**Hoodie: An Extremely Relatable Middle School Show**

By Adam Ashley

A new play is coming to Luther Jackson this fall, and with over fifty students in the two casts of Hoodie, the interest is high. Cast and crew are hanging posters, wearing their cast hoodies, and spreading the word through social media. Hoodie, a one-act play written by Lindsay Price and directed by theater teacher Ms. Stacey Jones, tells multiple stories regarding middle-schoolers and their self image. Hoodie runs Thursday, November 12th through Saturday, November 14th in the Luther Jackson auditorium.

The show tackles topics such as relationships with friends, arguments with parents, and secretly-held anxieties. "The show is really unique because it is not one of those really cheesy shows where it seems like what you would love yourself," said Eighth grader Annie Stamp from the Quasars team, who plays the character Bamboozle. "It instead really shows what it is like to be a middle school student."

Hoodie is a vignette-style show, which is a play that is composed of many small scenes depicting different scenarios while following a common theme. This allows the audience to be engaged in many stories, while focusing on one message. Hoodie will appeal to teens, who will find it very relatable, and adults, who may look back and make connections to their experiences. Regardless, most people will see themselves or their peers in the show characters.

Although the show deals with a very serious theme, it's still rather playful and manages to stay upbeat and comedic from scene to scene. For example, Annie Stamp explained one of her scenes, "My character tricks the head cheerleader into wearing an invisible sweatshirt." All of these clever scenes carry the show in an interesting and entertaining way. Several cast members plainly stated "It just works. It seems crazy at times, but it just works so well."

Because Ms. Jones wants to be sure that there are as many students as possible involved in Jackson theatre productions, there are two casts of Hoodie; each consists of about twenty-five students. The casts are the two groups of versatile actors, and many have had different theatre experiences. "I have been involved in theatre for many years outside of school," Eighth grader Samaria Delforso on the Galaxy team explained, "and this show sounded very unique and interesting." So many of the students are referred to as "the clump."

Trinity O’Donnell, Zane DeFienzo, and Joe Wong practice blocking.

**Early Morning Schedule Changes Extend After School Program**

By Jerry Achtermann

For everyone in Luther Jackson, students, teachers, and staff, their schedules have certainly changed. The 7th graders have gone from starting school as late as 9:15 a.m. to sitting in desks almost two hours before; the 8th-graders have gone from waking up early to waking up even earlier. Some bus routes are beginning before 6:15 a.m. Teachers and staff have to be at school earlier, too, because they have to arrive ahead of students.

High schools in Fairfax County now start after 8:00, which will be good for Jackson students in a couple of years. But in the meantime, it seems the 7:30 start time is the reality students are facing. The schedule changes are a result of the school board’s decision last year to give high schoolers more time to sleep. Board members made these decisions because of a strong parent group’s influence and recent studies indicating that the natural sleep rhythms of adolescents are disrupted with such early start times.

Other changes, besides the start times, have been instituted as well. The after school program now begins earlier. This delayed high school student pick up until after middle school pick up, so the after school program is longer - two hours and twenty minutes - to give buses time to circle back for late rides.

In order to structure this time, the sessions are organized as follows: A session runs from 2:20 until 3:30, and B session runs from 3:35 until 4:35. Some A session activities and are called “extended” (Continued on page 3)
The New PAWS
By Megan Ngu

This year, PAWS (Positive Activities with Students) is slightly different from last year’s. Although the structure of it still includes one SSF session, one enrichment session, and two FLEX back sessions, there are now more enrichment opportunities for students to take advantage of. Additionally, PAWS sessions are now by quarters instead of rounds, which allows teachers to spend more time with their students before schedules change again.

“The changes that we have made are focused on expanding the number of enrichment offerings. This gives students more choices and opportunities to try curriculum based enrichments from a variety of content areas,” Ms. Johnelle Sweet, one of the main PAWS coordinators said. Sweet and Ms. Christine Lyons have worked together to manage PAWS for the past few years.

Their combined efforts ensure that PAWS runs well. Even though the schedule this year is new to students and staff, Ms. Sweet said that everything is going well, and that they “intend to increase the number of enrichment offerings as the year goes on.” Last year there were few opportunities for enrichment, and this year there are many more choices available to students. They can explore new topics or get additional help from teachers.

