



Basilian Pillar Express

Making America Great Again?

Siena Wanders '19

The eyes of the world will be glued on America today, January 20, 2017, as Donald Trump is sworn in as the 45th President of the United States. With his inauguration, Trump becomes the first president with absolutely no prior governmental or military involvement - a political outsider. But what will happen after the inauguration? Will Donald Trump carry out his countless promises made on the campaign trail, or will he fail in his efforts to "Make America Great Again"?

Immigration, health care, economic reform. These are the key tenants of the Trump administration. Since the election, Trump quietly has dropped his movement to deport all undocumented immigrants and

replaced it with his plan to remove three million illegal criminals as one of his first actions as president. On the topic of health care reform, the Trump administration has vowed to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, an action already underway by the Republican members of Congress. President-elect Trump also plans to create a thriving economy that will create 25 million new jobs over the next decade. By eliminating regulation and decreasing corporate tax, Mr. Trump plans to keep American companies in the US.

Another hot topic surrounding the Trump administration has been the allegations against the legitimacy of his win over Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. It has been said that Russia

has influenced the results of the general election through the hacking of the Democratic National Convention as well as Hillary Clinton's and her campaign manager's personal emails. Consequently, over thirty members of Congress are boycotting the presidential inauguration ceremony, some representatives going as far to claim that President-elect Trump is not legitimate.

Many people throughout the nation disapprove of a Trump presidency. However, Donald Trump is the 45th President of the United States. Therefore, the people of America need to unite under our new president, work together, and pray that he and his administration are successful in "Making America Great Again."

Midterm Mania and Dealing with Stress

Jen Levito '18

Now that January is here, it is time to get serious about school work again; it is time for the dreaded midterm exams. This week has brought study guides, reviews, stress and anxiety, along with valuable advice on how to prep for midterms. Most importantly, this is time to take a breath, make a study plan, and not to panic.

In interviewing SBA Counselor, Mrs. Smith, about exams, she says, "Nervousness means you care. It is okay to be a little nervous, but also, be more

prepared for the task at hand. Listen to your teachers' advice, read over your notes, and trust yourself when it comes to sitting down with the test in front of you." Additionally, Mrs. Smith advises that on the day of the test make sure you skim through the materials and answer all of the questions you know first. This could help later in the test because some answers might be right in front of your face. Bring your supplies, like pens, pencils, or your calculator. Also, if you have to memorize information

find a nice space on the test or even a scrap piece of paper, you can "brain dump" all of that juicy information on the page for reference. To all the nervous seniors, here is a note from Mrs. Smith, "enjoy these mid-term exams for they will be some of the easiest you will take."

Good luck in these final days before exams. Remember, third quarter is just around the corner, with new opportunities for learning.



Soda And Society

Siena Wanders '19

Soda: is it a delicious bubbly beverage consumed by nearly half of the population or a sugary nightmare rapidly increasing health risks and obesity among children and adults?

In Philadelphia, a tax has been imposed on sugary drinks, including sodas, sweetened iced teas and some fruit drinks. The law is said to promote a healthy lifestyle among the residents in addition to raise money to fund pre-school education in the city of Philadelphia. It was introduced about a decade ago by public health researchers who were aiming to reduce consumption of sugary drinks, which they argued were causing increases in obesity and diabetes. Despite this, the implementation of the tax is wreaking havoc and anger.

Advocates of the soda tax are mainly concerned with the increasing obesity of Philadelphia. Research has proven that the soda tax will drive down soft-drink sales especially among the low-income community that tends to drink sugary beverages the most often. Additionally, Jim Kenney, the mayor of Philadelphia, successfully presented the soda tax to City Council members by linking it to a popular initiative to expand funding to pre-kindergarten public education. Despite the prosperous use of the tax revenue, there are still many who object.

Those who oppose the controversial tax include soda conglomerates, restaurant owners, and many consumers. Fearing that the soda tax will decrease soft-drink sales, companies argue that sugary drink consumption has not increased obesity, and that soda taxes will not reduce it. Many residents of Philadelphia are concerned by the amount of tax added to the soft-drinks, stating that it is simply unrealistic to expect people to pay increased prices. According to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 67.6 oz. bottle of Coca-Cola previously cost \$1.99. The new soda tax added \$1.01 making the beverage \$3.00, therefore the price of this product has increased by 51%.

What is more important, personal freedom to choose what to drink, or government mandated public health? And does soda tax offer an effective way to raise funds for public education?

We Came To Remember

Tess White '19

Service: the act of helping or doing for someone else. For some, service means a sacrifice of time, energy, or funds, but for a precious few this sacrifice takes on a whole new meaning. This precious few consists of the members of all military branches. These men and women selflessly do their job each day, with the understanding that they may perish protecting others- the ultimate sacrifice. They replace fear of the worst with courage, knowing that what they do for their country is worth this ultimate sacrifice. As Americans, we should all be willing to give back to those who have given their all for our safety. When given an opportunity to show our support to the armed forces, we should seize it.

This past December, an opportunity to volunteer arose, and sophomores Tess White, Jennifer Rossiter, Katherine Tracey, and Maureen Kennedy were all eager to lend a helping hand. In the midst of the Christmas season, it was easy to get lost in shopping or making lists of what we want, but we didn't. We stopped, we served, we remembered, and believe me it felt good.

On a cold, frozen, snow filled earth we placed wreaths on the resting places of our brave service men and women. The wreaths were just simple Christmas wreaths, but their message ran deep- a message of support and gratitude- a small thank you for their large contribution to our safety. The solemn event of wreath laying is repeated at 1,100 sites across the country, including Arlington Cemetery and abroad, with the purpose of remembrance. The event was easy to participate in, and yet it was still in need of more volunteers and donations. With humility and a goal I pledge to continue the honor of placing wreaths and invite you to join me in this important display of gratitude.

In the words of Ronald Reagan, "freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."