

The Paw Print

March 2016

Mr. Kotrc INTERVIEW

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Interview with Mr. Kotrc

Last week the former editors of the Paw Print met up with the whole school director Mr. Kotrc in order to conduct a monthly interview. They discussed changes that are being made at BBIS and addressed topics and questions that the middle and high school student body does not usually have the opportunity to ask. - *By Amalie Rasmussen and Antonia Seyfarth*

What is the plan for BBIS after the summer holidays?

The only change which BBIS will see directly after the summer holidays is the addition of a new admissions office. Currently, new students have to take admissions tests in the same room as the admissions officers, which is not ideal. Also, we do not have a proper waiting area for new students and parents, which will be changed through the addition of a new admissions office. Furthermore, it is likely that after the summer break the blue box will have been moved down the hill, to the roundabout. This is to include all buildings belonging to BBIS within the fence surrounding the campus.

Also, BBIS is currently researching possibilities for the improvement of the parking lot. The main limitation to this project is however the financing, which seems to be more costly than first perceived.

What renovations are planned for House 5 and when will students be able to enjoy the new facilities?

The major change which lies in the future for BBIS is the renovation of House 5. The current delay is caused by the fact that there is some disagreement about how much the investment is worth. The tenants believe that the investment is worth much more than BBIS' experts have valued the investment to be

worth.

Nevertheless, the renovations for House 5 will include:

- 6 state-of-the-art science labs on the entrance floor
- An area mainly for grade 11 and 12 students will be created on the ground floor, which is planned to include a bigger study room as well as an expanded secondary library, which will have at least the size of the current MPR. These two rooms will be next to each other in order to create an improved working environment for the IBDP and IBCP students. This floor will also contain a grade 11 and 12 lounge during the day and possibly an outlet for lunch. The boarding school will also have the chance to enjoy these new facilities after school hours.
- Ms. Kamphausen and Mr. Hand will also have offices in House 5.
- The roof of the rooms located on the top floor will be lifted, in order to create similar rooms as in House 1.

However, House 5 will only be ready for teaching in 2018. At this point, renovations of House 2 will begin. House 2 will become a building mainly for students in the MYP and will contain the offices of Ms. Jung and Ms. Giegerich. Generally, the renovations will include the creation of more flexible classrooms where both big groups and small groups can work efficiently and



productively, lectures can be held and there are possibilities for individual learning. As a result, the renovations should allow a smooth transition between different teaching and learning situations.

Perhaps one of the biggest changes this year was trip week being moved to the first term. Do you feel that this decision was a success?

Teachers in the MYP have expressed that after the bonding week in September, students worked much closer together and were able to cooperate better during group work. Therefore, I do not regret the decision to move trip week to September. On a more personal level, I do however regret that Grade 10s no longer have the possibility to go to London. Currently, we are working towards finding the best concept to replace this trip, since we don't feel like it was a learning experience for everyone, but more of a fun experience. Perhaps a London trip focused on English theatre studies specifically for the literature students will be set up in the future.

Will the grade 11 biology and geography trip to Slapton also be cancelled in future years?

Yes, the plan is that grade 11s will no longer be going to Slapton. One of the reasons for this decision was the big check that your parents had to pay for the trip. Although Slapton offered many opportunities for both geography and biology students to do their Internal Assessments, we believe that there is no reason that the data collection, analysing and interpreting could not also be done here at BBIS in our forest or at the lake. We also have the labs here and the science department is looking into getting some more updated equipment, so we would prefer to have the IAs done locally in the future.

A lot of students have stated that this trip has been one of their favorites, even over the London trip. Now that the London trip has been cancelled would it not make sense to prioritize this highly educational trip to Slapton, despite it being slightly more expensive?

I suppose we will draw on your expertise and Slapton experience when we try to set up an alternative here at BBIS. We might also set up an optional trip to another study center in Germany during the easter or summer holidays where students can work in a different environment. I know it makes a difference to your learning if you are somewhere with a focused, concentrated atmosphere due to total immersion. I completely understand this advantage - when I was still teaching literature i used to do revision classes up in a hut in the mountains where we would work on novels and poetry, so I know working in an unfamiliar setting is a good thing, but please keep pushing me and reminding me about these projects.

