

# The Quill

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## A Brighter Future

*Highlighting Changes that Lighten our Impact on the Environment*

**Michael Slattery**  
*Quill Staff Writer*

If you have looked around the MSJ campus recently, you may have noticed more luminous classrooms and hallways. This new change in scenery is due to the ongoing installment of LED no-ballast light bulbs in every light fixture. The upgrade in lights is now just one of many new improvements that have occurred throughout the past couple years.

The new light bulbs are predicted to be a huge money and time saver for the school. The bulbs are predicted to save about 25% of finances from electricity and are expected to last much longer than the originals. Also, the lights provide significant rebates in the electric bill. The absence of ballasts also saves time for the maintenance crew because they no longer have to remove excess ballasts that build up over time. As representatives



*Mr. Matt Adams replacing outdated lighting with new LED bulbs.* of the school save money on improvements like the new light bulbs, they will hopefully be able to put any extra money saved towards new improvements. Along with the new light bulbs, MSJ has upgraded the electrical switchgears in both Ryken Hall (Cafeteria) and St. Joseph Hall, installed and improved a new wireless internet connection, and updated the main plumbing in Ryken Hall. These upgrades and improvement all serve to create a

more professional and comfortable environment.

The installment of new light bulbs, along with the advancements to our school, is yet another sign for future improvement. Over the summer, MSJ plans to install bigger and more accessible bathrooms in Ryken Hall, providing convenience for many students and faculty during the lunch hours.

With the newest improvement, it is obvious that we as a school are moving forward successfully and efficiently. When asked about his feelings about the new upgrade to the school, MSJ president, Mr. George Andrews, said, "I love making progress, and I enjoy raising money for upgrades and updates." With an improvement in lighting and raise with finances, it is clear that Mount Saint Joseph High School is headed for a brighter future.

## The Wounds From Injustice

*Civil Unrest Rises Nationwide in the Wake of Racial Injustice & Violence*

**Everette Jackson**  
*Quill Contributor*

The frustrations of many people around the country have recently boiled over and sparked many protests, rallies, and discussions over race relations and injustices. A couple of months ago, some of my classmates were talking about what had happened the night of the decision not to indict Michael Brown. One of them said, "I don't understand why they are protesting so much."

I jumped in their conversation to try to explain the reasons why people are fed up with the injustices that happen in their communities, but I find it hard to discuss this topic with people who don't understand why the protests began after the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner.

The killing of these two

unarmed men had revealed the hidden injustice to a huge number of Americans. This problem didn't just start; it's been happening for years, and now the cup runneth over.

There are many cases where officers of the law show disrespect towards citizens and racially profile them when those people have done nothing wrong. When communities are faced with police who abuse their power and harass residents for reasons that go unexplained and without major consequence, then they are less likely to view the police as protecting them. Instead, communities view the police force

as having a disregard for their lives.

The disconnect between African-American communities and the police that are supposed to protect them has caused many problems in trust and respect on both sides. Brown and Garner's deaths are only the most recent examples of the tragic effects of this divide.

For example, back in September 2013, a video went viral showing two Philadelphia police officers racially profile two pedestrians in a stop-and-frisk. The men had only stopped to say hi to a friend but soon fell victim to harassment and harsh racial

statements.

A year ago, in February 2014, a video showing two officers restraining an African American man in Bronx, New York went viral. In the video, the cops ask to see the man's ID and a bus receipt. He complies but then is forced to wait on a bench for an extended period of time.

He eventually stands up. He does not throw a punch, nor try to flee, but when more cops arrive they pin him to the ground and cuff him. The man is still asking in agony why they are doing this when the officers are on top of him.

**Continued on Page 2**

Inside this issue of  
*The Quill...*

Junior Calvin Parker explains why students should take the Grammar Course- Page 2

Sophomore Isaac Scharbach explains why America should care about terrorism in France - Page 3

Check out reviews of *American Sniper* and *The Imitation Game* - Page 4

# The Wounds From Injustice

*Continued from Page 1*

The saddest thing about these incidents is that the African-American men committed no crimes. When situations like this one occur frequently, the effect it has psychologically on the community can be devastating and can easily turn the community against the police.

In response to incidents like these, there are many cries for justice and equality, not only coming from African Americans, but from all nationalities and creeds. On January 3, 2015, Pittsburgh Police Chief Cameron McLay received heavy flak from officers after he posed for a picture with a large sign that read, "I resolve to challenge racism @ work #endwhitesilence." Many are accusing him of calling the Pittsburgh police force racist, even

though he wasn't saying that.

McLay responded in a statement, "I did not seek these young activists out. I was stopping for coffee at First Night. Their message is not anti-anybody. It is simply a call for awareness. The photo was a great, spontaneous moment in time. Please join dialogue for community healing."

