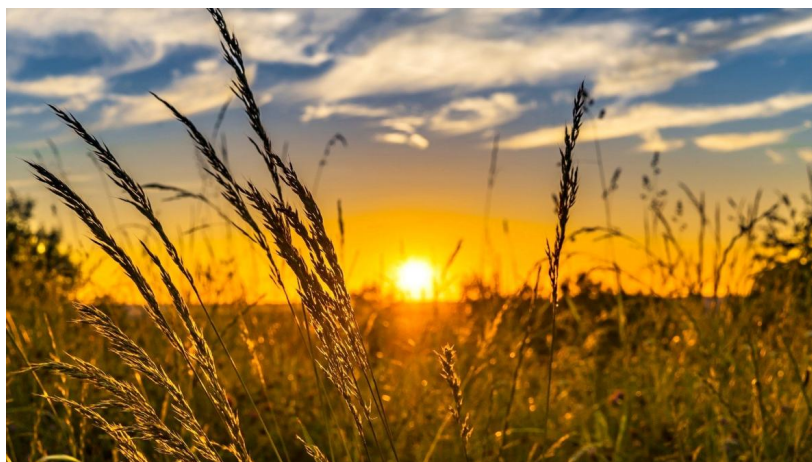


The Chariot

Published by Anneka Gernert

May 2023



Ralph

by Kathryn Masano (she/her)

So this one time my grandpa ran. He was good at the mile and great at distance, but what he ran best was his mouth. That's how he got stuck with a highly intellectual, revengeful turkey.

A few months prior to the Fall my grandpa Pop was chatting it up with his best friend, John, going on and on about how he just wished they would slaughter their own turkeys for Thanksgiving like they did in the olden days. First off, I don't know what he was smoking but WHAT younger years? He never slaughtered his own meat in his life! That's like me saying I miss when I would ace my stats test, I can't remorse what I've never gained. Although I wasn't around in the late 1900s to call him on his nonsense, John was thankfully there to do it for me.

(Continued on page 2)

The Chariot Is Dying

by Anneka Gernert (she/her)

Yeah, it's sad to say but the Chariot is dying. I've been writing for the Chariot since I was in 9th grade. I remember reading it in my 7th grade homeroom, truly enjoying the writing from the older students I looked up to. I thought I'd never be able to write something good enough in the school newspaper, but sure enough I did. Every month of 9th grade I sent in an article, and even had fun writing them. For the past two years, I've been the editor, and it has been more challenging than I had imagined it would ever be. Editing is satisfying to me; I like formatting the paper and creating something that I get to show the school. It's not all that glamorous though. Each month is a struggle to get anyone to write. I have a few dedicated writers that consistently submit pieces every month, but other than them I have to beg people to write for me.

(Continued on page 3)

Read about the many perspectives on socks on pages 10-12.

Go to page 3 to read about a healthier school mindset.

Read some articles from the alumni on pages 7-9.

Have a good summer!

(Continued from page 1) But the man kept insisting it wouldn't be an authentic Thanksgiving unless he killed his own bird, closing off with the excuse "except where would I ever find a turkey?" Just like that, a lightbulb appeared over John's head.

Three days later my grandmother, GiGi, returned home after running errands. She was first to discover clue number one: a sign on the door reading "To Peter, Love John, Happy Thanksgiving." Odd. It was barely October. GiGi walked in the kitchen, flipped on the lights, and put down the groceries right next to clue number two: a turkey. A living, breathing, turkey. Yeah, she knew right who to call. "Peter," she sighed into the phone, "why is there a live turkey on our counter." Like the man he is, he responded with "Are you sure?" Turns out she mistook it for the cat and started on dinner. The end! 'Are you sure,' what do you think? At this point the turkey was unpacking his bags. Meanwhile Pop grabbed his bat and drove over to John's house, who picked up right where their conversation had left off. "Well, you have it," he said. "Go on. Kill it." Pop's excuse? "It's not Thanksgiving yet." And so they named him Ralph.

Even Ralph knew his neck wouldn't be on the chopping block that November. If anything he'd be at the head of the table. You'd think he'd be grateful for a new family, a warm bed, having food to eat instead of being food to eat, that sort of thing. Ralph didn't care about this hospitality. Unlike 99.9% of the turkey population, who collectively have an IQ of -2, Ralph was a genius. Smart enough to know that the people he was living with were the same people that kept him in a cage all of his life. He wanted revenge.