In September, students took an online PAWS survey to indicate their interests. Ms. Sweet and Ms. Lyons compiled the information and made decisions about which topics to run. Then, throughout the school year, “we can see what sessions are popular and adjust our offerings to better meet student interests,” Ms. Sweet added.

Even if some students didn’t get the activity they would’ve preferred in first quarter, “we are hopeful that more and more students will get one of their top choices as the number of offerings increases,” Ms. Sweet added. Students expressed their level of interest in topics such as Make- space, Cupcake Wars, and 3D Printing and Modeling. In addition, Beginning Coding and Programming is offered for techies, and Girl Power is offered for people interested in the impact of women through the ages. As Luther Jackson students get ready for Round Two to begin, they will have opportunities to get needed help from teachers, study new topics, or have quiet study time. All in all, the new PAWS changes seem to be working smoothly.

Hallway Wars: The Struggle to Combat a Growing Student Population
By Jerry Achtermann

The consensus among Luther Jackson students and staff is that the school is a crowded place. Because student population has grown quite a bit over the past couple of years, the hallways, classrooms, and the cafeteria are often streaming with students. Currently, there are 1398 students.

Even though the hallways may not be as crowded as last year, some students are a part of huge health classes in the multipurpose room. The cafeterias are becoming more and more crowded each year. There are approximately 350 students in each lunch, which translates to long lunch lines.

At the start of the school year, there were not enough lockers for all of the students. New lockers were recently installed. Before that, Ms. Rose Cho, the Civics teacher for the Quasars team, allowed her students to use the wardrobe cabinet in her room to store their backpacks.

“There is going to have to be some consideration about how we handle the student growth; major changes are yet to be determined,” Mr. Chad Lehman explained. Redistricting is a lengthy process and can take years.

The county has plans to renovate schools, but the schools on the top of the list need structural repairs, not expansion. As a result, there will most likely not be any drastic change to LJ’s floorplan. “It’s not like it’s going to change a whole lot,” summarized Mr. Lehman.

For an older structure like Jackson, adding on additional floors is not feasible, and there are no expansion plans underway. For now, portable classrooms have been added; there are currently 13 portable classrooms behind LJMS.

Schedule Changes
Continued from page 1

A sessions” and run until 4:00. Ms. Christine Lyons, the after school specialist, explained that this 30-minute period “allows teachers to keep their students for a little longer if they choose.”

There have been benefits to the longer after school schedule. Ms. Stacey Jones is very appreciative of the extended after school program. “I am reliant on the late bus system for my play rehearsals,” she said. “With an extra hour of rehearsal time, it has been phenomenal and makes me feel less rushed.”

Also, because of the extra time, several after-school clubs have been added, such as Behind the Scenes of Theatre, Pinterest Club, and After-School Improv. Back to the Future Club is also new, and it is a club where students visit their former elementary schools to host activities.

Ms. Lyons explained that students are required to sign up for both A and B after school sessions. Not doing so could result in a loss of privileges, which would be disappointing for any student. Students should remember to sign for sessions in advance.
Hoodie (Continued from page 1)

interesting.” Ms. Jones, director of Hoodie, discussed the structure of the show. “Hoodie is interesting because the entire cast is part of a big ensemble, and they split up to do their own scenes.” She added that “the show portrays many different types of people, and I used that to my advantage while casting. I had seventy eight students audition for Hoodie, and I realized that with such a short and compact show, I could easily do two casts.” Jones further explained that each cast is equally strong, contains seventh and eighth graders, boys and girls, and students of all ethnicities. “This, to me, seems like an accurate representation of LJMS,” Jones stated.

Hoodie runs from November 12 through the 14th. Tickets are $3.00 and will be sold during lunch. Hoodie showcases Jack- son’s theatre department. This production is the fall play, and The Lion King will be the spring musical.

Presidential Candidates for 2016
By Evan Foster and Jose Rojas

In November 2016, Americans will elect a new president of the United States, and there are many hopefuls. There were a large number of candidates early on in the race, but only a few have made it this far. Here’s a look at those left standing.

First, the Democratic candidates...The former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, married to former president Bill Clinton, hopes to be the Democratic nominee for the 2016 presidential term. Hillary Clinton founded the Clinton Foundation, which partners with businesses and individuals to give people financial support. Clinton ran for Democratic presidential nominee against Barack Obama in 2008, but lost.

