



# THE VOYAGER

APRIL 2020



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A NOTE FROM  
THE  
NEWSPAPER  
STAFF  
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SPRING IS AROUND  
THE CORNER!

WE HAVE A LOT OF  
NEW ARTICLES IN THIS  
ISSUE, FROM AN  
ANALYSIS OF THE  
WORLD TO ALLERGIES.  
PLEASE READ THE  
ENTIRE ISSUE TO  
FIND OUT!

## ***IN THIS ISSUE....***

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*On the front cover: Sunny days will be here again! A picture taken of a beautiful city in Israel*

## **SAVTA BY MEEKA VARDI**

I feel my grandmother's green leather-bound photo album in my hands, running my hands along the fine rose petal detailing. It is stiff and fragile from age. I open it up with a delicate touch, careful not to tear a page. As I do, dust flies out and finds its way around the room. My eyes widen as I take in what was once my grandmother's everyday life yet is now history. It was upon one night that I pondered the life of the savta whom I love so dearly that I realized I seldom learned about her life. I decided at that point to write about her life. Savta, this is for you.

On the 9th of October, 1936, my savta (Hebrew for grandmother) was born in Haifa, Israel. She was blessed with wonderful parents, Polish refugees, trying to make a life in the new land known as Israel. They lived in poor conditions, sharing an apartment with another family with only a single bedroom to themselves. Savta, however, did not mind.

Conversations of money and food slipped by her young ears as she played blissfully with MacGyvered toys. Her father fished in order to sustain the family but the state was miserable and Savta was neglected.

Fearing World War II, Savta and her mother fled to Poland to live with her sister in law in safety while her father stayed back to maintain his job at a small oil company. After half a year, Savta and her mother returned to Haifa and enrolled in daycare so Savta could be cared for while her parents worked. She ended up spending more time at daycare than at home and practically grew up there with her friends and teachers becoming her new family.

I see in her eyes as she recounts the tale of her early years'

melancholy, gazing upon the hazel swirled with memories. Savta, the selfless person that she is, did not hold this against her parents. They worked hard long shifts in order for them to continue eating and paying rent, and my grandmother understood this from the age of six. It was up until World War II that life went as per usual. Savta went with her aunt to a safer city in Israel while her parents continued to work in the factory, worrying more about a steady income than their safety. Running from shelter to shelter, Savta was faced with challenges uncommon to those of mine at the same age. While I was concerned with what clothes were "in" at the moment, my grandmother faced extreme peril every day. "I remember the sirens and the noise of the aircraft. I was very scared". The war impacted her greatly, and to this day she remembers it as if it were yesterday. News came that all of her relatives residing in Germany had perished, proving that this was no mere disagreement, this was a World War.

Today, Savta enjoys playing chess and stays in touch with her friends from grade school. At one point her women's club received a letter of recognition and a certificate from the Knesset, proving that she has made a great impact on the world. Savta tells stories of my Ima (mom in Hebrew) and all of our family members. I attempt to soak up all of the information she holds, hoping to pass it on to future generations as she has done so lovingly. Watching her talk about her life so far has been fascinating, as I can see her interest and passion. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to have written this. Thank you for teaching me, for making me who I am. I love you savta, and I am extremely proud to be your granddaughter.

# **SEEING THE CHANGING WORLD: OPTIMISM V. PESSIMISM BY LAUREN GEIGER**

A family sits down for dinner during quarantine. In between bites of food, the mother begins to smirk and remarks, "There's going to be a lot of babies born in nine months." The family laughs at her joke and laughs even harder when the father replies, "There might also be a lot of divorces in nine months." These jokes, though both hysterical in their own ways, are clear examples of what an optimist thinks and what a pessimist thinks. The mother and optimist of this family chose to see the positive in this situation, believing that the nature of these circumstances will lead to life. The father and pessimist, however, believed that this unprecedented time will lead to the end of something, the end of love and marriage. Though the husband and wife differ in many different ways, they differ the most in how they choose to see the world. What truly makes someone an optimist or a pessimist? What causes optimism and pessimism? What is the mother doing that the father isn't?