After discovering Ralph's violent nature, he was banished to the outdoors in hopes that he would run away. On the contrary, he made himself quite comfortable, comfortable enough to declare war. Each morning when Pop would step onto the porch, Ralph would sound the cry of battle out of literally nowhere. Sometimes he would come out from behind garage. Other times he'd camp out in the trees and parachute down. Most times, however, he utilized guerrilla warfare: wings back, neck extended, charging full speed at Pop who would (literally) run for his life to the car. On the days that Pop wasn't fast enough (Ralph's favorite) the two mortal enemies would battle it out with any piece of gardening

equipment imaginable: a hose, a shovel, you name it Pop fought Ralph off with it. You know what he didn't use though? An axe. Why? BECAUSE HE COULDN'T KILL A TURKEY.

With a week away from Thanksgiving, my twelve year old mother went to retrieve a glass of milk. Instead she found a turkey carcass sitting pretty in the fridge. Upon opening the door she heard not Ralph's battle cry but the chirping of birds. She even made it all the way to the car with no ravenous turkey hunting her down. Immediately, she ran to my aunt in tears, who ran to GiGi in tears, who also burst into tears. Ralph was dead. But not in the way you think.

Pop only came clean to the girls; as far as John goes, he takes this story to the grave. Turns out that morning, Ralph finally packed his bags and hit the road. As fate would have it, he ventured up to a slaughter farm. Farmer Greg, being a good friend of Pop's, called him to "come get his turkey." Upon arrive, however, Farmer Greg offered him a bargain. You see, Ralph was very, very, obese. It could have been due to the steady supply of bird seed, the vegetable scraps in the compost, or the meatloaf my mother would throw to him every night. Either way the thing was HUSKY. And so, Farmer Greg offered to take Ralph. Pop could have peed his pants out of excitement. But there was one thing he still needed: to prove John wrong. Later that day he drove to his buddy's house with a pre dead turkey in hand (courtesy of Farmer Greg), telling him that the deed was done and laughing heroically in his face. That thanksgiving, the family feasted on the barter turkey Pop DIDN'T kill. To this day, he still has never slaughtered one. As for Ralph? Who knows. Probably waged nuclear war on Farmer Greg, there's no way they could have killed that thing. He wasn't a turkey that was a five star General. The moral of this story is to watch your back for Ralph, and don't tell John.

(Continued from page 1) There's few people who have a genuine interest in writing for pleasure now.

The lack of interest in writing in school isn't surprising when observing the amount of tedious essays and FRQs students must write. One study from Geneva College analyzes the attitudes toward reading and writing over the course of a student's academic career. Attitudes are typically positive up until about third grade. Then, the attitudes toward reading and writing are negative. During the time of positive attitude, these activities can be described as fun or enjoyable, but during the time of negative attitudes they are boring and time consuming. This is all due to the lack of control over what is being read and written. Reading and writing aren't choices in school, so students are less interested and engaged. The Chariot is supposed to be the space that makes writing fun because there is no rubric and almost no limit to what anyone can write, yet due to the academic rigor of the schedules of Wyo students, no one has the time or energy to write for fun.

Back in 7th grade, the Chariot was filled with clever, funny articles that the students clearly put a lot of thought and effort into. Now, I'm lucky if someone even submits a piece they wrote for another class. The busyness of school is partially to blame for the lack of writers; however, one article a month (max) is definitely not too much to ask for. At the end of every month—after having to send passive aggressive emails to the “writers”—I manage to scrape together enough writing to make the paper. I try to put the most interesting, catchy articles on the cover to spark some new interest in the school. Still, few people even bother to pick up a Chariot to read it. So, I end up spending hours of my free time making a paper that I'm proud of, but there's no one to appreciate that work.

Reading and writing should be made enjoyable again. The next time you have some free time, maybe consider sitting down and partaking in these creative ventures. If you want to write but are nervous about others reading your piece, just remember few students pick up a Chariot to read anyways. I am unsure if the Chariot will continue next year, but it was fun while it lasted. Rest in Peace Chariot—you did well.