Martin O’Malley is another Democratic hopeful. Once the mayor of Baltimore, he is often blamed for the recent Baltimore riots. However, O’Malley points out that since 2003, violence in Baltimore has decreased. He later became the governor of Maryland. O’Malley’s platform includes the continued legalization of abortion, civil rights for all, and strengthening gun control.

Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders has generated a lot of attention. This self proclaimed socialist is a two time senator and is the longest serving independent member of Congress in US history. His main focus is shrinking the American middle class. He also promotes campaign and immigration reform.

The ideals of the Democratic nominee candidates differ, especially between Hillary Clinton, the progressive, and Bernie Sanders, the socialist. Nevertheless, all the candidates are liberals in varying degrees. Now, for the Republicans...Donald Trump is an extremely popular Republican candidate. He is a real estate developer from New York, founder of the Plaza Hotel in New York and the Trump International Hotel in Chicago, and former host of the television show, “The Apprentice.” Trump is popular with a majority of Republicans because of his stance on immigration and his economic ideologies. Trump has made politically incorrect statements and has alienated himself from several groups, yet he is polling well and is the Republican frontrunner at this time.

Another Republican candidate is Jeb Bush, son of former president George H. Bush and brother of former president George W. Bush. Jeb Bush was once the governor of Florida. He has been criticized by fellow conservatives for being too liberal, especially because of his ideas on immigration reform. He has a tendency to challenge other conservatives. However, he may be able to overcome these problems and get a nomination from his party.

Dr. Ben Carson, another Republican candidate, was a famed neurosurgeon at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. He has run for president in past elections, and he is enjoying great popularity this election season. Some of his platforms are the legalization of marijuana and gun control reform. He is socially conservative and is pro-life.

Marco Rubio, another Republican candidate, first served on the Florida House of Representatives, then went on to become a Senator of Florida in 2011. Rubio is pro-life and fiscally conservative. Rubio’s platform is bold, but he could possibly get the nomination if he wins the crowd.

There are other Republican candidates, such as Carly Fiorina and Ted Cruz; however, they are not likely to make it to the Primary Election this spring. The candidates differ in views, and some seem extreme, but they all believe they are best for the country. Regardless of popularity polls, political debates, and endorsements by groups, Americans will elect the next president of the United States in November of 2016.
Cartoon Culinary Corner with Rolan Sherwani

Double-glazed Apple Fritters (As seen on “Regular Show”)

As seen in the “Regular Show” episode “Sugar Rush,” these apple fritters may be dangerous for human consumption in the show, but in reality, they’re totally edible! These glazed delights can be served for holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, or any other special occasions. You might feel a slight sugar rush, so eat something healthy before eating these sugary treats.

Ingredients
- 11/2 cups flour
- 1 Tbs sugar
- 2 Tbs baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 2/3 cup milk
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 Tbs vegetable oil
- 3 granny smith apples
- 1 qt. vegetable oil
- 3 cups powdered sugar
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup milk

Start by mixing the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Add 2/3 cup of milk, eggs, and a tablespoon of vegetable oil into the bowl and stir until the mixture is complete.

Next, core and dice the apples and pour them into the mixture to evenly conceal them in the batter.

(Continued on page 5)

Root for the Rookies: Where are the NFL rookies now?
By Elizabeth Nguyen

Since last spring’s 2015 NFL Draft, many sports critics believe that this football season has been the season of the rookies. Not only are the hopes of clinching a potential playoff seed on the line for many of these aspiring football pros, but multi-million dollar contracts are also depending on the results of their performances. Although the 53-man roster cut was tough for many of the coaches, they have been hoping that with fresh talent on the field, the year ends with more wins than losses. Football season is well underway, but one question remains: where are the NFL rookies now?

Quarterbacks have been the face of a franchise since the early days of the game. For Tennessee Titans Marcus Mariota, he’s racked up moderate passing yards for the first five games of the season. With his completed passes percentage at 64%, nine of which were scoring passes. Mariota has thrown a total of 1,239 yards and five interceptions as of Week 8. He is ranked as the 29th best quarterback overall in the NFL at the end of Week 8 with a rating of 42.0.