Is there anything planned for the middle school grades in May (when they used to have trip week), especially considering that the school will otherwise be full when the 12th graders take their final exams?

In the past the students may have been on trip week for one week, but for the other three weeks of exams the school has always been full. But I can ensure you that we will maintain a quiet, undisturbed atmosphere and we might block off part of the parking lot so that there are no distractions during your exams.

Thank you very much for this interview.

Press Release/ Bulletin: Justice, Peace & Environ- ment Group

Over the last 18 months...

1. The 'Human Rights Club' became the Justice, Peace & Environment Group (JPEG), to acknowledge how these issues are all connected. Human rights are always threatened when human-caused climate change drives people from their traditional lands, or causes widespread crop failure due to droughts or flooding. Human conflict is often driven by or made worse by environmental factors, such as lack of water or fertile land. Human rights are linked to human responsibilities.
2. JPEG encourages the Head of Boarding to buy a Fair Trade vending machine for BBIS, vending chocolate and other snacks. Not only are the contents fairly traded products, but the machine is entirely mechanical and thus uses no electricity, resulting in a smaller carbon footprint. It is standing in the coffee lounge in House 4.
3. JPEG members researched the snack products available at BBIS and discovered that many of them are made by companies with very poor environmental and employment practices. The next steps are both to raise awareness of the issue among students, and to put pressure on the canteen suppliers *Apetito* to offer a better choice.
4. JPEG members win the support of Director Peter Kotrc in the campaign against palm oil. With his support we discovered that ALL HOT MEALS SERVED IN THE CANTEEN CONTAIN PALM OIL as do many of the snacks and biscuits. 'Producing palm oil often involves felling virgin rainforest thus reducing biodiversity, destroying the habitat of endangered species such as orang-utans, elephants and tigers, and ruining the livelihoods of local people. This is already a major problem in Malaysia and Indonesia, and is becoming worse in Central Africa.' (Rainforest Foundation UK)
5. JPEG plans to team up with student reporters from the Paw Print to raise awareness of this and other issues.

JPEG currently meets every Friday lunchtime 11:30 in room 3308, and is open for more members. Come and join us and add your voice!



Bring back the old Wi-Fi!

- by Justinus Steinhorst

A message that bewildered the entire High School. By lunchtime on Tuesday of last week, everyone had heard of the new Wi-Fi policy, implemented by the school earlier that day. Outraged students screamed in dismay as they realized that they were now restricted to an extremely monitored, limited to a single device, use of the Internet at BBIS. The question on everyone's mind, faculty and students alike, now remains, why?

There has been word that the administration implemented this rigid new system in order to conform with the German laws on illicit internet traffic, holding the local provider of a Wi-Fi network liable for any illegal activity committed through its address. This means that, for example, if a student illegally downloads a movie from a website, while using the school Wi-Fi, BBIS will be held accountable, and must pay for the consequences. This is where the solution of monitoring the traffic of the Wi-Fi comes into play. Even though it raises many questions in regards to the matters of personal privacy and online freedom, this facet of the new system can be comprehended, even accepted. However the question that remains is; what was the administration thinking when they decided to limit our network use to one device?

Yes. The 21st Century Smartphone can be a severe distraction to a learning environment in which productivity and concentration are of the utmost importance. True, the plan could have presumably been to decrease this inappropriate use of our devices during lesson time. However one must be fully aware of the importance, a second device, in this case our smartphones, yields for us students. While social media applications such as Snapchat or Whatsapp don't

fulfill an educational role, several other programs do. With the introduction of the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) system at the beginning of this academic year, the productive use of Mobile Phones in lessons has become increasingly prevalent. Teachers utilize apps such as Kahoot and Quizlet to make lessons more interactive, and allow students to conduct efficient research on not only their computers, but also secondary devices such as mobile phones.