Trusting Your Intelligence

After finally getting past the midterm slump and trudging into the third quarter, students are slapped in the face with course selection. Suddenly we aren't comparing our finger-paintings to our peers, we're comparing our class rigor, our internships, our success, and how perfectly planned our futures are. And at Wyomissing, there's always someone doing better than you. Even our valedictorians feel the pressure of not doing enough; academic competition is undeniably a burden on the minds of our student body. When college admissions expect teenagers to climb Everest and have a 4.0, it's inevitable for these unhealthy, competitive habits to form.

If I knew you had time in your schedule, I'd recommend reading *Where You Go is Not Who You'll Be* by Frank Bruni. He explains how corrupt the ivy system is, and reassures students that the college you go to, or don't go to, will largely not define your future success. Granted, the more college experience you get, the higher your salary is predicted to be, but drowning in debt will certainly hinder your dreams of yachts and island homes.

What I find is missing from modern education as a whole is a love and passion for learning. Teenagers and young adults are being forced to ‘learn’ massive amounts of material in order to hold admiration for rigorous schedules. Students at our school try to fit in one more AP class about a subject they have little to no interest in just to be on par with their peers. Being practically forced into learning without passion is a direct pipeline to burnout, which leads to a myriad of mental health issues and an increase in academic dishonesty. When one fills schedules with demanding classes but no time to put effort into them, it becomes easy to share worksheets amongst friends, writing it off as ‘busy work’ and ‘lazy teaching.’ In reality, however, students want the glory of hard classes without learning the material they ultimately pay for. (Continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3) If you want my advice on course selection, take the 6 APs, but choose 6 APs you want to take. And stop asking for homework, even if it is busy work, trust me.

Along with high competition comes insecurities and self doubts. Watching others study differently from you, take more classes than you, or share their (fake) confidence about the test you're taking next period welcomes a swarm of anxiety questioning if you're doing all of this right. But if you really reflect on every time you felt that way, and realize how many times you succeeded or ended up okay, you'll find that nobody around you has a meaningful impact on your grades. Trusting your intelligence is one of the most important lessons you can take out of high school.

It's easy to talk about changing our habits, but the heart of the issue resides in college admissions and the structure of schools. As for high schools, better GPAs and test scores—something Wyomissing prides itself on—leads to higher profits. Simple as that. Colleges are the same; low acceptance rates tied with high graduation rates and larger success after graduation leads to higher profits. If you can't already tell, this formulates an unending cycle of profits from pressure. To prevent inflation of expectation, a structural change to the monetary value put on education must change. And that will never happen. Colleges and schools are businesses first, educators second. So continue to work hard, but find hard work that is fulfilling. Find a way to fall in love with learning and that success your crave will soon follow. And finally, trust the person you are and the great intelligence you hold.



Mars and Venus United by Love, Paolo Veronese

by Lexi Polyak (she/her)

In Veronese's *Mars and Venus United by Love*, Mars, the God of War, is conjoined to Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. Known in Greek mythology as Ares and Aphrodite, these two gods were complete opposites, with one being the face of destruction and annihilation, and the other being the physical manifestation of fertility and sexual love. Cupid, pictured at the bottom of the painting, ties Venus to Mars using a ribbon, binding them together for all of eternity. Despite the fact that Venus was married to Hephaestus, the god of fire, she and Mars indulged in an extramarital affair, and had their son, Cupid. Known to follow his mother around, Cupid (Eros) is the god of love. In Greek and Roman mythology, Cupid is depicted as a small, baby-like creature who shoots arrows of love from his bow, which cause victims to fall madly in love. Interestingly enough, in Veronese's painting, Cupid is not pictured with his bow, implying that Venus and Mars already maintain a passionate relationship, one that does not need to be reignited by Cupid's bow. (Continued on page 5)

Try Taboo

by Ellie Folga (she/her)

(Continued from page 4) Behind the two lovers, we can see another cherub taming a horse, whose musculature is quite similar to that of Mars', representing his animalistic strength. In the background, we also see some ancient ruins, and while it has never been confirmed, the statue is likely one of Zeus, representing sheer strength and power.

