Our Mission:
RCAHive strives to be an innovative student magazine that is entertaining, intellectually provocative, and visually engaging. We are conscious of the responsibility of writing and publishing, and we seek to create a dynamic magazine that is worthy of its readers. RCAHive seeks to bring RCAH to the world and bring the world into RCAH.

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RCAHive wants to hear from you! We encourage submissions, writing and photos, from all members of the RCAH community. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the writers and not necessarily of RCAHive. For this reason, we do not accept anonymous submissions.

The theme for the May issue is travel.
Cooper Franks

’Tis a new beginning. And since we’ve begun this beginning with a question, why not ask more? What defines a true beginning? It is measured by time, like that monumental second between 2011 and 2012? Why is it that we need New Year’s to begin? To alter the course of our actions, thoughts and outlook on life entirely. Why do we need to remind ourselves to self-analyze, appreciate and plot our ambitions?

I believe that each day should be lived like New Year’s. It’s a question, why not ask more? We have the power to create, to inspire, to continually redefine ourselves each day. Instead of waiting till the New Year to make that resolution, why not now?

For you, the traditional New Year’s could be huddled up north with your loved ones, or perhaps each year you search for that party in your basement among your friends. But wherever you were, you were no longer recognized to be me. Some unchanged entity that I was no longer capable of filling, or even capable of defining. A void within myself that I was incapable of filing, or even describing. As I adjusted to my niche back at MSU and the RCAH, I slowly reconciled with myself. I faced reality. But I felt lost; uncontrollable, almost.

When I think back to a year ago, I see myself shoving my belongings in suitcases. I see myself packing journals, books, and maps. I see myself arriving in Rome, in the midst of antiquity and chaos. I see myself walking along vialles and running to tram stops. I see myself as someone other than myself. Some unchanged entity that I no longer recognize to be me.

Of course, much has altered within a year. I spent half of 2011 thousands of miles across the Atlantic, something I’ve never done before. When I came back to the United States, I felt that there was an empty space of who I previously was. A void within myself that I was incapable of filling, or even describing. As I adjusted to my niche back at MSU and the RCAH, I slowly reconciled with myself. I faced reality. But I felt lost; uncontrollable, almost.

I struggled with how I could connect back to the self that I was in Rome; the woman with no reservations, no country. The Americana who was no longer una straniera–a foreigner. How could I get back there? Scenes play out each day in my head: having dinner with my neighbors, making the 45 minute trek to class each day, arguing with gypsies, buying flowers from vendors in the city’s most colored markets, arguing with gypsies, buying flowers from vendors in the city’s most colored markets. Scenes play out each day in my head: having dinner with my neighbors, making the 45 minute trek to class each day, arguing with gypsies, buying flowers from vendors in the city’s most colored markets.

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New Beginnings are something many people wish to obtain on a daily basis. New beginnings with friendships, classes, jobs. But when I think of new beginnings in correlation with my article, I think of a new beginning by starting a third wave: A third wave to the feminist movement.

The feminist movement dates all the way back to the 1800's when women were fighting for equal rights and were assimilating into the workplace. Now over a hundred years later, we are still facing detrimental issues that plague the female gender.

I could write this article and inform you about how women still face discrimination in the workplace and still aren’t allowed to fight on the front lines, but instead, I will tell you about how it is still seen as degrading for a male to participate in feminine activities. How it is still degrading for a male to like soft colors that often seen as “girly” like pink and purple. And how it is still degrading for a husband to stay at home and do the cooking and cleaning while the wife “brings home the bacon.”

On April 5th of last year, J. Crew sent out an email to its customers, offering free shipping on certain purchases. The email contained an ad of Jenna Lyons, the J. Crew President and Executive Creative Director, painting her young son’s toenails pink, which just so happens to be his favorite color.

This innocent picture is meant to depict a mother and son bonding and sharing a happy moment together while advertising J. Crew’s nail polish line. However, many people acted as if the picture was some horrid tool meant to cause gender confusion to Lyon’s son and small boys everywhere. Erin R. Brown, a writer from CMI, the very conservative Cultural and Media Institute even went as far to say, “J. Crew Pushes Transgender Child Propaganda.”

Many said that this ad was wrong because the young boy is showing “transgender” actions and will lose his ideas of “gender identity.” If the ad was of a father and daughter playing with toy trucks or toy guns, the ad would have slipped right under everybody’s radar.

This is why the ad has a stronger underlying problem other than just the accusations that were spewed at J. Crew. The ad proves the fact that boys taking part in a “girl activity” is unacceptable, not because the activity itself is unacceptable, but because the female sex is still seen as inferior.

This same theory is applicable to boys and men who are overly sensitive or are having a bad day. You can often hear other guys tell them to “stop being such a girl.” Many people see sensitivity as a weakness, and relate sensitivity to women. In turn, this causes women to appear as weak or inferior in the eyes of many.

