

# Opinions

## Narcotics Are Not Worth The Rush

By: Alyssa Gail  
Co-News Editor

Fluorescent lights – that’s what you see first, but that’s not what you saw last. Faces zoom in and out of focus like holographic pictures. Voices echo off the walls and you don’t know what they’re saying.

But they’re talking to you. They’re yelling at you – or maybe that’s someone crying.

What are they saying? Why are they yelling? You didn’t do anything wrong. Or did you?

Last thing you remembered, you had a drink in the palm of your hand, not an IV. They tried to put the IV in your arm, but the veins were sunken in – due to drug use. The heart monitor cries out.

People start shouting and someone starts crying again.

A nurse grabs the paddles and runs into the room. Soon, doctors rush in – rush past you.

And soon you realize that you’re not connected to the IV anymore. You’re looking at someone with thinning hair, yellowing teeth, a fragile frame, and bruises and cuts on their face.

You’re looking at you.

The heart monitor goes silent.

Family members weep over your lifeless body and doctors write down time and cause of death – 11:27 p.m. and cardiac arrest (drug overdose).

And as you stand there and watch people cry, you think, “Where did I go wrong? Could I have stopped this?”

But it’s too late for questions – your time is up.

Year after year, thousands upon thousands of young adults and teens are either dying of addiction or becoming addicted to narcotics.

Why? Well, that is the real question, isn’t it?

Young adults, especially teenagers, are given the opportunity – actually multiple opportunities – to be informed on the importance of saying no to drugs, such as programs like D.A.R.E. and informational meetings held by the school or organizations within the community.

Students are yearly, even monthly, offered the opportunity to listen to a recovering addict tell their life story and their close to near encounter with death. Many listen, but few too many nod off and feel as if they are untouchable from addiction or ever having a problem.

They forget that they are not exempt from addiction – it doesn’t discriminate. However, no matter how many seminars and programs that exist, young adults still fall into addiction’s deadly snare.

Why exactly is this?

It’s because it’s hard to escape. One dose leads to five, which leads to ten, and soon it’s daily.

People become addicted and they can’t help it.

They’ve fallen into a deep pit surrounded by narcotics and isolation that consumes

their life and changes them into someone they don’t even recognize.

The first decision to take narcotics leads to the beginning of a disease that forms inside their head – addiction.

It takes a hold of them and won’t let them leave its grasp until it’s done with them.

Many argue that addiction is simply a choice and to some extent that’s true, but it’s also flawed.

People make the initial choice to take narcotics and at first, it seems like an innocent one-time thing. But soon, they find themselves crawling back to narcotics and sometimes they don’t know why.

But they come back.

Even the most ethical people can’t resist the voices in their head and the urges addiction instills in them.

And it doesn’t have to be this way.

People consumed by this disease don’t have to feel helpless or spiral out of control.

There needs to be a solution – a push to help stop good people from turning into just another thinning face in a hospital bed.

Do people choose to end up in hospitals fighting for their lives or did the disease put them there?

Do people choose to give up everything – money, belongings and other people’s belongings – for a high?

Do people choose to sign their life away to narcotics?

Most people do not choose to become addicted for life. They plan on the drug use being an occasional habit, but that’s not how the contract goes.

And this is where people need to step in. More organizations and programs need to be put in place to help save people from falling into addiction’s web.

Of course, not all addicts want to be saved from this disease.

The desperate need for change in their life has to come from within. Addicts have to admit that they have a problem first before help can step in.

And for those who are ready and crying out for help, there needs to be readily accessible help waiting for them.

Just like doctors care for patients, someone has to be there to care for an addict when they’re recovering or reaching out for help. And it has to be more than a monthly meeting.

The help needs to not only be genuine, but it needs to be consistent and show recovering addicts the meaning of a life free of narcotics.

Because after the first dose, addiction sets in and addicts not only forget who they are, but they forget what it’s like to live a life where they are in control and not constantly craving narcotics.