It isn't so much what the mother is doing, but rather, what her brain is doing. As with all other emotions, optimism and pessimism stem from our brains, and more specifically, the left and right hemispheres. The left hemisphere is associated with positive physiological activity, such as high self-esteem and a bright outlook on the present and future. In contrast, the right hemisphere correlates with pessimistic views, such as low self-esteem and a gloomy outlook on the future. However, these two cerebral hemispheres do not operate unilaterally, but instead share information between each other to create our unique outlook on our world and environment. It is only when one has to make a decision that the asymmetry between the two hemispheres is clearly shown.

Based on how a person responds to adversity or a difficult decision, one can clearly tell if he or she is a pessimist or an optimist. Or so he or she thinks. In general, people are more optimistic and pessimistic about certain

areas of their lives as a result of their successes and failures. In addition, how one achieved those successes and failures also contributes to his or her sunny or gloomy outlook on the world. Pessimists typically feel as though their wins in life were caused by outside forces, such as luck and chance, whereas optimists view themselves as active agents that create their own destinies. This fate versus free will argument separates an optimist from a pessimist and is at the core of their very own belief systems.

Determining if one is an optimist or a pessimist and separating the two can be difficult because people change. Throughout life, one's standing on the optimism-pessimism spectrum may change not just once, but multiple times as it relates to his or her position in the world. We, humans, are constantly being shaped by our environment, our decisions, and the effects that our decisions have on us. In times like these, it is easy for our thoughts to sway towards the pessimistic side, considering that the world is quite literally falling apart. It is hard, at times, to look at what we've been blessed to have versus what we don't have. On the other hand, being an optimist during this time may be good, but over-optimism could lead one to take reckless and negligent action, instead of calculating the risks involved. There is no right or wrong answer for who you should be not just during this time, but all of the time. Only you can decide that for yourself, and it is up to you to see the changing world as you want to see it.

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## Citations

Hecht, David. "The neural basis of optimism and pessimism." *Experimental neurobiology* vol. 22,3 (2013): 173-99. doi:10.5607/en.2013.22.3.173

## **ALLERGIES BY KATE POHNER**

Whether it be to pollen during the springtime, or any kind of nut there is, most of us are allergic to something in the world. They affect us all so it has become very important to check ingredients in all foods made or consumed, and to check our surroundings often. But why do we have allergies? Where do they come from? People get allergic reactions when allergens enter their bodies that seem like a foreign substance. If that same substance enters the body of someone who is not allergic, their body will recognize the substance as harmless and they won't get a reaction. It is different for those who are allergic, because their bodies can respond with hives, inflammation, swelling, or trouble breathing if the immune system determines the harmless substance as a danger. Not everyone gets allergies for many reasons. Genetics plays a big role in passing allergies on through the bloodline, along with what you were exposed to as a child. There are many medications that have been created that limit or tame reactions, like antihistamines and steroids.

The most common types of allergies are ones to several types of food, pet dander, insect venom, pollen, or certain types of medication. About 50-60% of food-allergy related deaths have been due to peanuts. A lot of precautions have been taken to prevent allergic reactions like food label warnings and banning certain products like latex in certain areas. Allergies can become very dangerous if the allergy is severe and is not taken care of properly. People can go into anaphylactic shock, or their throats can swell to the point where breathing becomes very difficult. When training for

many jobs like camp counselling, treating anaphylactic shock, and allergic reactions has become a required lesson because of how serious and life-threatening they can be.