The female sex has progressed significantly in the last century. We attained our right to vote, began to break the mold of just being the motherly caretaker, and started participating in activities that were traditionally male dominated. But now, I think it’s time to not only finish breaking this stereotypical mold for women, I think that the stereotypical mold for men needs to be broken, too.

For example, it’s still not socially acceptable for a father to be a stay at home dad while the mother goes out to work. Society deems this unacceptable because the gender roles are reversed. Traditional western culture says the woman should be cleaning and caring for the children while the man brings in the money. However, it’s now okay for the woman to work and have a career as long as her husband does, too.

My roommate and I share similar perspectives. This past week, it seemed like our room was overflowing with female power as we discussed the stereotypical roles women fulfill. Sarah told me about an article she read that attributed women’s success to their nurturing and caring qualities—nothing else. Not their hard work, intelligence, or determination.

Many students, and maybe even some professors, are going to read this article and deny the claim I am making by saying that I have made an inductive leap from the evidence to my conclusion. However, those who believe that probably won’t be able to answer me this: why is it now acceptable for little girls to not only play on baseball teams, or play with trucks, or even toy guns, yet it’s still unacceptable for little boys to like pink or paint their toenails?

What’s wrong with that? Children are curious and they like to explore. A boy playing with dolls or painting his toenails isn’t going to “make him gay” or force him to become transgender. It’s not going to make him “weak” like society views women. His identity will stay the same, regardless of feminine activities he may participate in.

This is why I think it’s time for a third wave of the feminist movement. But this time, the movement can’t just change things for the female sex, because in order for things to change for us, things need to change for the male sex, too.

If you have a computer and ears, and don’t live under a rock, you’ve probably been hearing a whole lot about two acronyms lately: SOPA and PIPA. As I’m sure you’ve all heard it has something to do with Internet and everyone is against it. But the details of these two legislations have become so vague and misconstrued that they are starting to sound like the confusing health reform of 2009-2010 years.

So what exactly are the SOPA and PIPA bills? Well for starters SOPA is the House of Representatives’ Stop Online Piracy Act. PIPA is the Senate’s Protect IP Act. Each bill, when passed, would allow copyright holders to punish websites that host pirated content. According to CNN.com PIPA,

“...is intended to help put a stop to foreign websites that illegally post, and sometimes sell, intellectual property from the United States. Federal law-enforcement agencies would be empowered to shut down those sites and cut off advertising and online payments to them.”

This worries many American companies who have domain names registered across borders. Companies registered in the United States are equally as worried because both bills give copyright holders the power to shut down sites they accuse of copyright infringement with very little to no evidence. The current standing law in the US allows for the website guilty of infringement to be given a warning to take down offending material before the government is permitted to seize the domain.

This bill doesn’t just affect those small shady websites that stream terribly bootlegged versions of movies not yet on DVD. Both of these legislations have become so serious that requires a serious legislative response, we will not support legislation that reduces freedom of expression, increases cyber security risk, undermines the dynamic, innovative global Internet. These bills have been so abundant, in fact, that it has caused for many rewrites of the bills. As reported by the NY Daily News, “SOPA is coming back to committee for a markup session in February, according to a release from one of its sponsors, Rep. Lamar Smith. PIPA is still scheduled to go up for a procedural vote in the Senate Jan. 24th.”

The likelihood of both bills falling or being completely revised until the 2012 election are looking very probable. And luckily for those against the legislation, the opposition to the bills far outweighs the support which will be very important for President Obama on this year being that it’s almost election time.
Following tie for first in the Iowa caucuses, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney won the New Hampshire primary by a sixteen point margin. He’s expanded his national lead to double digits. Three former opponents for the nomination have dropped their bids. He’s scored high-profile endorsements, including former rival and 2008 nominee Senator John McCain. On the surface, January seems to have been an excellent month for Romney. But even as everything seems to be going right for the frontrunner, January has revealed a number of chinks in the former Governor’s armor and opened the door for intense criticism both as he wraps up the GOP nomination and in the fall against President Barack Obama.

Romney has attempted to deflect the attacks by insisting that to criticize Bain is to “put private enterprise on trial.” In fact, Romney even suggested that those who attacked it didn’t believe in capitalism. This defense may have been effective in the general election, when right-wing voters, already convinced Obama is a socialist, would have shrugged these attacks off. But the fact that this onslaught comes now puts Romney in a difficult position in the primary and sacrifices his general election defense. To attempt to brand the President as an opponent of capitalism, while dishonest, would have been one thing. But to try to do the same with a former Republican Speaker of the House, a leading culture warrior, former Senator and the Republican Governor of Texas, is monumentally more difficult. Assuming Mitt is the nominee, expect a number of Democratic ads this fall to simply let Romney’s Republican opponents do the talking.

