and her older brother, Wes Felix. Alyson was always athletic growing up and played different sports. When she was a child she actually played basketball.

In her freshman year of high school Alyson joined the track team, and she was great! Within a year she was competing in state meets and finished in seventh in the 200-meter dash at the California State Meet. Later, she became a five-time winner in that race. In 2003 Alyson was named “High School Athlete of the Year”. As a high school senior Alyson finished second in the 200-meter race at the U.S Indoor Track and Field Championships in New Mexico.

In 2003 Alyson gave up her scholarship for college and took an endorsement by Adidas. Alyson still attended college at The University of Southern California though, and ran for the U.S National Team. Adidas paid for her college education. After college, Alyson went to the Olympics in Athens which was in 2004. She got in second for the 200-meter, and got a silver medal. Then she ran in 2008 in London. In that race she won her first gold medal in the 200-meter! Her time was 22.11, which was the new world record in the under 20 year-old category! In that same year she ran the 4-by-100meter relay, and she and her teammates got a gold medal as well! They also set a new world record which was 40.82 seconds. Alyson Felix was the first woman to ever win 3 gold medals at an Olympics since Florence Griffith-Joyner. Then, of course, she won one silver and two golds in the Rio Olympic Games.
The Lochte Incident in Rio
Connor Coughlin, Grade 8

Ryan Lochte initially told NBC that he and four other United States Olympic swimmers were robbed at gunpoint on the previous night. He claimed that the robber was a man impersonating a police officer pointed a gun at them and demanded their money. Lochte was still under the influence of alcohol at the time of the interview, and it has now come to light that his initial story was fabricated, or at the very least, as he has said, “over-exaggerated”. A security camera revealed that the actual story was that Lochte and his fellow swimmers vandalized a public gas station restroom late that night and were confronted by four security guards, and guns were pulled out on command.

As expected, this made international news and was investigated by the US Olympic Committee, the International Olympic Committee, and the Brazilian authorities. There was lot of confusion in the story and multiple details that were difficult to confirm.

Lochte, boarded a flight on August 16th for the U.S. cutting his time in Rio short and leaving his swim team in Rio shortly after the incident. On August 17th, a Brazilian judge issued an order for all of the swimmers to remain in the country. The other swimmers involved did not escape Rio as fast as Lochte. Conger and Bentz, while attempting to leave the country on August 17th were removed from an airplane for further questioning about the robbery story. The fourth swimmer, Feigen, agreed to pay almost $11,000 dollars to a Brazilian charity in exchange for resolving the dispute which allowed him to retain his passport and return to the United States.

Lochte later appeared in an interview saying that he takes full responsibility for the incident because he acted in an immature manner and believes he over-exaggerated that story and if he had never done that, they wouldn’t be in this mess. As a result of this incident, he has lost major sponsors including Speedo, Airweave, Gentle Hair Removal, and Ralph Lauren. Lochte has claimed that he is incredibly sorry about the event and that he will learn from it for the future.

Fighting for Justice
Connor Coughlin, Grade 8

Colin Kaepernick is the second-string quarterback who plays for the San Francisco 49ers. In multiple games, he refrained from standing during the singing of the National Anthem.

He does not believe in praising a country where African Americans and other minorities are treated less respectfully than others. He believes it is bigger than football, and that would be selfish to look the other way and pretend nothing is wrong.

The 49ers issued a statement saying, “The National Anthem is and always will be a special part of the pre-game ceremony. It is an opportunity to honor our country and reflect on the great liberties we are afforded as its citizens. In respecting such American principles such as freedom of religion and freedom of expression, we recognize the right of an individual to choose and participate, or not, in our celebration of the national anthem”. Other fans are not supportive and believe that Kaepernick’s protest is unpatriotic, and some even went as far as to burn his jersey to show their disapproval. Other athletes, even those beyond the sport of football, have joined Kaepernick’s cause and have chosen other acts of protest. The topic on whether Kaepernick is unpatriotic or just progressive is deeply controversial and widely debated.
Pink Bunny Slippers
SHORT STORY
Maya Bywater, Grade 6

The leaves rustled in the wind and the lamp lights glowed in the darkness as the girls walked along, partially silhouetted by the light of the full moon. They talked quietly together, about a recent shocking event that happened at a school.

Last night, someone had attacked the janitor and knocked him out, and when the janitor was found he had absolutely no idea of how he had ended up in the parking lot. The only clues were some bright pink bunny slippers that were tied to his head. The teachers claimed nothing was stolen, but the fact that they interrogated everyone, and some evidence that was found after snooping in detention, was proof enough that something had been.

The girls knew what had been stolen, and they knew the dirty little secret that all the teachers were hiding, but the question was, did someone know that they knew? And what length would the supposed "teachers" go to protect their secret? Suddenly the girls heard a loud, menacing, growl. They froze, and turned around slowly. It was a giant, slobbering, dog, and he was most definitely not friendly. Only one girl made it home that night, and the only thing left at the scene of the crime? A bright pink bunny slipper. The next day the other girl was terrified to go to school, but she had to find out about her friend, and the teachers and the Master would be angry if she didn't show up.

Oh, yes, she knew about the Master, the one who the teachers followed, and the Master was unstoppable, but the girl would prove to be a fierce opponent to all things cute, pink, and cuddly. During her study hall time, she snuck into the basement, as usual, normally to escape from everybody else, but that had changed the day she and her friend found out about what really happened in the basement. Normally, she got lucky, and never got caught by the dreaded Eyes of Cuteness, but not today, and she didn't even see them coming. She was bashed over the head with a carrot, and the next thing she knew, she was face to face with her....... mother? That was not who she expected to see, especially considering that fact that she was standing at the head of a bright pink bunny army, all armed with carrots and fuzzy slippers. Her mother didn't seem to recognize the girl as she stiffly ordered lieutenant cuddles to tell the Master they had found am intruder.