Over in Tampa Bay, Jameis Winston is also trying hard to cut it with his fluctuating performances. Completing only a mere 58.5% of his passes, Winston has thrown for a total of 1,648 yards, 10 touchdowns, and seven interceptions over the course of eight weeks. He is 16.7 rating points ahead of Mariota at 58.7 points, and is the 19th overall best quarterback in the NFL. The Titans and Buccaneers are not having very impressive seasons, having ending Week 8 with 1-6 and 3-4 records, respectively.

Rookie wide receivers and running backs are also heavily-watched positions. St. Louis Rams running back Todd Gurley ended Week 8 by running 575 yards and scoring three touchdowns. As the youngest player in NFL history to run at least 125 yards in three consecutive games, Gurley places first in Chris Wesseling’s Week 8 Rookie of the Year Watch for Around the NFL.

The third overall 2015 NFL Draft pick went to the Oakland Raiders, who picked up Alabama’s Amari Cooper. The wide receiver has already caught 38 passes for a total of 565 yards and three touchdowns. He is the first rookie since Mike Ditka in 1961 to have three 100-yard performances in his first six career games.

One of the Minnesota Vikings’ wide receivers, rookie and Maryland native Stefon Diggs, leads the NFL in yards per route run by receiving 25 passes for 419 yards as of Week 8. Wide receivers Cooper and Diggs place third and fifth in Wesseling’s Week 8 Rookie of the Year Watch, respectively.

The defensive rookies to watch, according to Wesseling, include Philadelphia Eagles rookie linebacker Jordan Hicks at number ten. With a total of 43 tackles, one sack, and one interception as of Week 8, he has been praised generously by coach Chip Kelly for his performance against the Giants, earning the nickname “Simba” in regards to teammate DeMeco Ryans’ veteran nickname of “Mufasa.”

Another defensive rookie is Jets defensive end Leonard Williams, who was the sixth overall pick at the NFL 2015 Draft. His 24 tackles and gradually improving performance earned him a Pro Football Focus rating of +14.1 during his rookie year. Other formidable defensive rookies include Diggs’ teammates, Viking Eric Kendricks, who earned the NFL Defensive Rookie of the Month honors after picking up four sacks in the last three weeks, and right tackle T.J. Clemmens, who held his own against linebacker Justin Houston and the Chiefs’ fierce pass rush.

It is more than halfway through the season, and the battle to the milestone Super Bowl LII is well underway. As the season progresses, rookie performances may determine the name of the potential playoff seed on the field, anything can happen in an NFL season, if the right cards are played…and the right plays, of course.
Cartoon Culinary Corner
Continued from page 4

Create the glaze by mixing the powdered sugar, vanilla extract, and 1/3 cup of milk together and stirring until it's all combined and smooth.

Carefully place your fried apple fritters into the bowl and dip it in the glaze. Once they are fully coated, put the fritters back on the towel to let them dry. To glaze them again, either dip them back into the bowl of glaze or pour the glaze on top of them.

Enjoy after the glaze dries.

Photo and recipe from "Feast of Fiction", YouTube

Scanned QR code to watch the YouTube video demonstration of making the Double-glazed Apple Fritters.

Hispanic Heritage Month
By Aalswarya Gopinadam and Deepa Rao

What do Christina Aguilera, Jennifer Lopez, Pitbull, and 478 students at LJMS have in common? They all have Hispanic roots. During fall, Hispanic Heritage is celebrated all over the world. Festivals, parades, and parties are held in recognition of Latin American countries’ independence from Spain. In the United States, it was President Lyndon B. Johnson, who began Hispanic Heritage week in 1968. The week was later expanded to a month by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 and is celebrated September 15 - October 15 each year.

From left: Jelitza Sahonero (Bolivia & Peru), Jeffrey Legay (Peru), Marie Lopez (Mexico), Ariel Ticona (Argentina), Ayelet Coronado (Bolivia)

Graphic from library.sbcc.edu

Syrian Civil War and Refugee Crisis
By Fernanda Molina Galindo

More than 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives in the civil war over the past four years. Four in five Syrians are living in poverty and Syria’s education, health, and social welfare systems are in a state of collapse. Additionally, more than 11 million people have fled the country, and pictures of Syrian refugees are on the news daily. Most have resettled in nearby countries, and many have gone to Europe. Recently, President Obama has directed his administration to prepare to take in 10,000 refugees. However, in Syria discussions continue between powerful nations like the US, Russia, Britain and France, to try to work out if there is another way to help Syria achieve peace.