Not all of what has made January such a bad month for Romney has been because of his rivals. He has made a series of unfounded errors that have reinforced the Bain narrative and has gone further to appeal out of touch. In New Hampshire, he told a crowd at a town-hall meeting, “I like being able to fire people.” In context, this was not an allusion to his corporate past but simply a rather awkward phrasing of his position on health care choice—but the context is not likely to matter. As the airwaves are flooded with ads featuring workers laid off by Bain, to suggest that you enjoy “firing people” sounds callous no matter the rest of the sentence.

Romney’s tax returns have also been a source of considerable frustration. In keeping with a precedent set by Romney’s father, Michigan Governor George Romney, every major Presidential candidate since 1968 has released his or her tax returns. So far, Romney has refused. This is because they will likely show that, because of the structure of the federal tax code, Romney pays a lower tax rate than many middle-class Americans. The actual tax forms may do a lot to validate the Democrats’ position that the wealthy currently benefit from too many loopholes. But the drawn out, feckless way in which Romney has attempted to dodge the issue has made matters even worse. When asked at a CNN debate if he would release his returns like his father did, his intellectual, “maybe,” drew boos from the audience. In an election where the progressive case for federal taxes will likely loom large, struggles with his own taxes will do everything but help.

As we enter February, Mitt Romney is still the overwhelming favorite to win the Republican nomination. He has the support of most of the GOP establishment, he has the strongest organization of any of the Republicans, and polls consistently show him as the strongest opponent in the general election. But as his record at Bain has faced increased scrutiny, his tax returns have sparked considerable controversy, and his connection with the average American has been questioned, the first month of 2012 has been a bad month for Mitt.
That First Step (Is, Notoriously, a Doozy)

Libby Lussenhop

Poe’s tell-tale heart would commend us for our own tale-telling hearts that can’t be silenced by the floorboards.

Tales we display or dismiss, we are familiar with the polished blades concealed among words, like zinc-spiced pills submerged in applesauce—in an age of side effects, we understand how those blades can be bent, forging rapiers into railings, guiding us up the slick steps to the high dive.

Shuffling our feet, we adjust the fulcrum, we need a little more spring after this persistent winter of perpetual sleep, words confined to dreams.

Now poised at the edge of the springboard, tales held tight, it’s the doubt before the dive that stops us. We want to know the water’s depth; we want to see ourselves falling, breaking the surface, returning, breathing, breathing repeating.

Only time will tell and we’ve never listened so closely. But first it’s our turn to speak. So we’re taking that first step. Mind the splash z one.
After a day of moving, moving, moving, we settled down in Greektown to get some tasty eats. I was seated at the edge of a long table with my back to the window, and everyone in the restaurant was placed in just a way that allowed me to make perfectly connected eye contact with a perfectly connected stranger. Everyone at my table was talking and eating and buzzing, and I just felt me slowly going inside of myself. Not in a Sylvia Plath sort of way, but rather I was sinking into Observe and Absorb Maggie, and I just let the reality of the situation envelop me. I felt a step removed from everything, and in my observational frenzy, my eyes found Stranger. He looked to be about my age, at the very least no more than 20, and he too was smushed between the energies of those around him, subdued in the middle of the buzzbuzzbuzzing. He had a thick, dark mustache that seemed to contradict the clean eager youngness of his face. And we looked at each other. And we kept looking at each other.

Usually when someone finds me staring at their face, I quickly shy away and find any and every possible out to explain my crazy eyes. But this time, neither of us did. Maybe it was because I wasn’t at my real home, or maybe it was because I was so absorbed in absorbing, and a little tipsy off of rosy red Greek wine. Either way, we both boldly continued staring, not smiling or mouthing any words, just blatantly acknowledging the other. We shifted between worlds, returning to our proper tables, and every now and then I found him with a big smile, or gesturing to his family (…probably) around him. We looked up every now and then, the staring continuing. I wasn’t trying to flirt with him, and I don’t think he was really trying to flirt with me. In the situation, flirtation seemed a foreign concept and beneath us. We were just connected, despite the busy restaurant and the even busier streets. We were just looking, trying to feel the presence of another human. (At least, that’s what I was trying to do, for all I know he was just wondering why the doe-eyed, big-nosed white chick was staring at him.) After awhile, a ruckus broke out, and I saw the waiters hustling over to Stranger’s table, singing and bringing him whatever the hell dessert Greek restaurants give to people on their birthday (…baklava?). Either way, I found out his name is Yani, and as he was sung to he just stared ahead, barely reacting.