What I love most about this painting is the fact that not only does it have so many hidden meanings, but that each symbol and message can be interpreted differently. One clear message about love that can be derived is the effect that a child has on the bond that two parents share, and how their relationship prior to the child has changed—for the worse, and for the better. The act that Cupid performs by tying Venus and Mars together represents the indelible bond that two individuals now share after having a child together, and how their lives will be forever intertwined. Implicitly, however, there is a direct comparison of Mars to the horse behind the second cherub, posing a multitude of indications. The horse, with its defined musculature, reflects Mars' unbridled strength and masculinity; however, the taming of the horse, done by the cherub, parallels the adoption of tenderness and compassion by a father when his child is born. In this case, it is the birth of Cupid that softens Mars, which we can see in his endearing gaze, pointed directly at Cupid. The juxtaposition of Mars' loving admiration towards his son and his brutal physique highlights the duality of masculinity, and how both sides are related, creating man as a whole. A balance of these two qualities is what serves a man best—too much of one upsets the relationships between him and his surroundings. Veronese's *Mars and Venus United by Love* perfectly depicts different kinds of love, and how every type of love is malleable and open to interpretation in art.

Nowadays with our iPads and our phones, games have become the rage. Whether it's the mini crossword, snake, or online chess, there is a plethora of entertaining games to choose from. While these games are great by ourselves or in remote competition with one another, you don't usually play them in the presence of company or with a group of friends in-person. The question persists whether board games, party games, or other games in-person are still relevant. Well, whatever your stance may be, I would at least like to explain a cool game you are probably unfamiliar with and one that may be of interest to you.

The game is called Taboo. It is basically a guessing game, where I would say you need 4 or more people. It's ideal for a large group of family or friends. The game is simple: you should all sit in a circle and every other person is on a different team. So you won't be sitting next to your teammate. Then, you can start with whoever wants to go first, and that person will draw a card from the pile. For every round, you use a timer to ensure everyone has the same amount of time to describe and to guess.

The player draws a card that has a word for their teammates to guess. In the past, I have had words like mistake, wedding, and sweet, for example. The key is, there are other words listed on the card that you would likely use in conjunction with that word or in normal conversation using that word. When trying to describe your word listed at the top, you must not say the other words listed below it.

Let me make this more clear. Say your word was "wedding". The card would show wedding at the top with words like marry, honeymoon, and bride below it. These words listed below it are words that you CANNOT say while the timer is running and you are trying to describe "wedding".

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5) While teammates guess, the idea is that the guessing is rapid-fire and spontaneous by teammates, not one-at-a-time or slow moving.

If you do say one of the words listed below, there is a purple squeaker, yes a purple squeaker, that you use to call that person out. While someone's turn is going, the person beside them on the opposing team must be looking at the card and paying attention to the listed words to make sure they can "squeak" that player out if necessary. If this happens, they player just keeps going and moves on to the next word.

And one of the neat parts of the game is that you can get on a roll with it during a turn. So, if you get one word correct, you just move on to the next and the next, given that there is time left. Usually a good round when I have played consists of 5 or 6 words.

Of course, you need to keep score too! We usually grab a piece of paper and tally points for every word someone correctly guesses. Every time someone says a word that is prohibited, they receive a -1 point, while for every word guessed, players receive +1 point.

The game has been fun for my family and with our neighbors because it causes us to have to think outside of the box. Oftentimes, a strategy we have used is to come up with our own anecdotes and situations that people on our team can relate to in order to guess the word. I think last time we played, one of the words was "studio". My mom was on my team, and I knew she could guess the word if I said, "Ok, I was just here earlier today." Pretty instantly, she guessed dance studio, which given that the word was studio, she got it correctly.

I think this game would be pretty simple to create on your own without the official game. Just cut some slips of paper and write one word at the top with a list of words below directing relating to the word, ones you cannot use. I hope you think to try this game next time you are at a large gathering or need some gift inspiration. Every time we play, there has been a lot of laughing and fun memories shared that I hope you may experience too!



Review of SOUR by Olivia Rodrigo

by Matthew Driben (he/him)

Class of 2018

Former editor-in-chief of The Chariot

Album: *SOUR*. Artist: Olivia Rodrigo. Year: 2021.
Six-word review: Maddeningly inconsistent with moments of brilliance. Rating: 4/10 (4 = almost good)

Months before I listened to *SOUR*, Ben Kuhn '20 told me that *SOUR* was a 7, but a certain kind of 7. I can understand that. A couple nights before my first listen, one of my friends at college, after remarking that yes, I do have music by Olivia Rodrigo on my phone, pointed out that she was only 18 when she did that album. To which I retorted that Kate Bush did *The Kick Inside* when she was 19 (with some tracks written years before that), displaying genuine maturity and intellect writing melodies and lyrics focused on romantic topics. It goes without saying that Kate Bush's romanticism of TKI is this pure, imaginary romance while *SOUR* is a pouring-it-all-out breakup album. Fine. It also goes without saying that all the people raving about this need to listen to some Kate Bush, then listen to this again and hear the difference.

