

AP Exams

Remembering All the Missed Days of May

BY NEHA SHABEER, SOPHOMORE,
ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." The first two weeks of May are usually one of the best times of the year: the sun is out, flowers are blooming, and it finally feels like the harsh, snowy winter is behind us. But for Advance Placement (AP) students, the first two weeks of May are one of the most stressful times of the year because they are the two weeks of highly anticipated AP exams.

The College Board created the AP program in 1955 to bridge the achievement gap between secondary school and higher education (College Board). Initially, only 11 courses were offered, but now 38 college-level courses in a variety of subject areas are open to high school students around the world. The program has grown as more high schools adopt AP curriculum and more students take AP exams, with a record 2.6 million students taking them in 2016 (College Board).

Why Take AP Classes

The appeal of AP classes is that they showcase a student's academic rigor and passion in

specific subject areas. A study by the US Department of Education reveals that the most powerful indicator of college graduation is the rigor of a student's high school curriculum, with AP courses being the educational gold standard in that respect (College Board). Due to the difficulty and speed of the course, AP classes are weighted on a 5.0 scale instead of the 4.0 scale of regular classes, boosting students' GPAs and helping them earn merit scholarships.

Additionally, with all the extra knowledge students learn in an AP class, it gives them an advantage on standardized exams, such as the SAT, ACT and SAT Subject Tests. AP courses also help ease the difficult transition to college course load come freshman year of college. Best of all, many colleges accept AP exam scores to receive credit or to "test out" of introductory classes, saving students time and money. Some students who have taken enough AP courses are even able to graduate college early!

My AP Experience

From my experience of taking my first AP class this year, I would definitely recommend it



The Ashland High AP European History class of the 2016-2017 school year. (l to r) Back row: Wilson Lin, Alon Efroni, Andrew Dunn, Pratit Kadimdiwan. Middle row: Brianna Doucette, Nicole Abbattine, Neha Shabeer, Rebecca Rose, Jasmin Herrera, Eesha Yadav. Front row: Annabelle Rutherford, Olivia Beaton, Swathi Gorantla, Colby Weiss. (Photo/supplied)

to any student who is dedicated, up for a challenge and has a 100 percent positive mindset that they will be able to handle the course load.

As a sophomore at Ashland High School, the only AP course traditionally offered to us is AP European History. Taking the class was quite honestly one of the most eye-opening and inspirational experiences of my life. History has never been my strongest subject and is a class I need to work really hard to do well in. This year, I pushed myself to learn and study more than I ever have for a class, and it has given me the confidence that I can do anything I set my mind to.

AP exam scores are released in July and even if I don't make a 5, I will consider completing this course one of the biggest accomplishments I've had thus far. From fighting for the class to run at the end of freshman year to completing 18-page textbook outlines to writing an essay incorporating numerous primary source documents, I'm proud of myself and the other 15 students in my class. We've become a true family by sending each other late-night motivational messages before tests, throwing each



An AP Euro group behind their barricade of chairs and desks recreating the French Revolution in class. (front to back) Annabelle Rutherford, Neha Shabeer, Swathi Gorantla, Neha Chanda, Olivia Beaton, Eesha Yadav and Brianna Doucette. (Photo/supplied)

other out of windows in the name of extra credit (reenacting the Defenestrations of Prague), building barricades in class to envision the French Revolution, making 15-page study guides for every unit, and taking a field trip to the World War II museum in Natick.

The real-life application and usefulness of this class was a pleasant surprise, as well! My historical knowledge helped me

understand the context of A Tale of Two Cities in English class, which I quoted at the beginning of this article.

Keep Bugging On!

This whole experience would not have been possible without our phenomenal teacher, Mr.

AP CLASSES

continued on page 17

Relax at **METROWEST DENTAL**

Family and General Dentistry

Cleanings • Exams • Fillings • Crowns

Our Specialties

Sedation Dentistry • Implant Placements & Restorations
Cosmetic Dentistry • Oral Surgery and Root Canals

Free Consultation on sedation dentistry and dental implants

Selim C. Alptekin, D.M.D.
214 Main St., Ashland, MA • 508-881-1290
metrowestdentalcare@gmail.com

Dr. Sal

Keep Your Cats Indoors: Safer For Cats, Safer For the Environment

By PAMELA BRETSCHNEIDER,
METROWEST HUMANE SOCIETY
VOLUNTEER

All cat lovers want to make their cats happy. Cats are important members of our families. We vaccinate them, neuter them and care for them. It is natural to think cats should enjoy nature and the great outdoors. But before you decide to open that door, think about the most recent research on the dangers of doing so.