After hours and hours, he got up, dinner over. And as he stood up, I noticed he only had one arm, the other was a prosthetic. I didn’t notice during dinner, because it looked like his hands were just sitting in his lap while he ate, and frankly, I was too busy staring at his mustache face. I didn’t mind, he was still clearly a good looking kid, but everything inside me fell apart, and everything grew louder as I saw his Maybe-Uncle wrap a coat around him and zip it up. The whole time Stranger Yani looked at me, our eyes locked, and I felt like I could hear everything we weren’t saying. He was wondering if I cared. He was wondering if I was questioning our whole connection because now I know his physical secret. Or maybe he was wondering if I was happy, if that’s why I was staring, and if that’s what I wanted to see. I wanted to hug him and nuzzle him and tell him that everything was so real, that I wasn’t flirting, just connecting, and that wasn’t going to go away. But his dark eyes just kept looking at me unfishingly, and I wanted so much for him to see that it didn’t matter that I didn’t care. But it was his truth, and I know he can’t escape it.

He and his Maybe-Family, Definite-Horde filed out of the restaurant, his eyes never leaving mine, judgement, connection, confusion. I found myself at a long table, surrounded by laughing, faces made louder and more distorted by the rosy red Greek wine. The bottles emptied, and his eyes remained.

I felt anxious-empty-flat. Will his eyes remember me? After all, we’re just humans.
Music not Money
Isaac Berkowitz

Recently, I was able to play music with a local jazz guitarist by the name of Ray Kamalay (member of The String Doctors, Shepard’s Folly, and Ray Kamalay and his Red Hot Peppers). He has been playing music around Lansing and Detroit since the 1960’s. Being a young musician in the area, I was interested in what he had to say about the local scene. He told me that directly after finishing college in 1974 (a recession year) he was able to obtain a job at a local foundry making roughly $240 a week while playing music two to three nights a week at local bars and venues and making the same amount of money. He told me he played at as many venues as he could and even then, there were still countless more inviting him and other local musicians to play. This got me thinking about my own experiences with playing live music. Growing up in Grand Rapids I have been playing music in a band since I was about 14 and playing live since I was 16. Since I’ve been playing, however, it has been much more difficult to showcase my music live. There were only really two venues in which my band could sincerely play and be welcomed because of what we were doing, while every other venue seemed to focus on money and not the music. Mr. Kamalay further reminisced about how live music used to mean everything, recordings were simply a way to be recognized and bring people to see the band play. Over time recordings have ruined the purity and excitement of the live performance. People began putting so much into the studio recordings and using new technologies to alter sound and ability that when audiences finally go the see the artists perform they are let down by the poor quality of the music and inability to duplicate the sound, leaving fans skeptical of the music and pushing people away from the live music scene. However, to be clear, there are musicians who are able to duplicate their studio sound and put on a show as wonderful as expected by their fans. It is when tools such as Auto-Tune are used to perfect the vocals of a singer that the studio begins to ruin the sanctity of live performance.

As times change though, it is easy to get left behind. As much as one would love it to be two days past where recordings were merely an invitation to the live show—where there were recordings like Bob Dylan’s 115th Dream in which a carefree Dylan stumbles over the intro begins laughing and starts the song over—you must progress with the times and roll with the punches. As a musician now it seems as if you are judged more on the quality of your recordings than your raw talent as exposed in a live show. Live music, to me, is truly how music is supposed to be heard. Every time it gives you something new, something exciting to think about and to inspire you.

Music not Money
Isaac Berkowitz

Monday, December 19 was quite the night in Chi town. I went to Reggie’s Rock Club, the first stop on Asher Roth’s new tour named after his recently released mix tape, “Rap & Jazz.” The mix tape he dropped while on stage at the stroke of midnight for free on the well-known website, “Datpiff.”

Four close friends of mine made the road trip from my hometown of South Haven to meet up with fellow Roth fans in Chicago six hours before the doors opened. We locked into parking right in front of the venue and to our surprise, we could see Asher doing his sound check inside. We were so pumped for the concert and we were not disappointed. A guy who went into Reggie’s noticed we waiting in line alone for this concert not scheduled to start for hours; he came back out with a camera. He said they were making a rap & jazz tour DVD and wanted an interview with some obviously dedicated fans. This was exciting but not enough to block out the cold of waiting hours on a frigid December night. Right before they opened the doors on this sold out show, we tossed our sweatshirts and coats in the car then walked in right to the front and center of the stage. After some opening MCL’s, a soulful and refreshing jazz band called the Oh My’s came out and roled the house. Their new single “My House” sounded great with their blend of saxophone, trombone, trumpet, keyboard, drums, bongos, and lead vocalist playing smooth guitar. Rapper GLC destroyed his set and Micky Rocks of the Cool Kids came out with DJ Chuck English and pumped the place up. The doors opened at 7 and it was around 11 when Asher finally came on, and boy was the crowd ready. He walked out in a plain grey crew neck with a PBR blue ribbon pinned to his chest and warned the crowd that “I’m gonna play a lot of stuff off my new mix tape a lot of stuff you guys haven’t heard but its gonna be ok because we’re just gonna jam and rock out.”