Part of me wanted to love this album, as I want to love every album I listen to. Part of me also wanted to hate this album, if only to reaffirm my 60s/70s "the best thing to come out of this millennium was Brian Wilson finally finishing *SMiLE*" elitist tastes. When the dust cleared, both desires got what they wanted.

The first track, "brutal," is a particular lowlight with riff reaffirming everything braindead about punk, and forgetting even how much I hate the lyrics, they're *spoken* as if a melody was simply too difficult to come up with, over the riff which gets played ad nauseam. The elitist in me raised its hands in triumph...and slowly put them down as the song slowed down and nearly salvaged itself in the last 20 seconds with an almost (synth-)orchestrated mini-ballad.

And down they stayed, because "traitor" is fantastic. Maybe the best one on the album. Here



the lyrics work since they're more "universal," and more importantly the slow build-up and epic chorus are super memorable. Here she goes for the "adult contemporary with 'submarine' percussion" combo I last heard in Ween's *genius* "(It's Gonna Be) Alright" (perhaps Ween counts as the "vintage" 90s stuff she shouted out in her *Hot Ones* interview?). No, it doesn't stack up to (IGB)A, but it puts on a good show and is reminiscent of some of the things I like about that song.

And yes, I'll admit to liking at least parts of some of the other songs. Of course, quite a bit of this passes me by, like "enough for you" which goes nowhere. "good 4 u" is like an ideal treadmill movie in that the only thing it does successfully is get your blood pumping, which, if you're exercising, might be enough to make you forget that it has no substance otherwise. Much better is "happier," where even if the concept begins to get slightly tedious when she starts "we broke up a month ago..." again features some commendable tension-building over that nice piano sequence (and dig that guitar riff that comes out of nowhere). The last three songs do little for me, though none stands out as a particular lowlight ("jealousy jealousy" is worse, "favorite crime" is better). Still, this drags the experience down to the high 4, low 5 range (for reference, TKI gets a 9). (Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7) Even if this is clearly a breakup album (which inexplicably loses its conceptual continuity in the last song), she gets kudos for trying to mix it up between and sometimes within songs. Overall, the melodies are decent, and the lyrics are hit (still haven't mentioned "deja vu," which gets thumbs up musically too and is a contender for best song) or miss. Not bad for 2021. Hit or miss, though, is pretty impressive for something that is **so** personal and authentic and expresses lots of emotions girls and women are often discouraged from conveying, not to mention that anytime you pour your heart like that (for an entire album, at that) you're already treading the line between "resonant" and "pretentious/inadequate" pretty hard. At the same time, this is an album where the lyrics **beg** to be listened to first and foremost (this isn't ABBA, after all), mixed really high and all (and even continuing the *Kick Inside* comparison, just the sound of Kate Bush's voice complementing the music well is more than enough...and THEN you dig the Brontë lyrics).

Ultimately, the emotional punch she packs over 34 minutes does **not** stack up to the emotional punch of Ween's seventh track on *Chocolate and Cheese* (the one that starts "it's been a while since I've seen you smile...") OR "(It's Gonna Be) Alright," which each last less than a tenth of *SOUR*. (Not to mention that with Ween's subject/emotion/genre-hopping, that the former is wedged between "Roses are Free" and "Mister, Would You Please Help My Pony" and the latter comes right after "The Blarney Stone" and right before "The Golden Eel" on *The Mollusk*, drawing even greater attention to the emotions. And I didn't even mention *quebec*...)

Needless to say, this is **not** an album I can see myself singing along to, but this album was not written for my catharsis. This album is also **not** something I see myself playing often (at least in full, the best 3 or 4 songs maybe), but that's not necessarily a bad thing—when someone goes for the intensely personal and lets it all out, it's something you have to be in the mood for, and that's something I'll say about *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*. Is it **good**? Sure. "Not Kate Bush" or "not Ween" (let alone "not John Lennon") of course does NOT mean bad. Billy Joel likes her, after all. Not great, though. It's just the overhypedness that bothers me. If all this album did was help Olivia Rodrigo fight her demons, then terrific. And if her next album is as good as *The Kick Inside* I will rest my case.



