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ADAMS

## John Adams Drama Department's ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

KAITY RADDE - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On November 3 and 4, the John Adams Drama Club put on its fall show, "Arsenic and Old Lace" - an adaptation of a 1944 film of the same title. The story follows Mortimer Brewster (Chris Vreugdenhil), the head of a newspaper department and the member of a family with a streak of insanity - his grandfather used to make poisons in his laboratory, and his brother Teddy (Seth Kirkpatrick) thinks that he is President Teddy Roosevelt. Mortimer, upon visiting home to announce his engagement to Elaine Harper (Kayla Rivera), finds out that his kind, loving Aunts Abby and Martha (Julilla Baer and Maya Troischt), are actually murderers. When his crazy, long-lost brother Jonathan (Emilio David) returns, he must try to help and protect his aunts, Teddy, and Elaine and manage not to go crazy himself.

But before the first weekend of November, hours of work went into the show. Mia Borowski, the club's director, explained that they rehearsed for two hours, four nights every week and even more than that as the show approached. The hardest thing in putting the production together was "just pulling it all off essentially by ourselves," according to Borowski. The group was almost entirely self-sufficient, and the logistics of rehearsing and making a set were their biggest difficulties. However, they more than managed to put it all together by opening



night.

However, preparation for the show wasn't all struggles. Borowski said, "My favorite part is that the actors always keep the energy up and keep me on my toes." She went on to explain the process of their improvement and progress, and she said, "On Friday [Nov. 3] during school, we ran over the show so many times and I can remember just seeing it click [...]. There was a specific moment for both cast and crew in the middle of an act where everything just started to go right [...] and everyone just felt a huge weight off of their shoulders." I was at the first showing, but she also explained that they got even better as the weekend went on, mostly because the actors "realized that they can actually do this well, so the anxiety of both cast and crew went down."

"Arsenic and Old Lace" was a darkly funny, ironic production that I thoroughly enjoyed. The actors played their characters to near-perfection in timing and expression; the ex-

asperation and frantic moments that Vreugdenhil's protagonist experienced carried the show, and only Kirkpatrick could do the insane Teddy Brewster (Roosevelt?) justice. The unfaltering calm and benevolence of Brewster's murderous aunts, which for me was the centerpiece of the show, made the somewhat morbid plot absolutely hilarious. There were also piano transitions between acts, which Borowski explained were not an original part of the script, but the drama club decided would "add another element so that the show isn't so two-dimensional." As an audience member, I agreed and enjoyed them as much as any other part of the production.

Overall, "Arsenic and Old Lace" was a well-put together, impressive, and enjoyable production, and I will certainly be in attendance at the spring show!

THE JOHN ADAMS

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*The Tower* is a student-run newspaper publication and a voice for the Adams student body and staff. Letters to the Editor must pertain to Adams lifestyle, student/staff opinions, or local issues. Letters to the Editor must be sent to jnowicki2@sbcs.k12.in.us, or submitted physically to room 1831 or mailed to John Adams High School, 808 S. Twyckenham Dr. Letters to the Editor for Issue Six must be submitted by November 21.

Editorials are written by the Editorial Board of *The Tower* (comprised of Kaity Radde, Casey Carroll, and Alicia Koszyk) and are designated as such.

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We at *The Tower* also request that readers consider donating to help pay for the printing & production of our newspaper. Your donations will help the growth of a voice for the local community; your help and contributions are greatly appreciated.

## Veteran's Day Celebration

ZACHARY VEAZIE - REPORTER

John Adams High School displayed a tremendous amount of patriotism on November 10, Veteran's Day. The Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program hosted a flag folding ceremony in the school auditorium during sixth hour. For those of you not familiar with the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program, it is designed to introduce young men and women from ages 12 to 18 to various aspects of STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math] through aerospace education. This educational model introduces Cadets to various elements of leadership and community service by exposing them to varying levels of the profession of aviation. This also includes the unique opportunity to fly aircraft. Major Daniel Walsh welcomed not one but two color guards, the John Adams Civil Air Patrol and Miller's Vets. They both paraded colors as the national anthem played. Walsh read the letter sent from Senator Donnelly because he could not attend in order to recognize the brave men and women who fought for our nation. He then introduced a very special guest, Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Spells. Then, the flag folding began, and a twenty-one gun salute occurred. Finally, people bowed their heads as the sorrowful song TAPS played and Walsh thanked the people for attending the ceremony.