The Syrian Civil war is a conflict between its long-serving government and those seeking to remove it. The government's deadly overreaction to a civil protest led to the unrest spreading to other parts of the country.

After many months, protests became full-armed rebellions. Battles took place in many towns and cities and many people were killed. People didn't want democracy and freedom anymore, they wanted President Bashar al-Assad to resign. The country descended into civil war as rebel brigades were formed to battle government forces for control of cities, towns and the countryside.

As the fighting continues, the Syrian government has military support from Russia and Iran. Qatar and Saudi Arabia have given weapons to the rebels.

In 2014 an extremist group called Islamic State (IS) began to take over large areas of the country. To try and stop IS, in September 2014 the US, UK and other countries joined forces, using planes to attack their fighters on the ground. IS killed millions of people and the civil war continues across Syria.
Fall Into Fall
The Fall Fashionista’s Cult Favorites
By Elizabeth Nguyen

As the temperatures decrease and autumn days take over the sunny, sweltering summer, resident fashionistas find themselves adding extra layers to their trendy ensembles. Think thick textiles and rich textures for fall 2015. Swap your summer cover-ups for some appropriate outerwear and prepare your sandals for some quality time with their storage boxes. Whether you like it or not ladies, it’s time for a HuffPo Canada inspired cold weather wardrobe intervention.

Outerwear is the first thing that comes to mind when dressing for colder weather. With the early start to school and the dreaded transition in temperature, keep warm in a duster coat from Warehouse or a classy leather jacket from Forever 21. Find yourself caught in a monstrous monsoon? A poncho from L.L. Bean comes in handy when nature spills a little precipitation. Fitted blazers are a great option to amp up the prep with your favorite skirt, sweater dress or best pair of skinnies. Or you can opt for a nice burgundy hue like Pantone’s Color of the Year, marsala, to stay on top of trends.

 Appropriately dubbed “sweater weather,” fall is the perfect season to bring back your thick textiles. Brands like Fay, Diesel Black Gold, and Charlotte Ronson have flair for ribbed knits in their showcases. As the holiday season approaches, the ever-so-popular “ugly sweaters” are making a comeback in stores everywhere. Cardigans are also a favorite, as they can be paired with a wide variety of tops and dresses. Bring out the Tumbler-esque autumn vibe in your outfit, when you add a chunky knit wool sweater to your bootcut jeans or basic black leggings, boots, and an infinity scarf.

Go forth and have no fear wearing white after Labor Day; the decade-old fashion don’t has been reversed this past decade. A tailored pair of white skinny jeans are a must in every girl’s year-round wardrobe. Swap between tops and tees and have fun with the new fall staple. Not a fan of thick textures? A sleeved white blouse is the perfect alternative when you’re bored of wearing the same bland, white tee. Experiment by mixing your blouses with fun collars, ruffles, bows, and pleats. Some great designs come from Rodarte, Oscar de la Renta, and Michael Kors. The opportunities are limitless with how white can be incorporated into outfits, even after summer.

Wonder-fall Looks
By Annie Stamp

As the weather cools down, fashion heats up with the perfect clothing to keep you cozy but looking good. Warm, comfortable clothing rocks the streets in fall, mixing loungewear with most fashionable pieces. Must colors, neutrals, and fall leaves can be spotted on all your favorite fashion staples.

Starting from the ground up, trusty, comfortable Uggs are always in season, and they are cute with most clothing, from leggings to jeans, and even skirts if you’re brave enough to make it work. If you want to stray from good ol’ faithful, however, chunky black combat boots are in, such as Dr. Martens and the vintage Roots. The 1960s are also making a comeback with the sky-high Go-go boots. As for socks, make a statement with knee or thigh socks, bright and comfy leg warmers, and fuzzy socks.

As for bottoms, high-waisted pants remain a trend, which is good because they are very flattering. Leggings are also a great item to have in your wardrobe. They’re stylish and comfortable. Everyone looks great in a pair of leggings. Much like leggings, joggers are a great idea as well. Fall is also a perfect time to bring back your favorite pair of jeans. Bell bottoms are very in right now; in any style, length, or wash, you can’t go wrong with denim. If the cold weather doesn’t bother you, you can always wear an ever trendy mini skirt!