So, the next time you find narcotics in your possession, think of all the people who have handed their lives over to addiction’s hands and all of the people who are struggling to escape its grasps.

And next, think of what life means to you and if there’s something in life worth living for or some dream you have in mind – put the drugs down.

## Moana Rides the Wave into Our Hearts

By: Haley Fortuna  
Coordinating Editor

Forget Elsa and Anna. There’s a new Disney Princess now. On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, Moana stole the hearts of people all around the world.

This new fairy tale shares the story of a young girl, Moana Wailiki, who is chosen by the ocean to receive the lost heart of the island goddess, Te Fiti, and return it.

Moana must find Maui, a demigod who originally stole the heart, and venture with him to restore it back to its rightful owner in order to save her island from darkness.

To save her tribe, Moana, the Polynesian heir of the chief, journeys out to sea in search for Maui.

Moana is unlike any Disney princess we have ever met before. Sure, she has a sweet face, a genuine smile, and an animal side-kick, but what she doesn’t have is a love interest.

Of course, this is why everyone raves over Frozen. Elsa risked her life for her sister, not a man. But Moana takes it one step further.

There isn’t even a male character with love-interest potentially introduced in the film.

Moana is truly about Moana. What she stands for is something so unique for a princess.

Against everyone on her islands advice, Moana follows the voice inside her because she knows that it

is the right thing to do. Her whole life she has felt a connection with the sea.

Although, she loves and cares for her tribe, she always knew there was more for her than becoming chief one day: saving people.

Everyone warns Moana not to go to sea in search for the demigod, but in her heart she knows that she must find Maui and restore the heart of Te Fiti because if she does not the islands will be overcome by darkness.

As she watches the crops and trees of her island turn black, she knows it is time to leave her island, follow her heart, and do what is right.

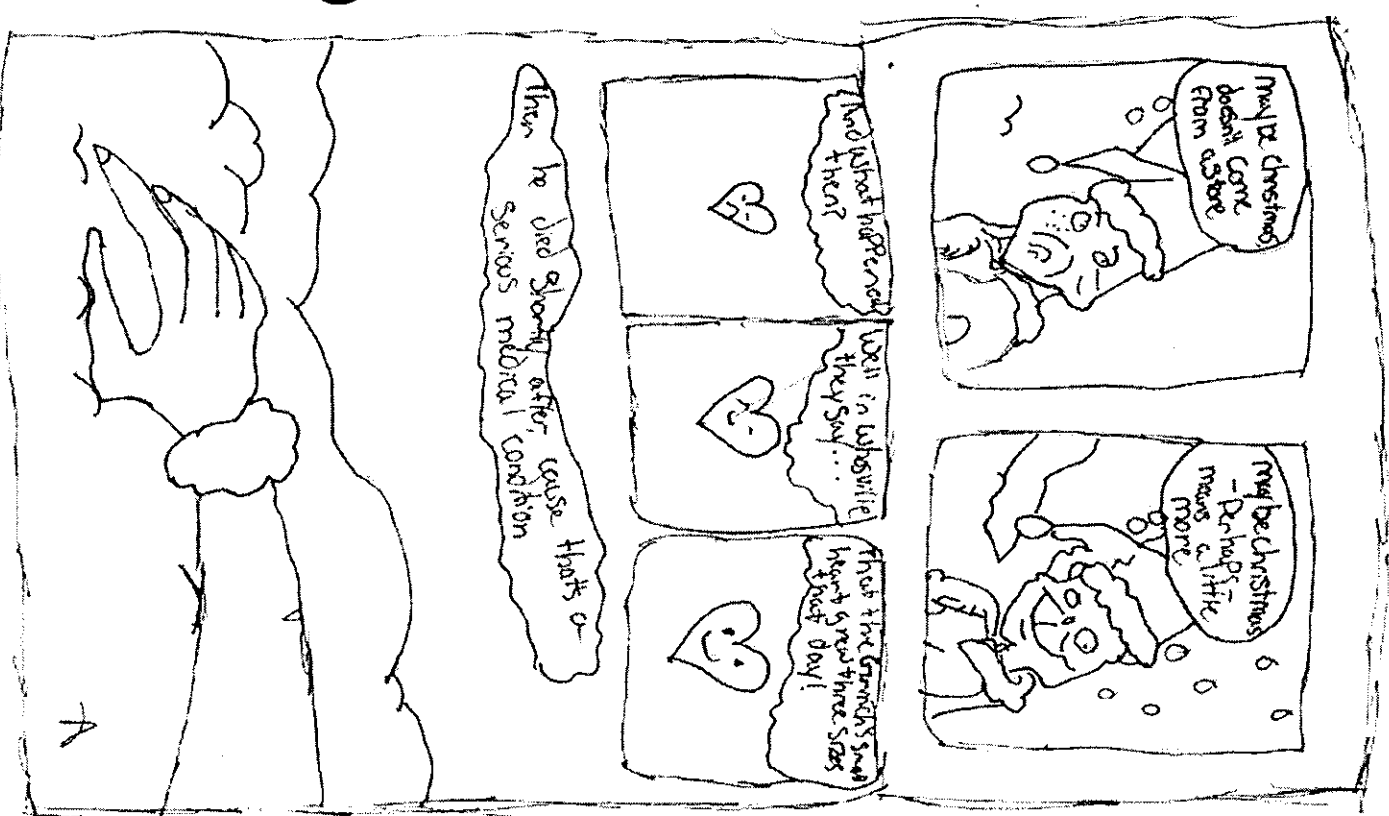
When little girls watch Moana follow her heart and help others, they learn how important it is to be who you are and to stand up for what is right.