## Southold Dance Theater's Brand New Nutcracker

JULIANNE GROHOWSKI - REPORTER

As Halloween is passed and Thanksgiving is in the mind of many, the Christmas season has already been in full swing for months for the many dancers of Southold Dance Theater. These dancers have been learning new roles since August for the 2017 annual production of *The Nutcracker*. *The Nutcracker* is a ballet that is performed every Christmas season nationally by many companies of all sizes. Locally, *The Nutcracker* is performed at the Morris Performing Arts Center in the heart of downtown South Bend. This year, however, is an exciting year for Southold's *Nutcracker*. With the direction under a new artistic director of two years, Calin Radulescu, this year's production will be like none other in Southold history.

Many Eagles will appear in this year's *Nutcracker*, including Anya Kresny, Emma and Claire Kirner, Brigid Reilly, Catherine Ott, and myself. For the seniors, Anya, Catherine, and I, this will be our last time performing in *The Nutcracker*.

If you are a person that loves the Christmas season and wants to get into the spirit, come see *The Nutcracker*! There is no better way to get into the Christmas mood other than listening to Tchaikovsky's classics such as "The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" and watching a ballet that is literally set on Christmas Eve. *The Nutcracker* will be performed on December 9 at 2 and 7 pm, and on December 10 at 2pm at the Morris Performing Arts Center.

# Adams Not Resting In DACA Support

CLAIRE STOWE - REPORTER

Weeks after the walkout, the Adams High School community is still determined to inform and bring recognition to the current issues and questions surrounding Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). On Thursday, November 2, Senior Rebekah Amaya formed a panel of four representatives from La Casa de Amistad to answer questions and offer suggestions for action. La Casa Director Sam Centellas, along with immigration counselors Nanci Flores, Ellen Ogle, and Rubi Astelo, were on hand to provide information and advice.

The panel began with a brief summary of DACA and the actions President Trump has recently taken against it. DACA, the executive order issued by President Obama in 2012, has protected illegal immigrant children of age sixteen or younger from deportation. It is merely a temporary measure, and does not automatically lead to a way to acquire permanent residency or citizenship. On September 5, Trump rescinded the DACA order; the last renewal applications to be approved had to have been submitted prior to October 5, and starting March 6 the DACA statuses will begin to expire if it is not renewed. The Trump Administration's initial stated goal was to have a replacement program in place by March 6, but the administration has since set down conditions, including an insistence to fund a border wall, prior to negotiations with congressional DACA advocates.

Before President Obama issued the DACA order, the Dream Act was already on the congressional agenda. Originally proposed in 2001, the Dream Act offered almost the same protections to young immigrants (popularly termed "Dreamers") as DACA did, with the exception that the Dream Act allowed for the acquiring of permanent resident status. After the Dream Act failed to win the needed majority in the Senate, Obama signed the DACA executive order DACA. Since then, many other bills--the Bridge Act, the Hope Act, and the Succeed Act, most of which are similar to the original Dream Act--have been introduced as possible replacements.

These proposed remedies, however, do not address the most urgent question for the Dreamers: will a change be made by March 6? Mr. Centellas believes it will not. "The optimist in me wants to say something will happen by March 6. The reality in the case is that that's not going to hap-

pen, or if it does happen it will be too close to the deadline to actually make a difference," he said. "Congress really needs to pass something in the next thirty days." Even if new legislation is passed in time, the panel believes there is a very high probability of there being a gap between the new legislation taking effect and the termination of DACA. "We're already at the finish line and we're waiting for something to happen."

Adding to the time pressure, Trump has said he will not sign a replacement for DACA until tax reform legislation is passed. The members of the panel agree that "the majority of Americans, both Republican and Democrat, want protection for Dreamers. DACA has kind of become the dessert, and they're trying to make Congress eat their green beans before they get to that." Unfortunately, they also agree that due to the sluggish pace of Congress during the current session, none of the "green bean" acts such as tax reform and a replacement for the Affordable Care Act will be passed in a timely enough manner to allow for the legislation Dreamers need.

South Bend-area Dreamers may well be in a more secure position than their counterparts elsewhere in the country. Throughout the country several cities have become so-called "sanctuary cities," meaning they attempt to control cooperation with national immigration law. Mr. Centellas has observed that South Bend, in effect, is a sanctuary city. However, "Mayor Pete was very specific about not wanting to [officially name it a sanctuary city]. South Bend would probably be in the top 5 or 10 in the country of actual sanctuary cities. We have a positive police relationship in terms of how they work with the undocumented. We just don't tell people that because we do fear that the sanctuary cities will be the first cities attacked in major ICE raids, so we've tried to stay under the radar."