Last but certainly not least, the new Wi-Fi system is yet to even function properly. The servers seem overwhelmed with the new approach, with loading times often exceeding more than 2-4 times of what they used to be. Moreover, even when using a single device, one must log onto the Internet portal every time you restart the browser. An extremely slow and painstaking process.

We can all rest assured that there must be a reasonable explanation as to why the new system was implemented. As for now however, teachers and students alike, are extremely bewildered and frustrated at this sudden change. We need the unrestricted access to the internet. We need an accessible and responsive connection, and not one that is infuriatingly difficult and slow. Please, bring back the old Wi-Fi!

If you support this cause and would like your voice to be heard, sign the following petition to show your support against the new Wi-Fi system at BBIS



<http://goo.gl/Xm3As5> (credits to anonymous 12th grade student)

Romeo and Juliet

Review

- by Eszter Magyar

On February 3rd and 4th the eighth grade debuted their rendition of the classic tragedy Romeo and Juliet, directed by Mr. Johansen. As soon as audience members stepped into the sports-hall it was clear the room had been transformed. The scenery featured romantic fairy lights draped across the bleachers, as well as a small, student-made balcony and shields painted with the Capulet and Montague family crest, spread out across the backdrop of the stage.

The performance began with action-packed fighting scenes involving the entire grade, giving a good idea of what was to follow. The group choreographies were all perfectly in-sync and entertaining for the audience to watch. It was clear that the cast enjoyed taking part in the project, and everyone got a chance to shine on stage. It was enjoyable to see a modern adaptation of the play, including a memorable dance routine to "Watch me whip" and intricate costumes that were very representative of the students' characters.

Though the group performances were very amusing, certain individual monologues were what proved to everyone how much time and dedication was truly put into the show. The eighth graders definitely impressed everyone who knows how difficult the script, written in Elizabethan English, is to learn. Even though the script has of course been altered, memorizing such a complicated text would be a strenuous task for anyone, let alone eighth graders with mixed levels of english speaking skills.

The performances certainly had their fair share of ups and down, but they made for a viewing experience like no other. What is a school performance without its handful of technical difficulties or slightly awkward silences anyway? The eighth grade performances of Romeo and Juliet were very enjoyable to watch and hats off to everyone who was a part of this tough drama; your interpretation of the show will be remembered for a long time!



Germany: No home for Refugees?

- by Emily Lauterbach

It was an ordinary Sunday morning when a former Hotel in Bautzen, Saxony, caught fire. The Hotel, known as Hausarenschhof, was being modified to shelter asylum seekers. It is still unclear today if the building can be restored, as the fire severely damaged the roof. The incident reported no casualties as the hotel was still empty at the time. Nevertheless, during the fire onlookers were cheering and suspiciously overcome with joy whilst watching the flames destroy what could have been a home to hundreds of refugees seeking a roof over their heads. Due to the disreputable behavior of bystanders, authorities investigated the crime scene and found traces of fire accelerants, concluding it was arson. Interior Minister of Germany, Thomas de Maizière, calls the Perpetrators of this incident criminals, as they treated innocent people with contempt despite their circumstances.



Refugees are escaping regions of terror, war, and death. There are now over 4.3 million Syrian Refugee's scattered across the region, thousands of them

fleeing their country everyday to make their way to Europe, where they hope to find shelter and the chance to start over in peace. According to the UN it will take \$7.7 billion to meet the urgent needs of Syrians in 2016.

Even though German borders are wide open to all Refugees, (some?) Germans show a lack of support towards these member nations. In Early August 2015, a mob blocked the entry of a bus carrying refugees to a shelter in Saxony, shouting "Wir sind das Reich" (We are the Empire), "Go home". Leading German politicians are ashamed of the actions of their nation. Saxony's interior minister Markus Ulbig, member of Merkel's Christian Democratic Party (CDU), said: "As much need for a discussion there may be over the refugee question: I find it deeply shameful to see how people are being treated here."