But Moana is geared, not just to little girls, but for everyone.

While the Polynesian princess, acts as a positive role model to young girls, Maui, voiced by Wayne “the Rock” Johnson, offers comedy that could be enjoyed by anyone. That’s right, even dads can enjoy this one.

Through a outstanding musical score, a brilliant story line, and just the right amount of comedy, Moana teaches all people that when you do what you truly believe is right, nobody knows how far you’ll go.

Cartoon by: Ana Kinkella



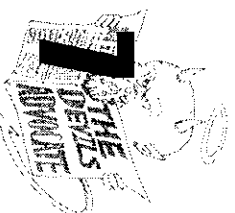
Would you rather live one  
life that lasts 1,000 years  
or live 10 lives that last 100  
years each?

## Opinions

December 22, 2016



# In Our Opinion



## Question of the Week

~\*~  
What was your favorite gift?



Mr. Wanger—Giant Jenga

### Staff

By: Jenna Stafford  
Features Co-Editor

If it doesn't affect me, it's not my problem.

This is a troubling attitude that many have taken towards situations of oppression in the past.

However, times are changing. For those of you who haven't heard yet, the federal government released a statement that progress on the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) has been halted.

DAPL is a pipeline with the mission to transport crude oil 1,176 miles, meandering its way through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois.

The pipeline has its perks, surely. It would allow the United States to tap into even more of its immense natural resources, and a pipeline slightly lessens the risk of spillage in comparison to transportation in trucks or trains.

So, what's the problem?

Well, a lessened likelihood of spill does not mean no likelihood at all. According to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, "Over the last twenty years, more than 9,000 significant pipeline-related incidents have taken place nationwide."

We faced this dilemma right here in Michigan when an oil pipeline in 2010 spewed 840,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River—which then cost millions of dollars and years of cleanup.

Today, DAPL is the cause of large-scale protests, primarily taking place with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North Dakota.

One problem is that the pipeline will threaten both Standing Rock's and multiple surrounding tribes' main water source. In addition, it is likely that it will pass through and destroy Native burial grounds and sacred areas.

I had the privilege of talking with Mackenzie Gibbons, a 17-year-old living on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. She is a part of the Oglala Lakota tribe.

For Mackenzie, this pipeline is a real threat to her daily life.

"It's not if—it's when it breaks, the oil will contaminate the Oglala Aquifer, taking away our only clean water source," she said.