Finally, the panel addressed the often-asked ques-

tion of "what can I do to help Dreamers." According to the La Casa representatives, the best thing one can do is contact their state representative or senator and advocate for what they want to be done, whichever side of the issue that is. Inspiring and encouraging everyone to speak their beliefs and stand for what they believe the panel told the audience "nothing will happen in Congress until they hear our voices."

Unfortunately, the turnout to the panel meeting was quite low. Rebekah Amaya commented that "I was disappointed in the turnout and that most people had forgotten about the cause that by no means has lost its importance. I believe that it was too long after but at the same time I would have liked those that walked out to take initiative as well and attend or help spread the word." However, despite this, Amaya still believes the event was a success. "It was informative and I believe everyone who attended left with a deeper understanding of not only DACA but some of the larger immigration issues that plague our country," she said. She also contended that the "[Adams] administration was woken up to the fact that many students deeply care about human rights issues, and are willing to stand up for them."

For Amaya, the issues surrounding DACA are extremely important and personal. "I have many friends that are DACA recipients who now face an uncertain future because of this President's decision to rescind DACA. I also believe that it is an issue of basic human rights that everyone should feel strongly about supporting."

## Letter to the Editor

# Thinking Outside the Food Pantry Box

STANLEY ROZENBLIT

On the morning of September 27, 2017, I was honored to attend the kick-off breakfast for the Food Bank of Northern Indiana annual student food drive. I was joined by my fellow junior and senior student government officers as well as Principal Seitz and Ms. Emily Zablocki, who allowed us to proudly represent our school. As the treasurer of the Junior class, I can genuinely say that I am the proudest I have ever been to be an eagle and to represent such a diverse group of motivated students.

In these past few months, perhaps behind the scenes, student government has been working hard to collect cans and food items to benefit those in need. Adams Eagles are known to be original and innovative in anything they set their mind to, and it is clear that the food drive is no exception. Deviating from traditional means of collecting food items, student government and supporting teachers have opted for fun ways of collecting cans, offering a breath of fresh air to this annual activity.

At the extremely successful Junior-organized MORP Halloween dance, over 100 cans were collected at the door. Spearheaded by Ms. Amanda Zablocki, tickets were \$7 or \$5 if the student were to bring in two cans. Such creative means of raising cans have allowed Adams to perform extremely well in the food drives, and most importantly, make a huge contribution to the community and the needy families who may rely on such food to make it through the holiday season. The apex of can collecting occurred during the Adam's signature "Dash for Cans" held on the evening of October 29. Four teams of Eagles bundled up and tackled the fall weather head on as they went door to door around the Adams area to ask community members for food.

The winning team, consisting of Stanley Rozenblit, Amanda Abner, Alexandra Sakaguchi, and Grace Beutter brought in 298 cans, contributing to the total figure of nearly 900 cans collected on a single day! According to generationOn, that is equivalent to more than 750 meals served at the Foodbank of Northern Indiana. This holiday season, the Eagles should be proud of all of their charitable accomplishments in supporting the food drive and thinking outside the food pantry box.

The student food drive will conclude November 10 at the Kroc Center where student government officers will act out original skits in hopes of winning the "giant metal fork" for the second year in a row. Stay tuned for the final tallies of the food drive and new developments from student government!

## Mixed Reaction to Terror in NYC

SAMI MIRZA - REPORTER

In the tumultuous three years since the Islamic State has become a major problem, the Western world has been the victim of numerous acts of terrorism, many of which have been claimed by the radical group. The most recent of these has been a "lone wolf" attack, an Uzbek immigrant driving a rented truck through a bike path. Eight were killed, and another dozen were injured. This and other high-profile terror acts have prompted many to argue against letting refugees in from Iraq and Syria. They cite the risk that Islamic State fighters may be hiding in their ranks, ready to strike. A common rebuttal is that the vast majority of refugees are women and children, and the debate has not yet been resolved. Like the vast majority of public policy debates in this country and in society as a whole, the issue of what to do with refugees and immigrants is nothing new.

The countless years of discussion - some professional, some not - has sharpened misconceptions about the both sides of the debate to a razor sharp point. Proponents of a more open immigration policy claim their opponents are racist bigots. Those who

want more closed borders objected strenuously to such a characterization, countering that they only want the best for their society and culture, for it to be safeguarded from any untoward influences. Again, the debate is endless, often with a lessening sense of civility. Regardless of such trivial details, the fact remains that both sides have legitimate viewpoints, and both sides are members of the larger John Adams community.