A recent 2016 article in *The Smithsonian* described the challenges of outdoor cats to themselves, other animals and the ecological system. House cats are domesticated animals but not completely. House cats are physically almost identical to their wild ancestors. They still thrive and hunt. So it might be a shock to you as a cat owner that the International Union



for Conservation of Nature ranks "house cats as one of the world's 100 worst invasive species." They state that all house cats, not only strays, with access to the outdoors, are equally dangerous, with "supernatural powers" as predators.

Cats kill 1.4 billion to 3.7 billion birds each year. In a study

called Kitty Cam (www.kittycam.net), they filmed more than 50 well-fed house cats, showing cats are active hunters but rarely bring home their kill, often leaving it uneaten where you as an owner cannot see it. Some areas are planning eradication of cats, using poisons and shotguns to solve the problem, certainly not

something we as cat lovers want to hear but need to consider as we make the decision to keep our cats indoors.

As cat lovers, we must be aware that our adorable pets, despite their reputation as hunters, become hunted themselves and exposed to many dangers outside. According to *American Humane* (2016) (www.americanhumane.org) by letting your cat go outdoors, you are:

- Creating an environmental concern, such as killing birds and small animals
- Exposing them to diseases they can get from feral cats they encounter (feline leukemia, AIDS, FIP, feline distemper, and upper respiratory diseases)
- Exposing them to parasites (ticks, fleas, ear mites, intestinal worms and ringworm)
- Leaving them prey to coyotes, bears, raccoons, loose dogs, skunks, and other wild animals
- Risk getting hit by a car
- Exposing them to pesticides and toxins, such as those spread on lawns, as well as poisonous bait.

You want your cat to enjoy fresh air, be happy, and enjoy life. So what do you do? MetroWest Humane Society advises making

your inside an outside haven by:

- Opening a window with a screen, perhaps with a cat perch, perhaps with a birdhouse set outside the window, for your cat's viewing pleasure
- Home-made outdoor enclosures
- A screened-in porch, where your cat can watch nature without being harmed, perhaps soaking up the sun that comes through
- Interactive toys
- A playmate
- Hiding places; a cardboard box sometimes is all that is needed for cat fun
- Climbing places, like posts
- "Cat TV" where birds are seen but cannot be harmed.

MetroWest Humane Society, a no-kill shelter on 30 Pond St., receives many calls each week about missing indoor/outdoor cats. The number of missing Massachusetts' cats are posted on local websites, such as Mass. Missing Pet Network (masslostpet.net) and MA Lost Pet on Facebook, number 5-10 each week. Please consider what it would be like for your family if your indoor/outdoor cat did not return. Keep your cats inside for your sake and for theirs!

AP CLASSES

continued from page 16

Michael Wurster. The care, passion and thought Mr. Wurster puts into every single lesson makes every student want to strive for a 5 on the AP Euro exam. While being the epitome

of a Star Wars fanatic, drama queen and secret Mean Girls aficionado, Mr. Wurster cares about each and every one of his students' well being more than their grades. He caters to everyone's individual needs and creates unique, fun educational activities! A sincere 'thank you' to Mr. Wurster for making this year unforgettable and remind-

ing me to always KBO (Keep Bugging On)!

I hope that the advantages of taking an AP class and my experience inspire other students to take on the challenge because it will be an experience they will not regret! For more about the world through my eyes, keep reading my monthly column :)



ASHLAND HANDYMAN

Carpentry • Remodeling • Painting
Power Washing • Tile • Decks
Kitchens • Bathrooms • and much more!

Detailed & Meticulous
Reasonable Rates

Call Mauricio
508-202-8602

FULLY INSURED MA HIC #169427

PLUMBING • AIR CONDITIONING • HEATING

Residential and Commercial



JOYCE
PLUMBING & HEATING, INC.

508-497-6344
joyceplumbingandheating.com

FREE Estimates Licensed & Insured

PART TIME POSITION

Looking for energetic, welcoming person for part time work in a friendly and busy new home construction sales office 12-15 hours per week. This job is all about multitasking - NOT a job for someone who likes only desk work! Will act as assistant in model homes, sales office and design studio. Must like to work with people, be a good listener and have some experience with Microsoft Office. Saturdays and/or Sundays required. No real estate sales license or experience required but 3-4 years customer service work desirable.

The company - We are a local builder with a national reputation, a New England family business for over 60 years. Recipient of dozens of national and regional homebuilder awards, we take enormous pride in the quality of our work and the homes and neighborhoods we create.

Call Judy Jennings at 508-322-6200 or email jjennings@greencos.com

**Sales Assistant
Ashland RE
Developer**