Police Chief Cameron McLay apologized to anyone who was offended while defending the photo and its message, stating, "The reality of U.S. policing is that our enforcement efforts have a disparate impact on communities of color." He also stressed that "unconscious bias applies to how we deal with the public."

This man was willing to make an effort to bring healing and make connections with the

community in order to ensure a recovery in the African-American community. This could be achieved by addressing these issues in town hall meetings and encouraging open discussions between citizens and local officials. This way, hopefully all parties could come to an agreeable solution, or at least be able to express their opinion as to what actions need to be taken towards healing.

The wounds of injustice may take years to mend, but the healing process can be accomplished if we as a people regardless of race, color, or creed are willing to take a unified stand. We all must work together with those in law enforcement who want to see these issues addressed in a positive and productive manner.

## Civil Disrespect?

*Examining the Recent, and Devastating, Unrest between Public and Police*

**Russ Sullivan**  
**Quill Staff Writer**

Recently in New York, two NYPD policemen were shot in Brooklyn, New York. Officer Rafael Ramos and Officer Wenjian Liu were sitting in their squad car as they were shot to death by Ismaaiyl Brinsley. Brinsley had just arrived in New York after killing his girlfriend in the city of Baltimore. Brinsley posted on social media that he was going up to New York and take the lives of two policemen.

A cousin of mine also happens to be in the NYPD. On this day, he was only 4 blocks away, sitting in his car. It has crossed my mind many times that he could easily have been the victim in this situation. Almost every police person out there is susceptible to this kind of violence. This has led me to think more about how our nation tends to take the police force for granted.

What some Americans have been refusing to accept is that our policemen are the ones that keep our neighborhoods safe. They risk their lives each day in order to keep us safe. If you take 9/11, for example, 60 police officers were killed.

Ismaaiyl Brinsley is an excellent example of a person who has no respect for the police. There are two different types of murderers: ones that have motives, and ones that just kill in cold blood. Brinsley had a motive. His motive was payback for the death of Michael Brown. His social media post read: "I'm putting wings on pigs today. They take 1 of ours ... Let's take 2 of theirs. #Shootthepolice #RIPERivGardner #RIPMikeBrown This may be my final post ... I'm putting pigs in a blanket." Brinsley also took his own life in this incident.

Another example of disrespect to the police force is the reaction of some of the followers of Civil Rights activist Al Sharpton. He has called for peaceful protests after the deaths of Michael Brown and Ishmael Brinsley; however, many protestors have interpreted his words as a call for more aggressive measures.

Former Mayor Rudy Giuliani has commented on this matter: "If he would like to have a poster boy for hating the police, it's Al Sharpton," he said on CBS' "Face the Nation." "You make Al Sharpton a close adviser, you're

going to turn the police in America against you."

I would say Mayor Giuliani had the right idea. While Sharpton's group marched through Washington DC, a similar group of protesters walked through New York chanting: "What do we want? Dead cops! When do what them? Now!" This form of protesting is anything but peaceful.

Of course, it is necessary to say that there are some dirty cops who take advantage of their job, but I would estimate this to be a very small number of individuals. It is fair to say that an NYPD officer is guilty of excessive use of force, but I believe the majority of the police force would not do something like that. Therefore, extreme actions like Brinsley's murder/suicide and unruly protests inspired by leaders like Sharpton are unnecessary overreactions.

In light of all of the aforementioned, there needs to be a call for peace. If this hate towards our police force continues, it's just going to continue to escalate. As faithful and proud citizens of this country, let us hope and pray that President Obama helps our nation to prevent this from happening.

## Grammar Course Review

*Junior Calvin Parker explains why students should sign up for Mr. Perzinski's course*

The semester grammar course is very useful and surprisingly enjoyable. Mr. Perzinski's class reinforced rules I already knew and introduced me to new strategies that I didn't know before. I really believe this course will continue to help me in areas outside of its classroom.

From the first lessons, I soon learned that Mr. Perzinski is a teacher who is effective in helping us learn while still making the class fun and enjoyable. The textbook of English grammar rules had many helpful definitions and examples that helped me see what Mr. Perzinski was explaining.

Some topics, such as verbal phrases and clauses, became challenging through the semester. I wasn't understanding the information as well as I had at the start of the year, and I needed to put more effort into my homework. When I began taking more detailed notes as I studied, I gained more confidence and scored better grades.

Tougher skills like "Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement" and "Using Adjectives and Adverbs Correctly" became clearer to me. I also learned a lot of specifics about punctuation that I hadn't known previously.

I really enjoyed this grammar course. I had many laughs with classmates and Mr. Perzinski. The class also went on to help me in other areas, such as my PSAT's and English assignments. The course also is continuing to help me write more effectively.

