

Ashland Flower Power

The Ashland Garden Club celebrates its successful plant sale on May 7. The club wishes to thank town residents for their support and donations of plants. Proceeds from the annual sale will fund plantings in public spaces around town.



Local Photography Exhibit

Premier Image Gallery announces their Special Photography Competition and Exhibit. The Exhibit is open for viewing through July 29th. There are thirty photographs from fifteen Metrowest photographers on display. The exhibit is open from 9 to 4 Monday through Friday and 9 to 2 on Saturday. Premier Image Gallery is located at 290 Eliot Street, Ledgemere Plaza, Ashland. For more information call (508) 881-4730.

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The Easy Way Out

By NEHA SHABEER,
STUDENT WRITER, FRESHMAN,
ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL

The students of Ashland High School Class of 2016 are anxiously waiting to zoom into their college futures after graduation on June 5! As a society, we offer much praise for graduating and getting into college as it is a truly remarkable feat. But what really happens to get into college behind the scenes?

Due to high competition and stakes for college, students are taught to do everything they can to make their application look like a beautiful, well-trimmed garden of assorted flowers. Surely you must be thinking top SAT scores, stellar grades, maybe a few AP classes, leadership positions, sports, clubs, volunteer work, playing an instrument, and so forth. That is a lot to handle while also having a social life. But the struggle to write college applications begins well before one starts applying. Colleges look for a student's commitment to what he or she has passion for. Don't colleges know that it's practically impossible to ask a 14-year old freshman to decide what they are "passionate" about and for them do the work to pad their application? As it is, many college students are still undecided on a major.

Overwhelmed with stress from a heavy workload, high schoolers often try to find the easy way out. Have to take reading notes for *The Odyssey*? Use SparkNotes. Have a confronting text that you don't know how to answer? Don't respond. Have a long math assignment? Split the even and odd problems with a friend, so you only have to do half the work. These ideas seem inge-

nious to high schoolers, who try to apply them to every scenario.

High school students apply this methodology to high school clubs. Clubs support different causes and are so fun to be part of if one is interested in them. I, for one, can attest to the fact that the clubs I've become part of this year have become my family and it has been wonderful finding a group of like-minded people in school. The fact that I can use club experience on a college application is just a cherry on top! Unfortunately, it has become a pattern for students to show up to the first few meetings of the academic year and to maybe one or two more meetings scattered throughout the rest of the year, while some never show up again. While the people in the club know, a college can't tell the difference between a student who has come to one meeting and a student who has come to one hundred meetings.

The only way for a student to show a difference is to be in a leadership position of the club. This forces and puts extra pressure on students to take leadership roles to show commitment when they might actually be content doing a supporting role consistently and working behind the scenes supporting the cause.

Colleges should stop putting pressure on high schoolers to have applications that look like a well-scripted movie for their future. The fact is that we students should be free to try out different activities, make mistakes and learn from them. High school shouldn't be the years where we focus on commitment; it should be the years to experiment and figure out who we are. I think it is only fair for colleges to look for good grades and conduct, but to have requirements to show steady commitment and passion is not healthy. Personally, I would like to try boxing one year, theater another year, or shadow a doctor without worrying that colleges will think I'm lackluster and unclear for the future. As I struggle through who I am, I am glad my seniors are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. I wish them all the best and a fabulous summer.

For more about the happenings at Ashland High School through my eyes, keep reading my monthly column :)

Recycle That Old Tricycle

For the past few years, Bill Gath has repaired, cleaned and lubricated used tricycles, bicycles and scooters and donated them to the Ashland Food Pantry to be given away to families in need. Last year he refurbished 24 of them. As summer is fast approaching, he is looking for donations. He will pick up. Contact him, 508-989-0181, billgath@gmail.com.