However, not only are Refugees mistreated but now also attacked with physical violence. In Early January 2016, a group of Pakistanis and a Syrian man were attacked by gangs in Cologne. Supporters of PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West) threw bottles and firecrackers at a march on January 9th, accusing hundreds of Refugees of sexual assault and rape. Three police officers were wounded and a journalist had to be hospitalized. Furthermore, Germans then blamed Refugee's for the physical attacks. Angela Merkel announced that anyone involved in the criminal act would be treated with the full face of the law, whether it be German nationals or refugees. Is this to off-topic?

Tech giants join battle against ISIS

by Justinus Steinhorst

In a closed-door meeting conducted at the justice department late last month, executives of influential technology firms such as Apple, Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat met, to discuss the ever-so crucial cyber war against ISIS. With more rigorous control mechanisms and collaboration between the Department of Defence and Tech firms, the Obama administration hopes to curb the terrorist group's activity online.

The main focus of this meeting was to brief the companies on the messaging and communication strategies of ISIS and its affiliates, through social media. While details of exact conclusions remain largely classified, the fact that 52 of the largest tech companies gathered together for negotiations at one table, marks significant progress in the development of an online counterterrorism strategy. In an interview with CNN after the meeting, Twitter announced that they will retain their efforts in thwarting ISIS, already having shut "125,000 ISIS related accounts" on their platform.

Particularly notable was the attendance of the tech-giant Apple, who just recently, had a tense faceoff with the administration, after refusing to hack into the iPhone of the San Bernardino shooter. Despite these tensions the Cupertino based company attended, along with its market rivals Microsoft and Samsung, who had just recently too pledged their allegiance with Apple in their court case against the FBI.

In a response to these negotiations and the resulting media-frenzy, Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey, CEOs of Facebook and Twitter respectively, were di-

rectly threatened by ISIS. An affiliated group named "Sons Caliphate Army" uploaded a propaganda video to their preferred social media platform "Telegram", vowing to take action against the two.

The battle on social media could prove to become an integral turning point in the war against the terrorist group. While international politics remain divided on military intervention and national counterterrorism policies, a joint effort in curbing ISIS' online activity seems much more achievable. Lone wolf terrorists, carrying out detrimental attacks such as the ones in Paris, Beirut, Tunisia and more recently the USA too, are most often recruited and lured in by the terrorist group's intricately woven net of online presence. Only if the online community stands together in unison, and this net is demolished, can we curb the alarming recruitment rates, ISIS achieves through social media.



The Zika Virus

With no vaccine available to this date, the Zika virus is a great threat to the world, as recent alarm bells from the WHO have warned the public of the disease. Although symptoms are usually mild and only last a couple of days, the Zika virus can cause severe birth defects and have detrimental effects on the fetal development of unborn children. - by *Constantin Ernst*

The virus is primarily transmitted through the Aedes mosquito, which usually bite in the early morning and evening. These mosquitoes circulate in southern America and parts of Africa and Asia. Recent spread to North America was also caused by sexual transmission of already infected people. Symptoms of the virus are rashes, joint pain, fever and conjunctivitis (inflammation of the eyes). The word "Zika" originated from the Zika forest in Uganda, where the mosquito-borne virus was first discovered in 1947. While the virus itself is not deadly or very painful, its effects may lead to Guillain-Barre syndrome, a disorder in which the immune system attacks part of the peripheral nervous system. This can lead to weakness, paralysis and in many cases respiratory failure, which can give fatal consequences. Pregnant women which obtain the Zika virus, are also in danger, as there is a high chance of children being born with microcephaly, a defect which causes stagnated growth of the child's head, making it smaller. This will have life-long consequences, as the brain cannot fully develop in the smaller head.



Prevention at the source is the key

To protect oneself and the greater community, mosquito breeding sites in water should be removed carefully. To prevent contact, people are advised to wear insect repellent, light clothing covering the body. In addition, one can sleep under a mosquito tent during the day. The virus has not spread to Canada nor to Europe, and research facilities are currently investigating the disease, trying to find a vaccine. And as Derek Landy phrases it in his novels: "Every solution to every problem is simple. It's the distance between the two where the mystery lies."