Hello there Spartans! I am an alumni (class of 2022) writing to you with some advice about college. I know that everyone's college experience is different and I am still early in my own journey, but I hope these six general guidelines are helpful for those preparing to graduate and those looking to the future.

1. **Make friends:** This might seem like it is easier said than done, but I promise you that if you put yourself out there or try to get involved with the community you are going to be joining you will find people. I highly recommend finding upperclassmen who are willing to guide you as you get settled in. They are fonts of knowledge beyond anyone else on the campus you are going to meet. They will also be honest about the state of campus, unlike any of the "adults". They are a great support system. The friends I have made have helped me get through some of the hardest challenges I have ever faced in my life. The older students and alumni I have as friends really set me up for success when I was starting my journey.
2. **2. Know your limits:** The campus, if anything like mine, will urge you to get involved in literally everything. Don't. It is important to find "your people" or a group you vibe with to hang out with or clubs to get involved with, but know when you have hit too much. Balance can be hard, but it is better than trying to fight burnout and stress. Know what your class workload is. If you think it is going to be too much, consider a different option. Also, don't feel like you have to know what you want to do for the rest of your life, there is time to figure it out. It is okay to change your major, especially if you are struggling or you have realized that what you are studying is not the right fit for you.
3. **Favorite Places:** Find a favorite place. Whether it be a favorite place to sit in the cafeteria, a hillside to watch the sunset, or a study space. Having a place like this can be super helpful when you are feeling down or experiencing homesickness.

4. **Ask weird questions/ look for all the hidden secrets:** I personally took on a challenge to find out some of the most hidden secrets I possibly could about the college and I have sparked the interest of those around me while learning more about where I am. I have made a great number of friends and allies in this quest for knowledge. I have even learned more than some of the professors who have been at my college for more than ten years. Asking random people of various importance the different theories they have or the different facts they know about campus can be a great way to start a conversation or even a friendship.

5. **Try new things (Don't be scared to say yes):** If you don't take a chance then you might come to regret it in the future. I was terrified to go to college. Much less to meet new people and try new things, but I took a chance. I have tried new things I never thought I would before and am even looking to study abroad for an entire semester! I have also said yes to multiple jobs on my college campus which have only heightened my experience.

6. **General things: TRY NEW FOOD.** You are not in college to have a highschool experience. Act like it. The people teaching you are not teachers, they are PROFESSORS. If you are feeling fancy, call the professors who have doctoral degrees Dr. [Last name], but only they are Dr. by title. Other professors who don't have doctoral degrees are simply professors.

I hope this little bit of advice from a Wyomissing Alumni has helped you. I know if this had ever shown up in The Chariot when I was in highschool I probably would have ignored it, but I hope that any of you who did make it this far learned something. Thank you for reading, and may your college endeavors be bright.

by Owen Holst (he/him)

Socks are defining. Formal socks, athletic socks, stylized socks, socks with patterns, cartoons, brands—all of these are important in defining one's inner self. However, there is a limitation to this expression of individuality. That is the complete monstrosity of toe socks.

Toe socks are an abomination of the sock world. When referring to general sock anatomy, we can break up an individual sock into four main parts: toe, heel, ankle, and tube. The toe sock, however, incorporates a mutated toe section; instead of a soft, comfy pouch that retains foot shape and comfort within the confines of a shoe, the toe sock individually packages each toe in a scratchy sarcophagus of cotton. I can not comprehend why anyone would want to experience, nevertheless voluntarily don, such vile machinations of humanity.

For those of us looking to find additional comfort in our socks, there have been plenty of recent additions to the sock world. Fuzzy socks offer warmth and smooth cushiony comfort. Safety socks provide comfort while not sacrificing the ability to grip the floor. And the leader of them all, seamless socks, provide one's feet with heaven's graceful touch of purely soft, unbroken cotton (the only sock my sister would ever consider wearing). Toe socks, on the other hand, completely defy these crucial pillars of sock comfort. Fuzzy socks are meant to provide excellent warmth, however, with the separation of each toe in toe socks, we increase the surface area exposed to the outside environment, causing an additional loss in heat. By breaking each toe into one, the rubbing of the seams that we would lose in seamless socks is converted into an odd frictional sensation between the toes (something I must assume occurs as I have and never will put these devices on my feet). There is no actual practicality to wearing toe socks whatsoever.