The pipeline builders have been met with fierce resistance—from not just those Native American

## Staff Editorial: Standing Up for Standing Rock

tribes who will be affected, but also people around the country who recognize that this is not just a fight on oil. It is a fight on the right to clean water and on respect of the Native American people.

People are standing united for the cause on the front lines and behind the scenes as well. Mackenzie said she hasn't yet been able to make it to the front lines of the protests, but she has brought food and water to the camp multiple times.

Another component of this protest that isn't taking place on the front lines is from Facebook users "checking in" to Standing Rock. This began in response to speculation that local police authorities were using the social media site to monitor protestors. It has also raised awareness for what's going on in the area.

Personally, I have been elated at the response for those in Standing Rock, especially from my fellow young people. I see an enormous change in attitudes of young people on situations like this—whether it be standing up and speaking out regarding politics, gender equality, racial issues, or many of the other problems we face in today's world.

Many of my elders regard our generation as lazy, spoiled and entitled cry-babies who can't deal with the realities that life brings us. I, however, think this upcoming generation is bringing a change of pace that this world needs. Sometimes, social media can be disheartening. It's upsetting to read posts and comments of those who only want to breed hate and intolerance. It's sad to see those who refuse to accept those who are not like themselves.

Despite this, I'm a firm believer that it brings more good than harm. People can finally speak out and make a difference. It's easier than ever to spread the good works of peace and positivity that so many people do. Social media gives us a platform for spreading education and awareness about current events, as well as a way for us to get involved. It has given us a voice—a voice that will be heard.

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Richmond High School's student newspaper, The Blue Devil's Advocate, strives to serve the student body and provide a public forum to make their ideas heard to the school and community. Our goal is to provide both accurate and balanced stories in order to heighten understanding, entertain, and inform.

**Letters:**  
We invite readers to share their thoughts with us by writing to the Editor. See the drop off box in the library or you may email us at: [mmurphy@richmond.k12.mi.us](mailto:mmurphy@richmond.k12.mi.us). Include your name, address, and grade level.

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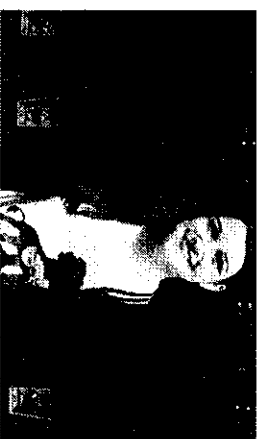
Evelyn Swantek—camera

### Sophomore



Hunter Seguin—Boat Shoes

### Freshman



Rachel Tavano—Sweatshirt

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## Franzosi's Future in Boy Scouts

**By: Ally Oddo**  
*Staff Writer*

At the age of 12 years old, Tanner Franzosi, junior at Richmond High School, joined the Boy Scouts. This was his first step of many in becoming an Eagle Scout and achieving all merit badges that go along with the title.

Boy Scouts are open to boys ages 10 to 17 who are open to new opportunities and a variety of challenges. Boy Scouts contain a series of rankings that lead to an Eagle Scout ranking. They start off as Tenderfoot ranking, then move on to Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and finally Eagle Ranking.

In order to accomplish an Eagle Scout ranking, a Scout must have all 21 merit badges and an additional 40 hours of community service. Franzosi is well on his way to do just this.

"It took me three to four years to get all merit badges. If a Scout really wants to achieve it, then it could take only two, but for some it takes five. It depends on the person and how much they want it," said Tanner. Although it may take some Scouts longer than others, once they turn 18, they cannot earn an Eagle Scout ranking.

The Boy Scouts provides young men with new opportunities and helps

them become versatile as they grow up. "It helps build a background for a career and personally it taught me how to be nicer and helping with little things is greater service to a person than it is to you," said Tanner.

Tanner started at the age of 12 as a Boy Scout, but was never a Cub Scout. "I started because of my dad. He is an Eagle Scout, too. I also thought it would be a good idea for my future. It shows me that you can accomplish something as a teenager instead of doing nothing," said Tanner.