I would recommend it to anyone who wants to raise his level of writing and find greater success in an academic or professional environment.

# Peace in the Middle East

## *Many Possible Routes, One Distant Goal*

**Robert Callahan**

**Quill Contributor**

Imagine rockets being fired at your town every day. More and more neighbors are killed around you from rockets and mortars. More and more neighbors are injured, and buildings and homes are destroyed. Imagine losing your home from a rocket destroying it.

This is the daily life for Israelis. For the Palestinians, it isn't any better. They are constantly being bombed by Israeli planes. Many of their friends and neighbors are being killed and injured. Buildings and homes are also being destroyed.

Israel and Palestine have been fighting since the creation of Israel in 1948. After the Holocaust in World War II, many Jews wanted a recognized Jewish country in the Middle East between the Jordan

River and the Mediterranean Sea in the Holy Land. When the United Nations created an area for Israel out of the former British controlled lands, about 700,000 Islamic Palestinians became displaced. This is how the conflict started, and it is still this way today.

Today, with Palestine's constant attacks on Israelis and Israel's constant bombings on Palestinians, I don't think peace will be possible. The Palestinian terrorist group Hamas wants to destroy Israel completely, and Israelis will make sure it does not happen. Several attempts at peace have been made since 1948 when Israel became an independent country. Several wars have also taken place between the Israelis and Palestinians during that same time.

The problem is whether the country of Israel should be

controlled by Palestinians, Israelis or both. Even with peace attempts and the wars, very little progress has been made with peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

Two plans to resolve the conflict are the one-state and two-state solutions. The one-state solution would make Israel one country, and both Israelis and Palestinians would have equal rights as citizens of the same country. The two-state solution would split Israel into two separate countries, one for the Palestinians and one for the Israelis. Most Israelis do not support the one-state solution because they think they will lose control of the country. The two-state solution is disliked by Israelis because many Israelis live in Palestinian areas like the West Bank.

I don't think either solution

will be effective because neither side will be happy. The Palestinians want all of Israel, and the Israelis want their country protected. Also, if there is a separate Arab country, it may begin to attack Israel.

A more recent threat to peace is terrorist groups like Hamas who want to destroy Israel. Several countries around Israel are being threatened by terrorist groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Its goal is to bring all Muslim regions of the world under its control, beginning with Iraq and the Levant region, which includes Syria, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus, and part of Turkey. ISIS is widely known for its violent propaganda, which includes Internet videos of beheadings.

If ISIS and Hamas continue to hate the Israelis, then peace will not be possible.

## Are We Charlie Hebdo, Too?

### *How the Terrorist Attacks in Paris Challenge American Values*

**Isaac Scharbach**

**Quill Staff Writer**

*"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matthew 5:38-39*

After the murders of journalists from the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* a few weeks ago, many have metaphorically taken up arms in response to this supposed affront on our freedom of speech. Voltaire's famous quote, "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it," has been circulating the web in the aftermath of the attacks. But as we stand in solidarity with the late journalists, what is it actually that we are upholding?

Cherif and Said Kouachi sought revenge and violence in response to the ideas advertised in *Charlie Hebdo*, and, in doing so, worked to undermine the principles

of freedom of speech our nation was founded on. Although it was not freedom of speech that the terrorists targeted, but rather the harsh insults to Islam *Charlie Hebdo* dealt, we cannot ignore the implications of this offense.

*Charlie Hebdo* champions free right of speech and expression, and its publications are a statement of its writers' fearlessness and defiance.

Unfortunately, the way in which *Charlie Hebdo* does this is often shocking and sometimes sickeningly obscene. The writers stand up for a fundamental right that is the soul of America, but rather than using this principle for positive purposes, the weekly seeks to insult and to anger without reason in unprecedented vulgarity.

The terrorists involved in the attack against *Charlie Hebdo* were not combating our rights

directly; rather, they were acting in revenge for the insults dealt them. Even so, we should not ignore the basis on which terrorists' ideology is formed. In numerous places the Qur'an gives reference to violent jihad (struggle), and Pakistani General Ayaan Hirsi Ali famously wrote, "The key to

*Charlie Hebdo* are playing similar roles. Think about it. Both bring their beliefs to an extreme extent in order to wrong each other (although in dramatically different ways). Both, through their actions, work toward the deterioration of religion.

Furthermore, it is not *Charlie Hebdo* alone, but all of France that is making an advance toward secularism. In 2004, France banned all noticeable signs of religion in public schools, and in 2014, the French government made it illegal to cover one's face in public, obviously targeting burqas and niqabs, the traditional Muslim head covering for women. Tell me, is that freedom of expression?