It’s fall, and it’s time to revisit old, classic favorites like combat boots and plaid flannels, the favorites of our fall essentials. Even if it’s a short season, fall is a time to experiment with transitional styles before the snow begins to fall. Whether it’s for school, a weekend activity, or an artsy Instagram snap, you’ll always be well-dressed and ready to fall in love with the timeless fall styles literally.

Want to read more from Elizabeth? Scan the QR code to check out her blog!

and coat sleeves and collars, as well as long gloves.

As temperatures start to drop, it’s important to stay warm without losing your sense of style. Quilted down coats are mega stylish at the moment. To find durable options, check out L.L. Bean or Eddie Bauer. Add an ever fashionable scarf. Beanies are cute and perfect to keep your ears from freezing off.

This year’s fall colors are reds, browns, golds, earthy neutrals, pops of blues, darker pinks and purples, all kinds of shades of grays, especially blue gray and green gray, dusty roses, olives. Duller, dullest colors are in. Of course, red plaid is an eternally popular fall pattern. If you’re having trouble figuring out just the right colors, neutralize it. Stay fashionable and warm this fall and winter.
What’s New with the iPhone 6s?
By William Covey, Ethan Kim, and Alex Lanier

Apple unveiled the new iPhone 6s in early fall this year. Many features have been added, and there are many upgrades. To start, it has a faster Touch ID, a stronger aluminum body, which doesn’t easily bend, it runs iOS 9, and comes in a new rose gold color. Still, some consumers and critics alike have been disappointed that Apple skimmed out on certain aspects. It has left them asking if the new iPhone 6s is really worth the upgrade, especially since the phone starts at $649 for the 16GB model. The iPhone 6s Plus, with its larger and higher resolution display, starts at $749.

The most notable new feature of the iPhone 6s is 3D Touch, which senses the amount of pressure applied on the screen; it responds accordingly. It works with most of the pre-installed apps on iOS, and some third party apps such as Twitter and Instagram. More options are available without having to open the app. For example, if you 3D Touch the camera icon, it gives the option to take a selfie, and it opens the front facing camera. Furthermore, the upgraded camera features a 12 Megapixel back facing camera, which can shoot 4K video. It also has a 5 Megapixel selfie camera.

The iPhone 6s also has a new processor, the Apple A9 Chip, and the phone is much faster as a result. This new micro chip, however, has lead to some controversy. Last year’s iPhone 6 Plus had #bendgate, this year the iPhone 6s and 6s Plus have #chipgate. Apple contracted two different manufacturers of chips, Samsung and TSMC. Both chips are the “A9” chip but are manufactured differently, which has lead to performance differences. Chances are if you order a new iPhone 6s, you will get the Samsung chip, because it can produce much more of the A9 chip. Yet, the TSMC chip has a bigger footprint, which helps the chip stay cool, therefore improving performance. Also, the phones with the TSMC chip have a longer battery life.

Even though the iPhone 6s has many improvements, it seems downgraded in some aspects. The 6s weighs more than the 6s due to the addition of 3D Touch, and the iPhone 6s also has a smaller battery, to make room for the 3D Touch module. While it doesn’t affect the battery life greatly, it’s unfortunate that Apple had to make the already small battery smaller, yet the iPhone 6s Plus has a larger battery. The iPhone 6s is the most advanced smartphone Apple has made yet, despite some minor flaws. If you’re looking to upgrade from anything below the iPhone 6, the iPhone 6s is a great upgrade. If you already have the iPhone 6, then upgrade if you are in need of a faster processor and better camera.

A Pixelated World:
Minecraft is Still Innovating
By Amy Huynh and Agransh Srivastava

Imagine you are inside a game where you reside in a world of blocks, and everything in the game is pixelated. Now, imagine using a variety of different blocks to create and build whatever you can imagine. This describes Minecraft’s creative mode.

Minecraft also has survival mode. You are in the wild with nothing but your imagination, the various biomes in your world, and your hands. Well, virtual hands. Once the sun goes down it’s dark, hostile creatures come out, and they eat you. You can still build, but you have to obtain the materials versus having them instantly at your disposal in creative mode. You have to defend yourself and survive. If you can’t do that, well, game over.