He then proceeded to rock song after song off his mix tape bringing out most of the other MC’s that were featured in the songs: Vic Mensa and Lian Cunningham of up and coming band Kids These Days joined him on stage for “Hard Times.” DJ Chuck English came back out to do his song “In the Kitchen,” which him and Asher actually made in the kitchen! Nathan Santos joined Roth for “Not Meant 2 Be” while Roth got everyone to spread their arms out and “float” to the beat like we were flying. All the while DJ Wreckineyez spun the beats in his fake mustache and glasses, flawlessly free styling a bit here and there. My friends and I were blown away at how close we were to the artist. I have pictures on my phone that look as if I was on stage with Asher. When Roth left the stage the crowd was more than hyped and the inevitable chant “ASH-ER ASH-ER ASH-ER” started up. He came back out and performed his hit single “G.R.I.N.D.” The crowd went insane when they heard the unmistakable synthesized organ intro to the start of the song. That energy carried through the song and after the chorus, Asher, his bassist, drummer, and DJ Wreckineyez stopped and danced to Apache (Jump On It). Then they smoothly went back into the song ending with Roth stage diving right onto me and my friends.

Walking out of Reggie’s at 1:30am Chicago time after DJ Wreckineyez freestyle to end the show meant it was already 2:30am in South Haven. Driving the 2 hours back was no problem since that amazing show had me wired. A quick “It was awesome” to my mom at four in the morning when she asked how the concert was and I flopped onto my bed with the sounds of soulful jazz, amazing MC’s, the roar of a sold out crowd, the sounds of soulful jazz, amazing MC’s, the roar of a sold out house, and Asher’s Unique tone still pulsing in my ears.
A small record label located in Fenton, Michigan has been generating quite a bit of buzz over the past few years. Count Your Lucky Stars, or CYLS, as it’s known to many fans, is a label that has amassed a large following in the Midwest. They happen to be one of the frontrunners in the growing “Midwest Emo Revival” scene and are associated with the larger label known as Topshelf Records. Now, when I say Emo, I don’t mean the common misconception of bands like Hawthorne Heights or The Used. Midwest Emo has a much more subtle and subdued sound. The heavy distortion of most mainstream emo and hardcore bands is often tossed aside and replaced with a clean “twinkly” guitar sound. Bands in this scene incorporate elements of Math Rock, post-rock, and punk rock.

Even though there is a particular sound that the label looks for, listeners can find a great amount of variety among the bands on the label. Warren Franklin has a more acoustic singer/songwriter style, soft and emotional sound of Empir! Empir! (I Was A Lonely Estate) is a must, and are associated with the larger label known as Topshelf Records. Now, when I say Emo, I don’t mean the common misconception of bands like Hawthorne Heights or The Used. Midwest Emo has a much more subtle and subdued sound. The heavy distortion of most mainstream emo and hardcore bands is often tossed aside and replaced with a clean “twinkly” guitar sound. Bands in this scene incorporate elements of Math Rock, post-rock, and punk rock.

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A New Year
Abby Conlin

I adore my godmother Susan, a writer who is responsible for my taste in jewelry, love of words, and the marriage of my parents. But she is also a force to be reckoned with, which means that until recently, I never spoke at her dinner table for fear of public shame. Case in point, when I finally worked up the nerve to argue with her for the first time, she informed me that my theories on the author H.A. Ray (of Curious George fame) were totally incorrect—the direct quote, actually is, “This you’re wrong, sweetie. Really, really WRONG.”—and we began yelling at each other about a child’s author until, inevitably, she won.

Fortunately, I have developed more of a backbone with her since then, and “You’re really, really WRONG.” has become part of family lore. But she is still a challenge sometimes, and this past New Year’s definitely put my family to the test. We arrived at her apartment in Manhattan two days after Christmas to be greeted with the excited announcement that she had gotten us tickets to see the 9/11 Memorial on January first. My father tentatively suggested that maybe only he and my godmother go, and let my mother and I stay back, just in case I hadn’t made it clear enough with my brother, but in case I hadn’t, she insisted that my theories on the author H.A. Ray (of Curious George fame) were totally incorrect—the direct quote, actually is, “This you’re wrong, sweetie. Really, really WRONG.”—and we began yelling at each other about a child’s author until, inevitably, she won.