Are you interested in further reading? Be sure to scan this code for more information:



Gravitational Waves And why you should be Excited about them

by Darya Guettler

25 years, 16 countries, 1000 scientists and 1 billion dollars - this is the magnitude of LIGO's experiment, which attempts to confirm the existence of gravitational waves. The theory behind the gravitational waves is not something new to modern day scientists; Einstein predicted as much in 1916 with his theory of relativity, but even he dismissed it as possible hocus. On February 11th, 2016, however, the LIGO team made Einstein proud, finally announcing that they had in fact detected gravitational waves. But how did they do it? What is the significance of such a discovery? And what does the word "gravitational waves" even mean?

In a universe where time and space are the respective axes, gravitational waves can be explained as 'ripples' or wrinkles in the material of space-time. Gravitational Waves are created by the most violent events in the universe. The waves measured by the LIGO were created by the collision of two black holes more than 1.3 billion years ago. That is before the estimated existence of Homo sapiens, our closest ancestors. Each black hole contained around 30 times the mass of our sun per minute volume, with the two

approaching each other at the speed of light. Scientists estimate that in their collision, the two black holes created a gravitational field that was so strong, the power it released was 50 times stronger than the combined power of all the galaxies in our known universe. Surprisingly enough, such a collision is not even uncommon. It is, however, the first that humans have ever been able to record.



So how did the LIGO team manage to find these gravitational waves that originated from a collision that occurred before the Stone Age? The LIGO team set up two L-shaped detectors (see picture), one in Louisiana and one in Washington State, each with 4-kilometer long arms perpendicular to each other. In each facility, laser light is bounced off of mirrors down the arms of the detectors. The laser light is then split so that the two beams are out of phase. When they are recombined at the mouth of the detector, the two beams should cancel out. If, however, gravitational waves pass through this detector, the gravitational wave will alter the relative lengths of the beams and the two beams will not join destructively anymore. Instead, they will create a new interference pattern that can be detected by a computer, indicating the discovery of gravitational waves. The computers picking up these signals must, however, be extremely sensitive, as the collision of two giant black holes will alter the relative length of the arms only by the diameter of a proton. This program began in 2002 and continued until 2010, when scientists in the LIGO experiment shut down the sensors and upgraded every aspect of it. The new system, called Advanced LIGO, was meant to launch on September 15th, 2015. Yet on September 14th, before Advanced LIGO's inaugura-

tion, the sensor in Louisiana picked up a signal. The same signal was picked up 7 milliseconds later in Washington State.

At this point, it might seem like gravitational waves are a big ado about nothing. So why are these miniature interferences in detectors so important? Through the discovery of gravitational waves humans have an insight into the large cosmic events, such as the Big Bang, that make our universe the way it is. Additionally, using gravitational waves, it is possible to make Einstein's theory of relativity more robust, as he only speculated the existence of such waves. There is so much potential to advance after finding these waves. In 1895, Roentgen found a way to capture X-rays. Today, these electromagnetic rays play an integral role in medicine. The same can be said for the discovery of radio waves.

The discovery of gravitational waves has opened up a new door for humans, a new way of looking at the universe that supplements the previous one. It is impossible to know what this discovery will amount to, but what we do know is that gravitational waves are destined to have eventual everyday applications for generations to come.

Mr. Milner CD Review

- by Esther Thomas

John Milner's newly released album „Songs for a fragile planet“ (in my opinion) may be one of the most inspiring pieces of art of the decade. Revolving around love and the planet earth, the songs carry profound meanings and messages, which are worth listening to. At the same time, every song is very easy to listen to, and even though the songs show John Milner's style of music, a wide range of influences may be heard. This gives the album a very global feeling.

Personally, I could not decide which song I liked more than others because every single song was lovely in its own way. While „Day of Truce“ may be an appealing song to Indie Rock lovers, „Waiting for your coin to drop“ may be liked by those who enjoy listening to Latin American music. Having focused my Personal Project on Flamenco last year, I found the rhythmic ornamentation and instrumentation in this song especially interesting as it shows influences from Spanish or Latin American clapping techniques.

