

Support whistleblowers

by Aidan Adams-Campeau
Humor Editor



Whistleblowers have been a topic of national discussion in recent months. Both the sentencing of Bradley/Chelsea Manning and the recent leaks made by Edward Snowden have sparked debates about topics such as the importance of privacy, corruption in government, and the morality of releasing confidential and sensitive information. While I can understand the desire of the government to prosecute these whistleblowers, the American public should regard these figures as heroes rather than traitors.

Whistleblowers are willing to step into a legal grey area to release confidential information to the public at great personal risk to themselves. Because of this bravery, they are absolutely vital to maintaining a government whose power truly lies with its citizens. Governments cannot be trusted to carry on with their business unchecked. Over time, the desire for authority and power is more alluring to leaders than the desire for morality.

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, for example, the government has become increasingly willing to weaken restrictions on personal liberties in the name of national security. At the same time, the US government has become more secretive about these questionable practices.

Whistleblowers are necessary in times like these to release to the public the information that the government is hiding from them. Chelsea Manning leaked information about government spying, shocking military statistics about deaths of citizens in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and, infamously, a video of an Apache helicopter killing Iraqi citizens and a Reuters photographer. She also released thousands and thousands of diplomatic cables giving insight into the shady operations of politics. Edward Snowden leaked proof that the government has been collaborating with companies such as Verizon to subject millions of citizens to blanket surveillance, ignoring the constitutional rights protecting Americans from searches without reasonable suspicion.

Without the revelations brought forward by Manning and Snowden, the government would never have to answer to what would only be mere suspicions of wrongdoing. Knowledge is power, and whistleblowers give power back to the deserving citizens by disseminating information about the shady dealings of the government.

Americans should be grateful for the selfless acts of these individuals who suffer immensely to add transparency to our government. Chelsea Manning has been sentenced to 35 years in prison, while Edward Snowden is stranded in Russia, seeking political asylum anywhere he can find it. Clearly, these individuals were motivated primarily by an interest in the welfare of their country as a whole. While traitors seek to damage their country for personal gain, whistleblowers make tremendous personal sacrifices for the benefit of their country. For this reason, they should be regarded as true American heroes.

(Sources: The Guardian, CNN)



Appreciate your school

by Rachel Sailsbury
Opinion Editor



Public schools in the U.S. are part of an underrated yet incredible system. Although it may not be flawless—and many students are eager to point out its shortcomings—the access that the majority of students have to exceptional teachers and resources is something to be appreciated. Especially at LGHS, a school with seemingly limitless funding, taking advantage of what a school can offer opens up a world of opportunities, such as gateways to four year colleges and connections to outstanding peers. Even with such a stellar school environment, appreciating school still carries a stigma. Why

is it against social norms to appreciate, or even enjoy, going to school?

This pessimistic attitude towards school may stem from a number of places, such as the negative portrayal of school on television, or maybe even the average teenager's unwillingness to wake up at seven in the morning. The important issue isn't where this approach to education comes from, it is what can be done to make school more engaging and less miserable for students as a whole. Although education reform is not out of the question, there is a simple, logical, and immediate solution: make students aware that appreciating and enjoying school is completely within their control.

Whether it's finding something the school offers that is well-suited to their interests, or just realizing that school is not the enemy, heightening morale in regards to academics is crucial in encouraging students to become more engaged and in making those who are already engaged less stressed. For almost every individual there is something within a school's vast web of clubs, activities, and classes that will suit his or her interests, and it is essential for each student to find a creative outlet. It is urgent to motivate students to hunt for these activities instead of writing off school as a dreaded obligation.

School should not be treated as an adversary when it solely serves to educate and open doors for the future. In order to ensure students are immersed in their academic community, learning must be treated as the privilege it is, rather than the chore it has become.



We need to leave Miley alone

by Sean Clark
Humor Editor



On Aug. 25, Miley Cyrus shocked audiences with her raunchy and controversial performance of "We Can't Stop" at the 2013 MTV awards. The young pop star came on stage wearing a furry teddy bear one piece while a voice boomed in the background, "twerk it out, twerk it out, twerk it out." Her performance was widely received as slutty and racist, but I do not think that this is the case.

Miley Cyrus has recently adopted "twerking" as her signature dance move, which people now associate almost exclusively with African Americans. People even claim that twerking is a part of black culture. So when Miley walked out on stage with all African American backup dancers, and began "appropriating black culture" by doing something as simple as shaking her butt, audiences around the world became upset. The fact that people even care about the race of Miley's backup dancers is absolutely unacceptable. This claim is completely offensive. Butt-shaking does not belong to any race or culture.

Initially, I applauded Miley for hiring backup dancers who weren't unhealthily skinny. Having curvy backup dancers helps relieve the social pressure to have a stick thin body. Accusing Miley Cyrus of appropriating black culture by twerking enforces the stereotype that all African Americans twerk and have large butts. This stereotype degrades actual African American culture by insinuating that the culture is shallow and underdeveloped.