The fact of the matter is, we know a couple of names on the marble walls of the site, including the father of a childhood friend of mine from Brooklyn (where I grew up), and I really didn’t want to go. Didn’t want to start 2012 in a mess of tears and snot. Which my mother and father understood, just as well as they understood how much it meant to my godmother that we all go together. So, seven hours after cheering for the four mile-races in Central Park at midnight, the five of us were in line for security checks in lower Manhattan. It is public knowledge that the attacks gutted the towers as well as the surrounding area, but being there for the first time since was surreal. The city space was oddly clear with an enormous wash of light and sky overhead because, unlike the rest of the island, there were no buildings jumbled together. My father was clenching his jaw and my mother was walking behind me with her head down. My brother was silent too, but it has to be said that he’s sixteen...My godmother was not prepared for how her guests behaved during the half-hour allotted to them on site, for how much we cried. My parents and I walked single file around the two enormous square fountains that stand for each tower. There was water coursing down the black stone insides, across the bottoms, and then down again a rigid quadrilateral chute in the center that seemed to be pulling us in and under to the ashes of the attacks far below. We looked at each engraved name, the mothers and their unborn children, the sons carrying their father’s names; there was a mass of people slowly rotating around the two marble squares, and then through the many memorial trees. My godmother and brother drifted off while my parents and I stood first in front of my friend’s father’s name, then the firefighter from our Park Slope neighborhood, and were quiet for a long time. It was sometime during that stillness that I noticed that many tourists around us were not upset. Instead, they were posing for photographs, situating themselves under the sun, leaning on the fountain walls, grinning hugely with peace signs. I found this shocking, almost offensive, and was convinced that we had to have something else to think about. We continued our walk through the memorial; left just before the thirty minutes were up, and ventured our way back to where we had parked, a few blocks into the murk of the city. It was a relief to be back in that shadowed familiar. And then, as we were getting into the car, a large man in a white coat on his head appeared down the street. I kid you not, a black cat with white mittens, and a group of Asian tourists behind us got very excited and pulled out cameras, in response to which the guy held up a furious “No, you’re wrong, sweetie. Really, really WRONG.”—and we began yelling at each other about a child’s author until, inevitably, she won.

What if we realized that the world is far bigger than us? That our time is short, during which we can and will find some way to which we come into contact with thousands of people? And that if we chose to spend that short time here being a positive force, we could do a lot more for those people we only briefly pass in our lives than if we were unpleasant?

Time, it seems, is a tricky thing. Just as every year, there is a new New Year, a new beginning. And just as every year, there is a need for space during which we can (and will) find some way to which we come into contact with thousands of people. And that if we chose to spend that short time here being a positive force, we could do a lot more for those people we only briefly pass in our lives than if we were unpleasant?

It’s my last semester, and I’m sort of freaking out and not wanting to dwell in “new beginnings” quite yet. But what I can do is new reflections. Being that this is the “beginning of the end” I feel as though it relates. I wanted my column to be a tell-all. Me laying on the hard truths: schooling you guys in hard knocks. And one thing I know about best is living (read going BANANAZ) in Snyder-Phillips. Here are some of the tricks I learned during my time in that complex, the notionous, complex that is MAS:

1. Create your own extracurriculars. I’m not talking about the usual “join an intramural team” or “Let’s start the RCAH Photo Club for uneighteenth time.” I’m talking about real extracurriculars like the time my roommate and I started what we called “The Terrace Fight Club— Don’t Talk About It.” We advertised on the bathroom dry erase boards and told everyone on our floor to meet us in the Pillar Room at 3 in the morning. No one came, except there was a couple there making out. They didn’t want to be in the clubs.
2. Find places that aren’t your room to make your home. I just want to say to the record right now that we kind of the “Snyder Reading Rooms” or the “Back rooms” above from a first-year office. And what is formally titled “Serenity”. Serenity is the place for one to truly go crazy. No work gets done there, but at the same time, all the work gets done there. It is the only place where it is completely reasonable to order two rounds of Jimmy John’s in one night.
3. Get really in it. The caf is cool until after the first month or two when you realize that you will never eat a new meal again. You know that green bean casserole comes on the bar three times a day. Everyone shuffles in and sharing the same place. Sitting in these spaces, you will cherish forever. Sitting in “Serenity” or in the “back rooms” or the “back rooms” at SAC or the “back rooms” at the Student Union and from Brimstone to Bliss and back again to Ciao.

This is what college is all about.

Abby Schottenfeld

It’s my last semester, and I’m sort of freaking out and not wanting to dwell in “new beginnings” quite yet. But what I can do is new reflections. Being that this is the “beginning of the end” I feel as though it relates. I wanted my column to be a tell-all. Me laying on the hard truths: schooling you guys in hard knocks. And one thing I know about best is living (read going BANANAZ) in Snyder-Phillips. Here are some of the tricks I learned during my time in that complex, the notionous, complex that is MAS:

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Abby Schottenfeld
LIFE WITH ANNA ORSINI

In Defense of Reality TV

Anna Orsini

Welcome to the first of my monthly columns in the RCAHive. I spent a lot of time (okay, maybe half an hour) debating over winter break what exactly I wanted the theme of my column to be. Would I write about current issues related to the four pillars of the RCAH? Would I focus on civic engagement? What about highlighting some of the current happenings in the RCAH? I decided my column would simply be whatever I felt like writing about each month—nothing serious or profound, just some casual musings. And one of my all-time favorite things to muse about is reality TV. Besides, what relates to this month’s theme of “New Beginnings” more than the outrageous new season of Dance Moms?