Conservatives argue that the benefits of letting immigrants and refugees in are vastly outnumbered by the risks posed. "If you look at places like Europe, you can already see it doesn't work because you hear of attacks every week," claimed sophomore Bradley Berk, among those on the right side of the political spectrum. He thinks that we should restrict those who enter the country from war-torn areas of the Middle East; a position shared by the current presidential administration and much of Congress. As Berk said, the rationale behind it is to protect the United States from terrorism.

Following that line of reasoning, Brandon Ploughe, another sophomore, argues that the perpetrators of such horrid crimes should be dealt with accordingly. "I believe this man should be executed because he committed an act of terror," he said in an interview, citing the cruelty of his transgression. "[Terrorism] should be our number one priority," Ploughe added, pointing to the increasing rapidity and severity of the attacks.

Others, like Zachary Johnson, sophomore, contend a more moderate approach. "We should let [refugees] in with a background check, finding out where they're coming from, who they are, and the like," he suggested, echoing the sentiments of lawmakers and pundits who lean to the left. In a stark contrast to Ploughe, however, he did not consider it as much of a pressing issue. "It's a threat, but how much of a threat, I'm not entirely sure."

This debate will likely never end. Like so many other contentious topics of public policy and societal action, there is no right or wrong answer, any easy solution. Each side shall put forth an argument, their opponents providing a counter. New statistics will emerge and their merits will be argued. And so the perpetual debate that is democracy will continue.



## Movie Review: Murder on the Orient Express

SIERRA WEAVER - REPORTER

Thirteen suspects. One train. One detective. One murder. One mystery. *Murder on the Orient Express* was written by Agatha Christie and originally released in 1934. The novel has been adapted to film many times before, but its most recent adaptation was released on November 10, 2017. The film stars Kenneth Branagh, Johnny Depp, Michelle Pfeiffer, Penelope Cruz, Willem Dafoe, Josh Gad, Leslie Odom Jr., and Daisy Ridley.

The film follows Hercule Poirot (Kenneth Branagh), a famous detective, who must return home by way of the Orient Express. While traveling through the mountains, an avalanche occurs causing the train to derail and stop. That night Samuel Ratchett (Johnny Depp) is murdered and his body is found the next morning. Hercule Poirot realizes everyone on the train is suspect and he must solve the murder.

The film has an impressive cast that all perform well in the film, as their performances are believable and entertaining. In particular, Branagh stands out as Hercule

Poirot. His scenes where he attempts to solve the murder are intriguing and clever. In addition, the scenes that require him to be more comedic are done very well. Johnny Depp also plays a great villain, while not being in the film for long. His character was made to be easily hated and leads viewers to question whether his killer was in the wrong or simply bestowing justice on an individual that deserved death.

The movie has an intriguing plot that makes viewers want to know the truth behind the murder. The plot is paired with gorgeous shots that make the film an enjoyable experience overall. The scenes taking place outside look stunning with the snowy mountains in the background and the scene where Ratchett's body is discovered is filmed overhead, making for an interesting viewing experience. Poirot is a near-genius protagonist, whose investigation is the highlight of the second half of the film. While the overall experience of the second half of the movie was great and the first half is beautifully shot, the movie is set at a very slow pace and the story can get confusing at times.

The first half of the film works mostly on introducing the characters and setting the scene for

the second half. While these are important elements to have in a film, the characters were still hard to keep track of and the introduction of them takes too much time for the end result. In addition to this, the film became a little confusing towards the end as so many characters were accused of the murder. The end of the film was also not completely satisfying. This may be because the last scene leaves the door open for a potential sequel, but it still would have been nice to see a more fulfilling ending.

*Murder on the Orient Express* is a fun mystery thriller with an incredible cast. Its gorgeous shots and intriguing plot in the second half of the film make up for the first half's slow pace. Overall, the film is worth seeing and is definitely a good movie even with its few problems.

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# Democrats Sweep Off-Year Elections Across the Nation

OPINION

KAITY RADDE - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A year ago, the United States presidential election shocked the nation. It seemed that more of America had shifted to the right than anyone had noted, and it was a loss that both Republicans and Democrats needed - and need - to learn from.

In this year's off-year elections, despite the extent to which many of us thought Trump had mobilized and influenced groups of voters, the nation saw an opposite trend. In New Jersey, Chris Christie's lieutenant governor Kim Guadagno lost to Democrat Phil Murphy; in Virginia, Democrat and veteran Ralph Northam won the gubernatorial race. Mayoral elections across the nation went largely to Democrats. Many of these new elected officials were women and minorities, encouraging the plural-

ists and the diversity in general that many feared had been greatly harmed in 2016.