## **REVIEW OF NEWSIES BY CAROLINE BERARDO**

Parsippany Hills High School's production of, "Newsies" was based on the book by Harvey Fierstein, directed by Patrick Long, and was starred by Anthony Paterno as Jack Kelly. It also included; Jack Raia as Davey, Brianna Davies as Katherine Plumber, Caroline Berardo as Les, Jake Murphy as Crutchie, Jade Schaffer as Medda Larkin, Nicole Narvaez as Spot Conlon, and Colin Smith as Joseph Pulitzer. Supporting cast included; Meghan Lalo, Rafaella Espinosa, Brian Davies, Scarlett Horvath, Davida Padi, Vincent Paglucci, Matt Bumanlag, Malda Gobena, Tara Bilgeshouse, William Lanza, and Alison Paterno as the Named Newsies. It debuted on March 12, 2020, for it's one and only showing. The story follows a teenager in the 1899 newsboy strike. The boy wants to leave New York to go to Santa Fe but ends up leading the Newsies in a city-wide strike.

Within Parsippany Hills production of, "Newsies," all of the actors were fully committed to their characters. However, out of all of the actors and actresses, two stood out above the rest. Jake Murphy, who played Crutchie, had so much expected of him entering the show. For months, he practiced walking with his crutch, dancing with his crutch, and had to

commit to the character to the point where his story was neither funny nor pitiful. The result of his performance not only brought tears to the audience's eyes when he sang, "Letter From the Refuge," but also brought them to an erupting applause when he returned in the last scene. Additionally, Jack Raia as Davey stayed in character whether he is delivering lines or even crossing in the background. His reactions were always true to Davey throughout the show. Both Jake Murphy and Jack Raia boosted other actors and actresses' energy through their excitement radiating across the stage. Watching the two of them interact with the rest of the cast was truly magical and brought new life into the show.

The technical aspects of the PHHS production were unbelievable, especially the set. Not only was it secure and massive enough to fit the entire cast on it at one time, but it also was simple enough to work for every scene. The imperfections in the set really established the time period and the stain of the wood made it look like a murky part of Manhattan. The set was complex, simple, and safe all at once, making it truly amazing. Not only that, but the newspaper backdrop and the stacks on the middle platforms reminded the audience of the theme throughout the show. It really connected the newsies to the entire show, and it strengthened the connection between the newsies and The World, and that's what the show is all about. On another note, the costumes were amazing! They were all so unique and time period-appropriate. The knickers worn by Les helped her stand out as a younger child. Also, the mix of cast members in newsie caps and no newsie caps really helped them all stand out in their own special way. It can often be difficult to find characters in the midst of the fight scene, however, the costumes helped illustrate who is who and where they are on the stage. Meanwhile, the PHHS pit band is always incredible. They

know their music so well that they can always speed it up if necessary. For example, this was done in, "Seize the Day," during the dance break. The pit sped up the tempo seamlessly as one unit. In addition, the sound effects in, "King of New York," added to the lighthearted, and lively number. Overall, every key component of the pit, especially Ms. Christianson, allowed for a great connection between the actors and the pit. Therefore, all technical aspects of the show were amazing and only added to the experience.

In the end, Parsippany Hills High School did an amazing job performing, "Newsies." Not only was it entertaining, but it was engaging and energized throughout. The students did a fantastic job bringing life to the characters, music, set, costumes, lighting, and dancing. This show deserves a longer run. The most magical part is when the entire cast appears in the aisles as if they teleported there. When the lights turn on as they start to sing, the show truly comes to life. It directly connected the audience and gave an opportunity for a souvenir. This production was one of the best of the school's productions from the past 13+ years. I would most certainly recommend it for not only those that support the arts but anyone looking for a new source of entertainment. Overall, "Newsies," performed by the PHHS Players, was an enchanting performance that will not leave the audience when the curtain closes. It most definitely deserves another chance to dazzle the audience.

# CROSSWORD

## APRIL



### ACROSS

- 4 a spring holiday
- 5 colorful arc in the sky
- 8 just a little wind
- 9 the color of grass
- 10 small pool of water on the ground
- 11 home for a bird

### DOWN

- 1 perennial plant with a trunk
- 2 red insect with black spots
- 3 keeps the rain off you
- 6 another name for a rabbit
- 7 they make honey

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