True freedom of expression does not lie only in the ability to say whatever one wants, but also in freedom from discrimination based on one's expression of his or her beliefs. True standing up for one's beliefs lies neither in violence nor submission, but in the ability to quietly walk away.

victory, taught by Allah through the military campaigns of the Prophet Muhammad, is to strike at the soul of your enemy. And the best way to strike at your enemy's soul is through terror."

Given this, it seems that in many ways the terrorists and



## Movie Review: *American Sniper*

**Michael Slattery**  
**Quill Staff Writer**

The story of a courageous Navy Seal from Texas, which happens to be a top novel pick for many MSJ students over the summer, was a compelling and inspirational film for the big screen.

Chris Kyle, a rustic and God-loving cowboy, was dedicated to protecting his country. Regarded as a “Legend” and “Hero”, Kyle was responsible for saving count-

less lives and killing over 150 terrorists.

This movie portrays the unfortunate reality of the tragic condition, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, from which many veterans suffer after experiencing war first hand.

A true inspiration, “American Sniper” deserves four and a half stars out of five stars.

Benedict Cumberbatch stars as Alan Turing in *The Imitation Game*



Chris Kyle - The deadliest sniper in US military history

## Movie Review: *The Imitation Game*

**John Scavilla**  
**Quill Staff Writer**

*The Imitation Game* was released in November. Benedict Cumberbatch and Keira Knightley star in this film about genius mathematician Alan Turing. Turing and his team were hired by Britain’s MI6 to break a supposedly unbreakable Nazi code during World War II.

The movie moves back and forth over three periods in Alan’s life: an interrogation by the British

police during the Cold War; his work with his team to break the Nazi code system; and his childhood, where he discovered his love for cryptography.

Throughout the movie, Turing, who was absolutely brilliant but socially awkward, overcomes all odds. He endured horrendous methods of

bullying as a child and had to hide who he really was and how he felt. During WWII, he constantly fought against the British military hierarchy and authority in his attempts to crack the code in unconventional ways. He suffered rejection from almost everyone until they realized his ingenious methods would prove successful.

In my opinion, director Tyldum did an amazing job in the creation of this film. Although it is not the most fast-paced of movies, through subtle humor, high intensity, and a few action packed moments, this movie will keep you captivated. Benedict Cumberbatch and his co-stars help you relive the nail-biting and heart-wrenching story of Alan Turing.

If not for Alan Turing and his developments, the war would have extended on possibly for years longer and resulted in the loss of thousands more lives. Turing’s universal machine, as it happens, is the reason we have almost limitless knowledge at our fingertips today, since it was really the first computer. I would recommend this movie to anyone.

## Mastering the Fundamentals

### *One Mount Man’s Journey Toward Upperclassmanship*

**Nick Viennas**  
**Quill Staff Writer**

Looking back now on our tumultuous weeks of midterms, winter break, snow delays, and the end of first semester, I have an overwhelming urge to glance back to last year, my freshman year, to put things in perspective. I want to reflect on how much I have changed and learned at the Mount, through all the ups and downs.

When I entered the Mount from middle school, I was used to being at the top of the “totem pole.” Then I came into a new environment where I had to start from the ground up again. While trying to feel at home and comfortable in my new surroundings, I recall the advice and encouragement that was given

during Freshman Orientation. Mr. Norton, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Murphy, Mr. McDivitt, and Mr. Peace expressed to us the importance of becoming Mount Men and stressed that we should carry that with a high honor. For me, I have always heard that from my brothers who graduated from the Mount in ’08 and ’10. After the first week of school, I soon realized this wouldn’t be a walk in the park. Here, effort is needed in order to succeed.

On the first day at the Mount, you are told that you aren’t just going to make new friends, you’re going to gain new “brothers.” I know it’s hard to think that when you’ve only known the person right next to you for only a couple of minutes, but he could, eventually, become your best friend.

Even though I’m still early into my sophomore year, I feel as if I have already made friends that I’ll have for the rest of my life. My older brothers can attest to this, since their best friends graduated with them from St. Joe. This is a testament to the school, since they never knew each other until high school.

A big part of how I am today is attributed to the lessons learned while participating in the Mount’s baseball program. Coach Harris told us early on what it meant to put on those jerseys and take the field. It’s not just about how hard you can throw or how far you can hit the ball; you also have to show respect to everything involved with the game. The freshman coaches helped teach us the fundamentals of the

game, both physically and mentally. When we’d make errors, they would tell us not to worry and just be ready for the next one to be hit. If someone stuck out, they would just say to try again. We learned to not rely on our parents to talk to our coaches or teachers, but for us to take the responsibility and take care of what needs to be done on our own.

At the end of the day I’m proud of the person that I’ve become, and I’m excited to still be changing. Every day I look forward to school and what I’ll learn and accomplish that day. I know my remaining years will fly by, and I hope I’ll become the person that my family wants me to be, along with being a good example of a proud Mount man.