Another mode in Minecraft is story mode, which was developed by Telltale Games. Their games are known more for their storytelling rather than their gameplay. The player is the star of the story, and the player’s choices determine the action and story outcomes.

These are the most popular modes of Minecraft’s five modes, played by over twenty million people worldwide and increasing every minute. Minecraft was created by Markus Persson, also known as Notch, who later sold the game to Microsoft for 2.5 billion USD.

Minecraft gamers enjoy playing it because it is creative and allows them to use their imaginations. “It’s a fun game to play; it emphasizes the social and multiplayer part,” seventh grader Brandon Lee from the Olympians said.

Players can download modifications or mods. These add many features to the created worlds. For example, Minecraft players might use the Biomes O’ Plenty mod, which adds more biomes and plants. Minecraft fans are often entertained by other Minecraft players on Youtube. Captainsparklez, Stampylonghead, TheDiamondMinecart, and BabanCanadian post videos on Youtube. These are so popular that YouTubers often make a great deal of money from their millions of views. Captainsparklez, 23, just purchased a 4.5 million USD home in Los Angeles from his earnings.
The Martian: A Review
By Jake Berkowitz

American audiences are spending yet another billion dollars searching for a lost Matt Damon in The Martian directed by Ridley Scott. It is a flawless adaptation of a gripping bestseller written by Andy Weir. The film begins with a sweeping shot over a beautifully generated desolate Martian landscape. This is the standard for the graphics quality in the entire movie. The overhead perspective gives way to five astronauts working on diagnostic checks for a futuristic looking shuttle.

As the astronauts are collecting data, a sandstorm hits, and astronaut Mark Watney, played by Matt Damon, is left behind as the rocket leaves a fluorescent trail across the Martian sky. The Martian follows Watney’s story as he struggles to survive on the barren Red Planet.

In an industry where science is often ignored for the sake of effects, The Martian’s scientific accuracy is a breath of fresh air. The obstacles that Watney has to overcome are precisely the same challenges that real Mars astronauts would battle during a Mars mission. Not only are the hardships realistic, but the solutions Watney comes up with are entirely feasible. This film is dramatic, and the genuine hope felt for Watney’s return, combined with scientific accuracy, has attracted theatergoers in droves. The Martian is a five-star film.

Movie Previews
By Evan Hamilton and David Xiang

The Peanuts Movie
November 6, 2015

More than 65 years after the first “Peanuts” comic strip, Snoopy and Charlie Brown star in yet another new animated movie. They each choose their paths in an epic adventure. Snoopy chooses to chase down an arch-nemesis, while Charlie heads home. This sensational movie is expected to draw a large crowd. Steven Martin, known for directing Horton Hears a Who and Ice Age: Continental Drift, returned to Blue Sky Studios to direct this movie.

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2
November 20, 2015

In this soon-to-be released movie, Katniss Everdeen or the “Mockingjay,” partners with the leaders of District Thirteen for the final fight against President Snow and the Capitol. Based on the best selling novel, Jennifer Lawrence, continues her role as Katniss. Josh Hutcherson returns as Peeta for part two of the epic finale. Previous Hunger Games films won awards, such as “Kid’s Choice Award for Favorite Movie” and “Teen Choice Award for Choice Movie: Sci-Fi/Fantasy.” And Jennifer Lawrence, who won the Academy Award for Best Actress in 2013, is expected to take back the spotlight in this new movie.

Victor Frankenstein
November 27, 2015

Victor Frankenstein is told from the perspective of Igor, Frankenstein’s assistant. The movie examines Igor’s relationship with Frankenstein, along with his own dark past. Starring Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter) as Igor, and James McAvoy (X-Men: First Class, X-Men: Days of Future Past, Muppets Most Wanted), as Victor von Frankenstein, this movie is a must watch.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens
December 18, 2015

The Force Awakens is perhaps the most highly anticipated movie of the year. Very little information has been released about the film, with the exception of exciting trailers. Set 30 years after The Return of the Jedi, Mark Hamill returns as Luke, Harrison Ford returns as Han Solo, and Carrie Fisher returns as Leia. J. J. Abrams directed this seventh film in the Star Wars franchise, and George Lucas wrote the characters for the screenplay. Fans, which span generations, can’t wait to see Hans Solo set foot on the Millennium Falcon and say, “Chewie, we’re home.”

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