I’ll admit it: I’m a reality television addict. It’s really the only thing I can get interested in watching. See, I’ve never been much of a TV fan. My ideal movie length is about 90 minutes, since anything longer puts me to sleep. I find sitcoms to be like a root canal with no anesthesia, and I can hardly even make it through a single episode of those intelligent HBO dramas like Boardwalk Empire and The Wire. Watching TV for me is a complete waste of time—there’s no way better than reality television—I was its prime audience. I watched the 13-year-old skater punk Christopher try to navigate his life in a public school, speaking only sign language and rarely able to communicate verbally. I watched him get a cheerleader implant and upon hearing his mom say “Christopher” watched him sign, “That’s my name, I hear you say my name!” I sat on my couch and cried right along with his mother. I realized then that these were real people. These were their lives, and they were complicated and difficult. I may not have been able to get myself to care about Jennifer Ariston as Rachel in a staged New York City apartment, but goddamnit I cared about them. For me, reality TV just had a gravity that scripted shows were missing.

Flash forward a few years and I’m hooked. I watch Dance Moms every Tuesday night, and record Teen Mom 2 after that (not even reality shows can overcome my lack of an attention span). I love Teen Mom, Top Chef, True Life: Beyond Scared Straight, RuPaul’s Drag Race, and hell, I’ll even watch Storage Wars. Yes, I’m aware the reality TV shows have writers. I’m aware that they employ “story editors” who create plots by cutting existing footage and using voiceovers to create illusions that certain things happened which, in fact, did not. I don’t know that producers create drama by manipulating the questions asked during character interviews, by adding intense music and sound effects to impact scenes (as we all know, real life has no soundtrack), and even by staging certain events. In effect, I know that reality TV simply does not always portray “true” reality.

But you know what? I don’t care. It’s fascinating, it’s entertaining, it’s illuminating, and for that on my couch I’m watching it, I can escape. I can stop worrying about the papers I have due, the chores I never finished, what the hell I’m going to do with my life. Instead, I can completely invest myself in the (edited) lives of real people in the world. I can root for Maci in Teen Mom as she devotes her life to her three-year-old son Bentley getting a job, going back to school and standing up to her ex, Ryan. I can shake my head as middle-aged women fight over which 9-year-old is a better dancer in Dance Moms (it’s Maddie, by the way). Hell, I can even cry at True Life: I’m Deaf if I want to.

I’ve been told watching reality TV is tasteless. Countless people have tried to find “just the show” that can get me out of my reality habit and back into “quality” (re: scripted) television. My friends and family wonder how I, an intelligent young woman, could possibly degrade myself with unscripted shows on MTV. Well, it may be trashy, but reality TV gives me illusions that certain things happened which, in fact, did not. I don’t know that producers create drama by manipulating the questions asked during character interviews, by adding intense music and sound effects to impact scenes (as we all know, real life has no soundtrack), and even by staging certain events. In effect, I know that reality TV simply does not always portray “true” reality.

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The idea of starting fresh and being able to begin from square one is always exciting. As humans, we like to have constant new beginnings. It gives us a chance to start over and forget any mistakes we may have made before.

Every semester we get to start from scratch with new classes and new professors. We make promises to ourselves that we will try harder; achieve more this semester; and get those papers started well before they are due. Let’s be honest, for most of us those papers will still be left until the last minute. At least we had the chance to expect better from ourselves to try harder.

The changing of seasons is always exciting to us. The beginning of spring brings fresh flowers and new life to the world. Summer promises a break with sunny times and laughter. When we think of fall we imagine walking around on a nice crisp day through tunnels of yellow, orange and red trees. Winter gives us thoughts of pretty snowflakes, sledding, and making snowmen.

We like to imagine the positive aspects of what the new seasons will bring us. We could dwell on the fact that spring will bring rain, summer will be sweaty and unbearably hot at times, fall means raking up dirty leaves and winter gives us slippery roads and frozen toes, but we don’t. We imagine beautiful beginnings with hopeful glances toward the future.

Going through life, we sometimes don’t realize simple things are complex things put together for our enjoyment. Look down at what you are wearing. Can you imagine that every article of clothing on your body began with one little stitch of thread? Whether your clothes are handmade or were made in a factory; someone’s hands guided the machine to sew the fabric together that you are wearing. If you would like to go even further, someone created the fabric, being sewn together and the thread that’s used.