Genuine musicianship can be found in such a wide range of instrumentation, such a large group of contributors, including Ruth Organ and Mr. Milner's own sons, and such intricate ornamentation and decoration of the main melodies. For singers, „Songs for a fragile planet“ offers lyrics with deep messages like in „Blue patches“, while „Tsunami of love“ comes alive through beautiful harmonies. For guitarists, there is a wonderfully-played guitar solo in „Found my love“, by the former BBIS student, Honza.

I believe that this album has a song for anyone and any occasion. The unique style of music and the important message, namely to love and to take care of the planet and the people living on it, have truly inspired me and it will not have been the last time that I will listen to these songs. Thank you, Mr. Milner, for sharing such a piece of art with us!



















Champions League

2015/16

- by Nina Bernhardt

The 61st season of UEFA Champions League has reached the Round of 16!

Here are the results from the first leg:

 Paris Saint-Germain	2 - 1	Chelsea 
 Benfica	1 - 0	Zenit St. Petersburg 
 AA Gent	2 - 3	VfL Wolfsburg 
 AS Roma	0 - 2	Real Madrid 
 Arsenal	0 - 2	FC Barcelona 
 Juventus	2 - 2	Bayern Munich 
 PSV	0 - 0	Atlético Madrid 
 Dynamo Kiev	1 - 3	Manchester City 

The 1st legs of all matches have been completed and there were some pretty interesting and close games. After all, most, if not all of the remaining teams, are rather prominent and play at a very high level. When two teams such as Arsenal and Barcelona or Bayern Munich and Juventus play each other, these games are bound to be gripping and fascinating. Whilst of course the games in the 1st leg are very important, we know that the 2nd leg can bring about the real surprises. Last year in the quarterfinals Porto beat Bayern 3-1 in the first leg but Munich came back and reached the semi finals with a 6-1 win in the 2nd leg. You can never quite predict the outcomes of the second leg based on the first game, which is why these games are so incredibly fascinating to watch.

Barcelona won the tournament last year, succeeding their rivals Real Madrid. Bayern Munich too, has been very active and always finishing in the top of the tournament these past years. Juventus, who haven't won the tournament since 1996 and lost in the final to Barcelona last year, are now eager to claim the title once again. They proved this with their surprising comeback when came back from a 0-2, to tie the game at 2-2.

Whilst all teams in the tournament this year play a very high level, the team of Luis Enrique, FC Barcelona, is once again a favorite to win. Leading the La Liga (Spain) before rivals Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid, as well as being described as "super favorites" by Arsenal coach Arsène Wenger, there seems to be no reason for Barcelona not to reach the finals this year. Their South American dream-trio up front, consisting of Neymar, Messi and Suarez, seems nearly unstoppable. The MSN (as they are called) have scored 91 goals in their league, whilst their quarterfinal opponent Arsenal has only scored 61 goals in total this season. Yet, even though the statistics are on Barcelona's side, football is an unpredictable game and we could see any of the 16 teams holding up that trophy on May 28th, in Milan.



The Most Beautiful Places in the World

Our world is filled with indescribable beauty, both man-made and natural, and it's hard to say whether a single lifetime would be enough to truly experience all of it. When travelling, we can enjoy the beauty of our nature, and get impeccable experiences, which will stay in our memory for a long time. And therefore, it is very salient to visit places that would leave a lasting impression, as well as help us discover something new and fascinating. And so, we have decided to introduce you to the Top 3 most unique and mesmerizing places in the world. - by Carolina Vasilcisin

1. Great Blue Hole

The Big Blue Hole is located in the middle of reef Laytkhaus, in the Atlantic Ocean. You probably wonder why it is called that. Well, you will be surprised because the depth of this hole is more than 120 meters, and the diameter is about, 300 meters. Impressive, right? This beautiful place was found and discovered by Jacque Eve Cousteau. The Big Blue Hole attracts professional divers around the world, however, many perished in this bottomless water abyss. The danger, which the Big Blue Hole is hiding is not a border for many tourists, sine its beauty truly is unique.