In order to achieve the Eagle Scout ranking, a Scout must complete a separate community service project that they create and build off on. "I want to do rebuild the duck pond at Wolcott Farms because I did all of my community service there, so I thought it was best to finish there," said Tanner.

As new boys come up and achieve different merit badges, the Scouts do not change what they do for the community. Along with completing 40 canned food drive for the poor during the holiday season.

For the canned food drive, they put out bags for roughly a week. Once they are collected they give them to

the poor in within the following week.

As a group, they do many things together other than community service. The Scouts try to make a camp every month. During the winter, there's the Klondike for the Scouts. In the summer, they attend various camps.

"My favorite would have to be when we go up to Mackinac Island for honor troop for Michigan. You stand post at a historical site," said Tanner.

A big event for all Scouts across the country is the Jamboree in West Virginia. Jamboree has a whopping 10,000 acre lot for strictly Scouts to do over 200 activities such as white water rafting, shooting guns, zip-lining and other adventurous tasks.

Fortunately for the Scouts, Polaris is sponsoring this upcoming Jamboree. Polaris is going to provide off-road vehicles like quads and 4x4's to add to the experience. "This year will be my first year going, but I cannot wait and see what it actually looks like," said Tanner.

To be an Eagle Scout is a privilege and an experience a young man will never forget. Tanner said, "Boy Scouts has motivated me to work harder to show that I have a bigger responsibility than others."

## Students Use the Vanishing Points to Bring Richmond Hallways to Life

**By: Jaret Gil**

*Opinions Co-Editor*

Looking down the hallways, they seem narrow and lifeless. The walls hold lockers and posters, and the cameras loom over as you draw. Using your vanishing point, you draw an angled line after angled line, and the hallway takes shape.

These are just some of the thoughts and experiences that kids in Mrs. Belf's Drawing 1 class dealt with in drawing Richmond High School's hallways. Using a technique called one point perspective, students were able to take a single dot in the center of their paper, and recreate the hallways that they saw.

Richmond junior Megan Reece said, "I think the hardest part was getting over the fact that [the drawing] wasn't going to be perfect." Drawing in one point perspective somewhat distorts reality and exaggerates the spacing of objects in real life. Reece's favorite project was actually with watercolor, using an ink pattern in the foreground and watercolor as the background. "But I enjoyed getting out of the classroom," said Reece. "And draw-

ing things I wouldn't normally draw really opened my eyes – artistically."

But these drawings aren't just boxes drawn from a vanishing point. While these drawings can often seem basic, especially if there isn't a lot of focus on detail, Belf challenged her students to shade the drawings. "The point of this class isn't to just coast through. In this class," said Belf, "I expect just a little bit more than what I would of my basic classes."

And while students like Reece enjoyed the challenge of shading, many of the other Drawing 1 students found it to be the most difficult part of the drawing.

Dominic Nicolopoulos, a freshman at RHS, said "The hardest part was shading, and using the blending stumps to get the exact tone." The blending stumps are white "paper pencils" that allow artists to move their medium around the paper, without applying more of that medium. The RHS sophomore also said that the project was his favorite thus far.

Richmond freshman Madi McEwan also reflected on the shading as a more difficult part, saying, "We had to focus

on the floors and reflections [when we were shading], not just the basic highlights and shadows."

The freshman also reflected on one of her favorite projects in the "negative space bicycle drawing" the Drawing 1 students designed. "[I] just don't like shading that much] so it was interesting drawing using proportions, since we don't use it that much – I like using proportion much better [than shading]."

Students at RHS sometimes groan about the required courses, but attention to detail and the commitment that they give her, show how much students love working with Mrs. Belf.

"I love Belf," said Megan Reece – using Mrs. Belf's nickname, as most art students at RHS have become accustomed to. "She just knows so many things about progress on projects like this, so having her is very helpful."

"The goal in all of my classes," said Mrs. Belf, "is to create well rounded artists. And hopefully, by showing my students all the different things they can do with art, they will find something they like."