Many of our new beginnings are created by us, like writing words upon a page. The first word on a piece of paper can bring a whole new story that no one has ever seen before. Whether you are writing a story, a poem, or a song, there are so many possibilities. You can take yourself and others anywhere your imagination will lead you.

Creating something is the ultimate of new beginnings. Who knows where your creation will take you? You may just escape the burdens of real life for a few minutes, or you may see your artwork in a museum some day. Regardless, it all begins with a brushstroke, a word written on a page, the singing of a lyric, or a picture being taken, and ends with freedom. That could be freedom of thought, freedom of speech, or just the freedom of release.

The sunrise is one of the simplest new beginnings I can think of. With the flaming orange ball peeking over the horizon, we are given the promise of a new day. We have made it to yet another day of life. Only we can decide what that new day will bring and how precisely we will treasure it.

With the constant blur of school, work, and extracurricular activities flying through us, it becomes really easy to forget how gifted we are to simply be alive. Every sunrise means we are still on Earth to enjoy life. Every step leads us to a new journey. Every story must start somewhere.

The Simple Things

New Beginnings

Kaidyn Fay
Am I beautiful?
A Collection of Thoughts
Melanie LaBerge

How hard is it to love yourself? How hard is it to look in the mirror and feel beautiful? From my own personal experience and the experiences of people close to me, the answer is that it can feel impossible. Believing that self-acceptance is hard in a world where every perceived flaw you can be edited away is easy, it’s much easier than learning to love yourself for the person that you are. I look in the mirror and see a face too round, with a lack of chin that often makes me look like I have two. I see the swell of my stomach where I’ve been told there should only be a Flat space. I see my feet that face themselves upright. I am told there should only be a Flat chin that often makes me look hopelessly flawed and ugly. It takes work to love your body the way it is. It is in fact an act of revolution in a way, is it a revolution that is desperately needed by us all. We are not the perfect magazine aliens and we should not try to be because beauty should not be defined by sameness or an adherence to some impossible standard. Desire for complete perfection is what is given to us even though reality is what you make of it, not what you are told. Is it possible to love yourself without help? How hard is it to look in the mirror and feel beautiful? From my own personal experience and the experiences of people close to me, the answer is that it can feel impossible. Believing that self-acceptance is hard in a world where every perceived flaw you can be edited away is easy, it’s much easier than learning to love yourself for the person that you are. I look in the mirror and see a face too round, with a lack of chin that often makes me look like I have two. I see the swell of my stomach where I’ve been told there should only be a Flat space. I see my feet that face themselves upright. I am told there should only be a Flat chin that often makes me look hopelessly flawed and ugly. It takes work to love your body the way it is. It is in fact an act of revolution in a way, is it a revolution that is desperately needed by us all. We are not the perfect magazine aliens and we should not try to be because beauty should not be defined by sameness or an adherence to some impossible standard. Desire for complete perfection is what is given to us even though reality is what you make of it, not what you are told.

Here’s the thing about words:
They’re just words.
Just a conglomerate of sounds.
It’s the human’s job to apply meaning.
I feel words have become so light lately, people throw them around like feathers to the point where the meaning has become lost.
Think about what you are saying.
They do impact the people who see these words as opaque and clouded with intention and formed thought.

We’re only hurting ourselves by pretending that it is. When this happens I wonder if there’s something wrong with me because obviously everyone else must be attracted to such and such, as long as the person’s in their target sexuality I assume that I’m the problem, not that what a person is attracted to varies more than I’ve been told told.

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Reality is what you make of it, though. If you believe the sky is purple and the grass is blue, even though it is not true, that is your reality. On one hand I’m sure the sky and the grass would be frustrated with the population holding this reality as they would want them to know their true colors. On the other, maybe they realise the people who accept these fallacies are not worth their energy. Those who do not question should not have the right to own a brain. Or the right to own a voice to spread their ignorance.

Think about what you are saying.
Think about what you know, and what you don’t know. Question. Don’t assume. Do not accept what is given to you even though it might be what you want to believe. That is foolish. Find these things out yourself. Ask the source. As words travel from one host to the other it is easy for truth to be twisted, stretched and bleached to the point where it has come so far from what it was that it has become a completely different entity. And so the meaning and the truth, who desire no association with the new being, have fled.

Please let’s stop this genocide of words.

Let’s all grow up and use our brains a little instead of ripping pillows apart and letting feathers fly when we’re angry or upset like a toddler’s temper tantrum. No need for such destruction.

I’m here to understand. I’m here to learn. I’m here to question. I’m here to problem solve, and I’m here to communicate.

The thing is though, I don’t do grudges. All negativity can be erased with a simple conversation. Perhaps we can inch closer to truth that way, Think about what you are saying.

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