Miley Cyrus is also under fire for stripping down to nude-colored underwear and dancing provocatively with Robin Thicke. My twitter feed was filled with horrendous insults directed towards Miley, calling

her a "slut," "hoe," "whore," and "ratchet." Slut shaming is extremely sexist and carries an annoying double standard. The only reason why Miley was criticized for having a highly sexual performance was because she's a woman, and in our society it is not acceptable for women to want sex, have sex, or talk about sex. However, men are expected to think about sex 24/7.

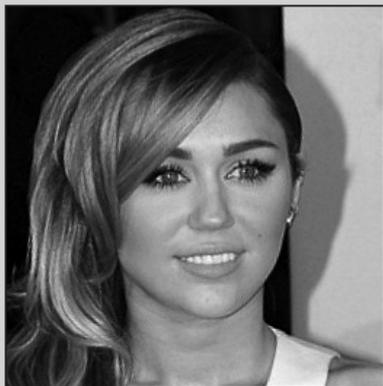
Sex and desire is natural human behavior. No one should be criticized for being human. Media and pop culture put so much pressure on women to have perfect bodies, but when a woman shows off her body, she is verbally abused like Miley Cyrus.

Cyrus' childhood role as Hannah Montana amplified the horror some VMA viewers felt. Hannah Montana is a symbol of childhood, which seems to be an indirect synonym for innocence. People need to stop associating Miley Cyrus with a role that she moved on from 3 years ago. In recent events, Miley Cyrus has clearly attempted to deviate from her childhood image. From singing about getting "turnt up," and popping ecstasy. It is unfair and invasive to hold her silence regarding the situation and said, "Madonna's done it. Britney's done it. Every VMA performance, that's what you're looking for; you're wanting to make history." She also stated, "You're thinking about it more than I thought about it when I did it." The only thing that was inappropriate about her performance was the audience's insensitive reaction.

Miley's Disney Channel persona against her. Miley did not carry herself like an adult. Her performance wasn't coordinated very well, and she relied on shocking her audience for publicity. Her performance was simple and people are overthinking it. In the end, Miley accomplished her goal of making VMA history. She broke

her silence regarding the situation and said, "Madonna's done it. Britney's done it. Every VMA performance, that's what you're looking for; you're wanting to make history." She also stated, "You're thinking about it more than I thought about it when I did it." The only thing that was inappropriate about her performance was the audience's insensitive reaction.

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The animals need us

by Lauren Fredericks
Web Editor



A few weeks ago I was near San Jose's SAP Center when I noticed protesters gathered at the front entrance. Knowing the circus was in town and because of my knowledge of their abuse toward their animals, I decided to join the protesters. Little did I realize what an impact the half hour would have on me. I witnessed countless adults shielding their children as the protesters peacefully spoke and handed out flyers to those attending the circus. Here was a perfectly good opportunity for these parents to educate their children about animal cruelty and morality, but instead they took the statement "ignorance is bliss" to a whole new level. People need to know the truth about circus animal cruelty, or it will continue indefinitely.

Mahatma Gandhi once stated that "the greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated." Most people are aware of the abuses against animals like dog fighting, puppy mills, and neglect. However, many people are shocked when I tell them about the horrible cruelty that exists in circuses.

The largest and most well-known circus is Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey Circus. It was started in 1870, and today the circus has an expansive collection of lions, tigers, elephants, llamas, and more. The circus may appear to be all fun and games, but there is a dark truth that is not seen by spectators. The circus does not treat the animals as the wild and majestic creatures that they are, but as props that need to be forcibly controlled in order to perform correctly. For example, baby elephants are separated from their mothers well before they are in the wild, and they scream as men yank their young bodies into unnatural positions with ropes. This brutal training is accompanied by electric prods used to shock the baby elephant into obedience. A common training tool used on elephants is the bullhook, which resembles a fireplace poker. This instrument is used to beat the elephants as part of training. This cruelty needs to be stopped.

Footage taken by a Ringling Brothers retired trainer, Sam Haddock, confirms that this form of training occurs. The ex-trainer claims that this method is the only way to train elephants, proving that wild animals, like elephants, are not meant to perform and should not be used for entertainment purposes.

Elephants are not the only animals being abused. A Ringling Brothers tiger trainer was filmed by a PETA volunteer beating his animals during a dress rehearsal, and tigers have been endangered being transported in overheated boxcars. Witnesses have also seen an out of control caged tiger being shot to death by a Ringling Brothers employee, which further proves wild animals are not meant to be kept as performance pets. Wild animals should remain in wild.

If our society was judged solely on the way its animals are treated, as Mahatma Gandhi suggested, it is failing. Animals are being tortured and killed as a result of our demand for entertainment, and many of us simply look the other way. In fact, we support and encourage the cruelty every time we attend the circus. In order to become a great nation, Americans as a whole must educate themselves and stop the use of wild animals for entertainment purposes.

(Sources: ringling.com, PETA, ringlingbeatsanimals.com)