2. Fly Geyser

Fly Geyser - if not the most delightful geyser around the world, then, at least, one of the most beautiful places on the planet. The beauty of this place is something indescribable. It is hard to believe, but this geyser was made by a man. A long time ago, people drilled a well on its place. Surprisingly, after a few years, the hot water has managed to escape out of limits of the dwelling. Under the continuous influence of hot water, various minerals, which have created such unique geyser, have gradually begun to dissolve. It has now reached 1.5 meters, but there is still more to come, since the geyser still grows. Isn't it just simply fascinating?



3. Marble Cave (Crimea)

Marble Cave, located in Crimea (Russia), is appreciated by hundreds of tourists due to its uniqueness. The cave is located on one of the deepest Alpine lakes in the world. The

material of the cave contains a large amount of calcareous breeds that promoted emergence of colorful landscapes with prevalence of shades of blue color. For divers, this cave would be one of the best discoveries.



“2 years later: a wee reflection from Edinburgh”

Cäcilie Steinhorst graduated from BBIS in May 2014. She is currently in her second year studying International Relations at The University of Edinburgh. - by Cäcilie Steinhorst

It has now been precisely one year and ten months since my graduation from BBIS. Do I miss it? If I'm completely honest - no. Not exactly.

After my graduation I started university in Edinburgh, Scotland and am currently in my second year at The University of Edinburgh studying International Relations. During these past (nearly) two years, I have learned to do laundry, open a bank account, cook my own dinners - I have become independent. I started university, met unique people and formed a diverse friend group. I travelled to remote Highland villages, beaches and valleys across Scotland as well as more exotic locations around the world for conferences and internships. I probably spent a fortune on coffees and teas and started a food and travel blog. I spent nights at the library balanced with nights at pubs, got a scholarship and hosted various flat parties. I definitely enjoyed my first four semesters of university yet I still have no concrete plan of where life will take me in terms of job, career and life after university.

My two years at BBIS were definitely not the best time of my life. I moved to Berlin after spending the majority of my childhood and all of my teen years in the Middle East and was rather bitter when I realized I'd have to settle in a new school for my final two years of high school. On top of homesickness, I developed quite

a strong identity crisis upon my arrival in Germany. Although according to my passport, I was returning “home”, I felt odd, out of place and conflicted in regards to my identity and what “home” really meant to me. In addition to all of this, I moved to Berlin knowing I'd have to start the IB, which overshadowed everything and naturally was the cause of much distress and headache over the two years. Although those two years were heavily affected by homesickness, identity crisis and IB stress there are definitely things I miss about Berlin, school and living at home.

After moving out from home and leaving both my teachers and parents watchful eyes, I was forced to become an adult over night. From complex tasks such as bank accounts, renting flats and weekly budgeting to more simple – but nevertheless quite demanding – day-to-day routines such as shopping, cooking and cleaning, I had to deal with it all. I often miss my mum's beautiful lunches after tiring days at school or simply her daily pick-up and drop-off taxi service from and to school. I miss not having to take responsibility and worry about my keys, laundry, how to get home, money, safety - the list goes on. I miss having teachers who genuinely care about your academic success and remind you to complete your work on time. I miss having all my friends in one place and seeing them every day in class.



University is so different. With independence and freedom comes responsibility and accountability. You're responsible for your own success and there is little control and restrictions over your academics as well as social life. While this is – for the most part – very liberating and exciting, it can also cause loneliness and lots of stress. With distance and time I have learned to value a lot of things, especially those that are taken for granted when living at home.

I spent most of my senior year fantasizing about the future, life after graduation, IB and school. I was ec-

static about what was to come and wanted nothing more than to leave Berlin and BBIS and start adult life. As exciting as that all may be, if I were to give the current seniors one piece of advice, it would be to cherish every moment you have left with friends, parents, teachers and pets. You will truly miss them and you will perceive everything so differently. As exciting as university and independent life may sound – yes, it really is very exciting – do stop yourself and live in the present because you'll definitely miss it all sooner than you think.