



# ABC CLARION

High school students are welcome to send articles or comics to [clarionabc@gmail.com](mailto:clarionabc@gmail.com)

## The Declining Popularity of the Pledge of Allegiance

by Brandon Ho

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

This is the monotonous, unenthusiastic chant recited every morning by East Brunswick High School students, as well as just about every other student in the U. S. The Pledge is somewhat of a custom in schools; thus, after many years of going to school and reciting the Pledge each day, students believe the Pledge of Allegiance is losing its popularity and its significance, becoming a meaningless chore that they are required to fulfill each morning.

Many students may think the Pledge is purposeless or insignificant. However, to some people, the Pledge of Allegiance is important, as it represents the American effort to instill patriotism into youths and to unify the diverse population of America. Mr. Wildermuth, an IPLE teacher, summarizes the purpose of the Pledge as follows:

"The Pledge of Allegiance is a way we express our solidarity as Americans." While the Pledge of Allegiance may not seem to be significant by itself, America is known for uniting individuals of multiple ethnicities under one country, and the Pledge of Allegiance is a reminder to everyone that despite the differences we have, in the end we are one nation.

On the other hand, the Pledge of Allegiance can also represent outdated views that no longer have a place in modern society. The Pledge of Allegiance has a long history riddled with controversy, and phrases like "Under God" in the Pledge and state laws requiring students to recite the Pledge have raised questions regarding the constitutionality of the Pledge. As political club representative Sabrina May puts it, reciting the Pledge is "like a reminiscence to the 1950's standards" and the Pledge should definitely "be changed and updated to today's society."

Yet there still exists a third group of

people, as many students in schools today do not recite the Pledge, yet they also do not disagree with it. These students are simply unenthusiastic and feel removed from the patriotism and unity the Pledge is supposed to instill in them. They see no reason to waste their breath on regurgitating what they think are meaningless words, so they stay silent. In elementary school, most students would just recite the Pledge because everyone else recited the Pledge, but as Mr. Wildermuth explains it, "naturally, in adolescent years, you be-

come less conforming to your peers."

In the end, it is the student's choice to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or to refrain from doing so. There exists a New Jersey law that mandates for the Pledge to be recited in schools, but there is a provision that allows students to opt out of saying the Pledge. So in the end, you choose to do what you want to do, whether you want to participate in national unity, you want to protest the conservative values associated with the Pledge, or you just don't have the energy to say the words.

## Hurricane Matthew

by Karen Li

Hurricane Matthew hit South Carolina this weekend as a Category I hurricane, the weakest level of a hurricane. Still, it's strong enough to unleash 75-mph winds on Charleston, knocking down trees and causing a six-foot tall storm surge. Matthew is expected to produce rain accumulations of 8-12 inches over the Atlantic coast. Some areas could receive 15 inches of rain, which could lead to flooding and flash flooding, even in inland areas. Most importantly, a hurricane could deliver storm surges, resulting in destructive and life-threatening conditions.

Storm surges, combined with rain and wind, are what make hurricanes so deadly. A storm surge is an abnormal rise of water generated by a storm- i.e. not a tide. Surges can cause abnormal flooding, possibly leaving millions of people stranded without basic necessities. With Hurricane Katrina, most of the catastrophic damage caused to New Orleans was from a storm surge, not from the actual wind and rain. The surge breached 53 of New Orleans's levees, which left about 80% of the city flooded. With Hurricane Matthew, the citizens of Charleston mainly have to worry about flooding more than downed power lines and trees.

The National Hurricane Center said that "the combination of a dangerous storm surge, the tide, and large and destructive waves will cause normally dry areas near the coast to be flooded by rising waters." It sounds remarkably similar to Hurricane Sandy, which despite being a minor Category 1 hurricane, managed to destroy beach properties, knock out power in New York and New Jersey, and close schools for a week. This was due to a combination of high tide, a storm surge, and the funnel

shape of the New York harbor.

While this storm isn't going to impact New Jersey or anywhere north of the Carolinas, people in New Jersey might still feel the punch of a hurricane as though it has hit their neighborhoods. Hurricane Sandy hit us nearly four years ago, but parts of the New Jersey beachfront still haven't recovered. It resulted in billions of dollars in private and public property damage, Governor Christie declaring a state of emergency for the entire state, and more importantly, the destruction of thousands of lives and livelihoods. My neighborhood wasn't directly in the path of destruction of Sandy, and my family still lost power for a solid week. While this can't possibly compare to the situations of people who lost their homes and jobs to flooding or people who lost friends and family members that day, Hurricane Sandy was still a terrible natural disaster. Hopefully, the residents of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida are safe while dealing with Hurricane Matthew.

To everyone down in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, please stay safe. If your neighborhood is scheduled to be evacuated, please do so. If not, please find shelter, fill up your bathtub with water, and do whatever it takes to ride out this storm.

### \*Editor's Note:

**This article was written during the week that the U.S. was affected by Hurricane Matthew and should be read as though you are in the present moment during the hurricane.\***

## Football:

by Harvey Wang

### Growing Popularity, But Also Growing Concerns

In the midst of yet another football season, the topic of concussions and the safety of the players has been brought up once again. In particular, the dangerous and potentially fatal disease of CTE, or Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, has raised concerns for both the retired football players and the kids who already participate in tackle football. CTE is a brain condition that has been diagnosed in mostly boxers and football players. It is commonly compared to Alzheimer's, as they are both progressive degenerative diseases, where the disease is the result of continuous changes in the brain cells. CTE is currently known to be caused by repeated concussions and traumatic brain injuries. Both CTE and Alzheimer's begin with symptoms of memory loss, mood swings, and difficulty in concentration, which can develop into thoughts of suicide. However, CTE can cause unnatural aggression and a lack of impulse control, meaning there is the loss of the ability to resist the urge to hurt oneself or others. Furthermore, CTE symptoms start earlier in life at around the forties, which is about 20 years earlier than when Alzheimer's symptoms usually start. Unfortunately, there is no known cure for

both CTE and Alzheimer's.

"Researchers say that CTE is caused by a buildup of an abnormal protein called tau. Tau is released in the brain after receiving repeated hits to the head. While we do know where the tau is located and how much tau is needed to cause certain symptoms, it is still a mystery as to how many blows to the head or how many concussions must occur to cause CTE. It is said that genes can also play a vital role in determining how easily one can get the disease. One of the toughest problems with finding a cure for CTE is the fact that it can only be diagnosed for sure after the death of the patients, when scientists can examine the brain in detail. About 30 deceased professional football players have already been found to have suffered from CTE, while even more athletes that are currently living claim to have the disease. Many of those who died from CTE eventually committed suicide or suffered severe depression and mental issues. The wives of these players and even some current athletes have spoken out against the dangerous safety violations of football, but for now, it seems like we will have to find a way to cure CTE before we will ever prevent it.

**Managing Editor:** Sydney Peng  
**Executive Editor:** Oscar Chen

**Members:** Adam Deng, Adam Liu, Alena Zhang, Aileen Wu, Angelina Li, Audrey Zhou, Brandon Ho, Harvey Wang, Karen Li, Lawrence Huang, Marina Luo, Nicole Cheng, Olivia Nguyen, Oscar Chen, Paschal Park, Sanford Ren, Siyu Cao, Siyu Hou, Sophia Hu, Sydney Peng, Tanya Wang, Thomas Lynch, Victor Zhang, Victoria Tian, Winston Huang

• **Website:** [www.GCTimes.net/abc.php](http://www.GCTimes.net/abc.php)