Lieutenant Cuddles quickly returned, looking very shaken, and soon the girl was being dragged along in the direction cuddles had came from. Five minutes later she was thrown on the floor in front of a throne that appeared to be made of carrots and scrap metal. All was quiet for a minute, until a voice started interrogating her about the stolen files. Shockingly the voice was not deep, scary and dark, like you would expect, but it was peppy, high pitched, and frankly, quite ridiculous. It took all of the girl's self-control not to start laughing, until she remembered the grave situation she was in.

As the voice continued to question her, she noticed something mice in the corner of the room. They had come! You see, before going to school that day, the girl had called up the Anomaly Squad, a special group in the government that had contacted her about the bunny situation. It was them who had stolen the files, and the girl was sure they could help her friend. The girl suddenly gasped as a two foot tall, neon pink bunny jumped down from the general vicinity of the throne."Listen here, Cupcake," he said." I don't know why you stole
It was a dark October night. It was cloudy and cold, but then again, it was Autumn. Just like any other night... until the incident. It all began when I got a phone call. My friends had wanted to go out tonight and do something fun. What the plans were, I didn’t know, but somehow, they convinced me to go, and the next thing I knew, I was walking out the door.

After a few minutes of walking, I saw them. John, Luke, and Bob were sitting on the sidewalk. John was the leader of the group. He is tall, smart, and athletic. Luke is his sidekick. He is very strong, but I definitely would not ask him for help on my homework. Bob, well, is just Bob. He is the weird and unpredictable one. Anyway, we were trying to decide what to do, being the little devils that we were. John suggested we egg a house, Luke suggested graffiti, I suggested T.P. Suddenly Bob shouts, “LET’S PRANK THE SCHNEIDERS’ HOUSE!”

The Schnieders’ are my neighbor, and old couple of about seventy years who we do not particularly adore. They never go outside, and the only time they are seen is when they yell at us if a ball lands in their yard. Needless to say, we all thought this was a bad idea. Honestly, we were a bit creeped out by their house, and we all felt uneasy. Before we could make a decision, Bob had darted away, a full on sprint. We had no choice but to follow him. It took a few minutes, but we arrived. “Now what?” said Luke.

In the time we had been coming up with ideas, we hadn’t decided on one. After arguing, we decided to just egg the house, but I still had an unsettling feeling. When the first few eggs were thrown, I said we should leave, but nobody listened. Unfortunately, at that moment, John threw an egg right as it opened! Mr. Schneider got a face full of yolk, and in his hand was a reddened knife. I yelled, “RUN!” I screamed, but nobody needed the encouragement. We all ran to our houses as fast as we could. I couldn’t see Mr. Schneider, and I didn’t want to see him. I tripped, and should have died, but I managed to keep going. We screamed all the way home. To this day, we have never pulled a prank again, or even left the house. The weirdest part was that the next day, a cherry pie with one slice missing was left on our porch.

Halloween
SHORT STORY
Athan Diniaco, Grade 8

It was a dark October night. It was cloudy and cold, but then again, it was Autumn. Just like any other night... until the incident. It all began when I got a phone call. My friends had wanted to go out tonight and do something fun. What the plans were, I didn’t know, but somehow, they convinced me to go, and the next thing I knew, I was walking out the door.

After a few minutes of walking, I saw them. John, Luke, and Bob were sitting on the sidewalk. John was the leader of the group. He is tall, smart, and athletic. Luke is his sidekick. He is very strong, but I definitely would not ask
Moon and Sun
Zane Lippert, Grade 8

The moon shines bright
With brilliant light.
His beams are ever-shining,
Yet often he resorts to whining.
For it seems that the people of earth
Don’t much care for his shine, and light lamps
with private mirth.
There is no rejoicing for the moon, when the
humans only create their own sources,
With electricity and fire, the humans have other
forces.
This angers and offends the moon, who flies
down to earth.
The entirety of the brightening sky is filled with
his great girth!
He is mad, and sad, and he plans to cause
trouble!
A little girl awakens from the crashing rubble.
Oh, my! Oh, dear! This isn’t fair!
The little girl can see the blinding white glare.
She knows exactly what she can do.
She puts on a jacket and then puts on her shoes...
The little girl flies in a hot air balloon,
And she flies over to China, where it’s only a
quarter till noon!
“Miss Sun, will you come talk to your brother, the
moon?”
“Oh dear, what’s up with that old goon?”

And the beautiful golden sun followed the girl
back...
All the way home, where the night was still black.
“My brother,” said the moon, “What is it you do?”
“Why do you batter and mess, I must know!”
“My sister,” said the moon, in a snide little tone,
“Do you really care if I sometimes will moan?”
“I do,” said the Sun, “You’re destroying this
place!”
“Well!” said the Sun, “They don’t care about my
powerful face!”
“You’re face isn’t powerful,” his sister declared.
“You’re just a cold stone, but you’re making them
scared!”
“Oh, well,” said the moon,
“I suppose you’re right...I’m just a dark old
goon.”
“You are dark,” said Miss Sun, “But you are cool.”
“You keep the earth warm and bright, even if you
are a fool.”
“I suppose that is true,” said the other.
And the Sun thanked the girl for helping her
brother.

Far into the sky, behind the girl’s house, behind
the world, and behind the Moon’s worst...
An angry red planet watched and he grumbled.
Jupiter was mad. He would not be the first.
Vocabulary

BALLOT  PRESIDENT
CANDIDATE REPRESENTATIVE
CLINTON  REPUBLICAN
CONGRESS SENATE
DEMOCRAT  SENATOR
ELECTION TRUMP
POLITICS VOTE
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