It looks like a turn away from Trumpism, though the White House apparently doesn't think so, and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) certainly believes things are looking up for the party. Whether Trump voters actually turned away from their president or just didn't go out and vote like they did in 2016 doesn't really matter - the bottom line is that the base that Trump rallied to his cry of populism and putting "America First" didn't come out again for those he called on them to vote for. The more notorious parts of his base - the parts we find at his more boisterous rallies - aren't rallied to anything but him. They don't get riled up for Republican governors or mayors, they don't go out in force to vote against the people Trump attacks in Tweetstorms, and while many of them still rally behind their candidate - as that's what he still seems to be in many respects - it doesn't extend to his colleagues farther down the political food chain.

It also seems that the anger that had fueled the Republican and to a larger extent populist election of Trump in

2016 now fuels the Democrats, who are voting against those who stand with him in party or in vocalized and actualized support. Furthermore, they're going out for local elections, something the Republicans didn't accomplish this year. In the Virginia elections as just one poignant example, the turnout for an off-year was especially high - so high that some would call it unprecedented, but the political climate makes it more precedent than in previous years. This and the sheer number of seats that flipped from red to blue in the Virginia House of Delegates - about 20 - indicated a resurgence of the Democratic party representative of other parts of the nation as well.

Without support at the lower levels of government, Trump can't get nearly as much done. For the Democrats, it makes 2018 look even better, as they now see that the opportunity to take back the House of Representatives isn't unrealistic in the slightest. We still have a year until midterms, but it seems that the path forward is looking better and better for the Democrats and all anti-Trump Americans.

Left: Virginia  
Right: New Jersey





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## Senior Spotlight Alex Ammerman

SETH KIRKPATRICK - REPORTER

Alex Ammerman has been involved in many activities including Marching Band for four years, Mock Trial for four years, National Honor Society [NHS] for two years, Refugees 101 for two years as well as being enrolled in the IB programme and planning to graduate with an IB certificate. He has been a Marching Band Drum Major for two years and is currently the NHS president. When asked about his experience in band, he said, "The band has such a fun and positive and supportive environment, and everyone there is so kind. We may not

have gone to state these past few years, but I would not change a thing as getting to know all of the other kids has been such a great experience." He also talked about how fulfilling his Mock Trial experiences have been: "I get to work with some of my best friends and being able to create a really complex and exciting argument every year." His NHS experiences have been marked by helping others and leading his fellow members, and he explained, "NHS allows me to support the community and help people. I also have learned many valuable skills, like how to plan a major event and deal with interpersonal relations."

Ammerman is clearly heavily involved here at Adams. He doesn't, however, believe that more activities is always better. He said, "It's important to take advantage of opportunities, but if you stretch yourself too thin, you won't be able to accomplish anything [...] don't forget to slow down and enjoy yourself, otherwise there's no use in doing all of those activities in the first place." As a leader, though, his perspective may be different. When asked, he said, "Definitely! It's helped [me to] realize the importance of finding positivity even in gloomy situations and also just how kind the people around here are."

Next year, Ammerman plans to major in physics and hopes to go into particle physics research after college. It is too early in the year to say where he will attend college, but his abilities and experiences at Adams will

carry him into success.

## Senior Spotlight Alex Bonaventura

CLAIRE HARGIS - REPORTER

Alex Bonaventura is a senior hockey player here at John Adams High School. Alex has been playing hockey since he was four years old, and he began playing mostly because of his dad. "My dad played Division 1 college hockey so he forced me to play, yet eventually I gained a love for the sport," says Bonaventura. Alex's Adams hockey career started his freshman year and he has been playing here since. He is one of the captains on the team this year as well as being a captain for another team outside of school.

When asked what makes a team function, Alex answered by saying communication. "Communication ultimately makes a team good or bad, and not just on ice communication but off as well." Alex explained that communication allows a deeper understanding of each other and every teammate's actions, and this is what lead the hockey team to success. One of the most memorable moments of Alex's hockey career thus far was going to the state championship last year, he hopes that this year, being a top ten team, they will be able to do the same again. Alex also explained that his memories are not only of victories, but also of the fun times spent with the team. Alex said that "the locker room talks and the out of town tournaments with the boys will never be forgotten," and "yes, playing the game is great, but spending time off the ice with your teammates, and more importantly your best friends, is truly unforgettable."

Alex Bonaventura's future in hockey is undecided as for now - he said he is waiting to hear from colleges and letting things play out. However, that does not take away from the talent and leadership he has exhibited on the team during his time at Adams.