Some may argue that by wearing toe socks, one may break the barrier of conformity. Yet, the entire concept of socks is that they are an in-between for shoes and feet. No one else will know if you are in fact wearing toe socks without you explicitly bragging, pointing it out, or you just so happen to be shoeless in public. Finding normal socks with intriguing patterns, styles, or

colors is ten times more effective than wearing something so unnatural. Nobody, and I mean nobody, wants to see toe socks running around in public. So, instead of throwing away money to the toe sock barons of the world, we should instead look to find individuality among the other budding sock dealers of the modern era.

After speaking with a local sock advocate and connoisseur, I gained some insight into the thoughts and feelings of a professional sock wearer. "I don't like toe socks," says David Giles. "They're weird and I don't understand the point of them." This is coming from someone with the complete Hershey sock collection and a wide variety of limited edition socks. Prominent figures in the sock industry agree that toe socks are completely pointless. And you should too.

I would like to conclude my argument at this point. This argument is founded in fact. However I have one final question for you and every other reader. Do you want to be on the right or wrong side of history? Because I assure you, nobody wants to see that.



Socks with Purpose

11

by Anneka Gernert (she/her)

On the cross country team, I've been known for my choice of wearing toe socks. I need to pause and beg you to just keep an open mind about this subject matter. Although the concept may seem strange, I assure you there are many benefits to choosing toe socks over the typical white Nike performance cotton crew socks. For me, the purpose of my socks is to support and comfort my feet while running, although they can be worn by anyone. This is best achieved through toe socks. While Owen may focus on style and individuality, I am focused on style that has a purpose.

One main benefit is blister prevention. The famous pagoda run during the summer is an infamous dispensary of blisters; however, when I see my fellow runners complaining about their blisters, I can't feel bad because I know there is a simple solution. Ever since I switched over to toe socks, I have been impervious to the pain of blisters. These amazing socks reduce friction and create a lightweight barrier between each toe. There is no chafing or moisture whatsoever. I don't know about you, but I wouldn't want to risk getting athlete's foot every day; but you do you.

Another key benefit of toe socks is that they allow for the total utilization of the foot. Toe socks allow for natural toe alignment. Normal socks allow your toes to get smushed together when running and walking, ultimately causing subsequent issues that will cause real pain. I will spare the details because I know all this discussion of socks is already a bit much. These special socks let your feet breathe and move naturally. When you allow for movement, you will automatically have better balance, propulsion, and comfort.

If this central route of persuasion hasn't worked for you yet, let me take the peripheral route (gotta throw some AP psych in there). Owen's main focus were the designs and patterns of the socks that allow for unique expression. While my focus is functionality, toe socks still allow for the choice of fun designs. For example,

my lucky racing socks are teal and neon yellow to add a pop of color to my uniform. Along with an assortment of bright colors, toe socks come in holiday designs, and other designs that appeal to runners.

Finally comes comfort and convenience. Many people will say that there is no way these socks can feel good. I'd argue these socks are like comfortable cocoons of cotton for the feet. They are just as easy to put on as normal socks, and are just upgrades all around.

Whether you decide to try out toe socks or not, I hope you've learned more about the benefits to wearing them.



An Ode To Socks

by Ben Zobian

A pair of cocooned, common, simple socks,
Lying within their wooden dresser box,
Await the sound of the fast morning's clocks,
To do their work, start our daily epochs.

They pop out of shells with gentle coaxing,
One stretches, the other still shyly clings.
Fumbling fingers grab and start wringing,
While clammy feet shuffle and sit, swinging.

Now scrunched and stretched, each sock strains to comply,
Covering feet still wrig'ling out shuteye.
Tendons moan, muscles groan, and lungs heave sighs,
as sleepless night's knots begin to untie.

The socks, oh faithful and dutiful friends,
Painfully squash and begin to distend
As sluggish legs clomp along to descend
And drain black energy, bringing morn's end.

They're stuffed into hot suffocating shoes,
Destined to suck up the day's coming woes,
As we sweat and stink and ourselves amuse,
Paying no thought to our socks' abuse.

They absorb our bumps, bruises, and blisters,
Supporting strength without any whimper.
And at day's end, when tossed into hamper,
They stay faithful, ready for tomorrow.

