



MARCH N°11

THE NEWSHAKER

Let's shake the news!
St Marc High School newsletter



Here we are, back from our 3-week-trip in the freezing Minnesota and Wisconsin, eyes full of stars and mind filled with memories, wishing we never left. We got this amazing opportunity to be hosted by American families, and became little spies by observing their ways of life. We noticed many differences between France and the United States that we are about to share, how lucky you are!

We followed our American sisters and brothers to their high schools and attended their classes usually very dissimilar from ours. If the French school system is only based on studies, American one considered studies as important as activities such as sports, arts, or volunteering. We ate very typical dishes and even took the famous yellow buses. On a less positive touch, we are also going to discuss gun culture causing dramatic events. During our stay, some major cultural and political festivities were celebrated such as Black Month History, President day and Super Tuesday, stay tuned for our U.S. festivities section !

To know every detail of our crazy journey, the Newshaker's team invites you to read this special issue and hopefully you will turn into American culture experts!

We cannot finish this edito without some words about the confinement. It is unnecessary to remind you that for the first time ever in the 21st century history we are living an unprecedented situation. We are all confined in our houses in order to avoid spreading or catching this dreadful disease. No excuse to avoid reading our Newshaker!!! **Take care and "Stay at home!"**.

Maé M-D.



FESTIVITIES IN THE USA



A BUSY TRIP

Black Month History, let's learn from the past...

Black Month History is celebrated in the United States and Canada in February; but also, unofficially in Ireland, the United-Kingdom, and the Netherlands in October. Black Month History is a means to remember important people and events part of African History. In most American schools this month is set up in different ways. Some schools have a "Black Club", whose members organize meals and shows. African American adults also come to explain how their studies went on with segregation and racism, and how people could be narrow-minded toward their peers. Even if nowadays, segregation is abolished, racism still exists ... But we all need to rise above those prejudices! In some classes, students made posters that were exhibited in their schools. They were mostly about iconic or/and historical famous African or White-skinned people who promoted African American rights.

We need to change all these invisible rules and stereotypes, we must learn from the actions of these inspiring people who have made their voices heard and have made people changed their minds!



A candy made at school, by students on the occasion of Black History Month

President's Day

The third Monday of February is a public holiday celebrated in memory of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln and thus, all the American Presidents.

We were in Minnesota and Wisconsin just for this occasion,

and while some of us had a long week-end but no great event, a number of others did not even have the day off. A few families explained why President Day is celebrated. We can understand that several days off in the USA are not compulsory and that the meaning of this celebration depends on the state, the school, the city and the job.

Super Tuesday

On Tuesday 3rd of March, was held the Super Tuesday. It first appeared in 1998 only during presidential election year. Many states vote simultaneously in primaries and caucuses to decide between the candidates of the two main political parties - the Democratic and Republican parties - and who will be the official candidate of each party for the following presidential election that will take place in early November.

This year 14 states were voting on this Super Tuesday, on the Republican side Donald Trump won them all contrary to the Democrats there was a political divide between two political trends: Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders, Joe Biden got the majority of the ballot for the moment. The American families feel genuinely concerned and for a majority go and vote for the Republican or the Democrat representative. We noticed that most of the teenagers we met felt very concerned and are interested in the politics! They talk about with friends and argue in discussion with their parents or their teachers to defend their point of view!



Stickers " I voted", that people who voted received

Lucile M.

IN THE DEPTH OF TODAY'S SOCIETY

JUST HISTORY...



In the US, the gun issue is a hot topic of the public debate. Americans are largely divided on this point, which has a huge impact on American society and economy. Today, the firearm lobby is subject to sharp criticism as it largely impacts new generations.

American children are over exposed to gun violence: an estimated 3 million American children have witnessed shootings, either in their communities, their homes or their schools and nearly 2,900 children and teens are shot or killed every year. Since the beginning of the year, 16 school shootings have occurred. On average, a shooting happens more than once a week in an American school. As a result, there are police officers in every school in order to bring safety and to make sure everyone feels safe.

This issue is centered around the 2nd amendment, which allows every American citizens to own and bear arms.

In order to defend this right, organizations were created ; the most powerful one being the NRA (National Rifle Association). This lobby **supported Trump's campaign** in 2016, and is likely to be a source for campaign contributions to the candidate and congressional Republicans in 2020. Consequently, the NRA prevents any kind of improvement, or agreement on gun control. Some would argue that guns save lives, which is true, but overall, far more people are killed than saved.

Even though this issue causes tensions, things are changing since some states have passed gun regulation laws that greatly helped reduce death toll. Despite the obstacles, things are likely to change thanks to this rising awareness amongst young people. Civic initiatives aim to reduce and control gun trade. The younger generation is the most involved in this fight, led by activists like Emma Gonzales. Today, more than ever, mindsets have to change.

Vincent G. ; Pania B. ; Salomé D--R. and Carla A.

UNIVERSITY IN THE US UNIVERSITY OF MORRIS, MINNESOTA.



During my stay in the USA, I had the chance to attend college classes in UMM. The parents of my host family were working there as French and Italian teachers, and they offered me to take classes in college. I was told that juniors and seniors could take college classes if they wanted, and even if I am a sophomore, I found it very interesting to try. Thus, I attended college classes for six days. I went to creative writing class, to science-fiction class and to Spanish class. The campus was separated into several buildings, such as the science department, humanities department, fine arts department, dorms, a dining hall, a fitness center with a swimming pool

and a student building with a cafeteria and an amphitheater. A lot of students were full board and were staying on campus most of the time, though some of them lived outside, on their own, and drove to college every day. As for pets, from what I heard, students were allowed to bring their horses to college, and there were stalls for them. They could also bring their goldfishes, but dogs were not allowed there, which is quite ironic. The students also had a schedule for each class with the assignments for the whole semester. What a great experience!

Jeanne P.

A DAY IN THE SHOES OF AN AMERICAN STUDENT

Transportation

There were different ways to go to school in the US. Some of us were going to school by car. You will say that it's a pretty common way to reach school. But here is the difference: it wasn't always an adult driving the car, it could be our pen pal. Indeed, in the US, teenagers can get their driver's license at 16 years old. Awesome!

As you probably know, US school buses are yellow. Besides, there is no real "bus stop", they just stop really often at crossroads so that children don't have to walk a lot to catch them. Furthermore, students don't have any bus card and the bus drivers are welcoming and they know pretty much all the students in their bus. Indeed, we can say that the relationship between students and bus drivers are very different from France...

Lisa B. and Irina Z.

The Importance of Patriotism

To begin the day most schools start with the pledge of allegiance: students repeat it after the principal with their right hand on their chest and turned toward the American flag. In most classrooms, it is easy to notice plenty of posters presenting the United States, as for instance the famous "We want you for American army", or others expressing the love of the population for their country. Once they finish school their time is reduced with school clubs or activities. As a matter of fact, Americans are more involved in their school than us. They defend the colors of their school by competing against other schools in many contests; the most popular ones are basketball, American football and hockey. This wish of proving sport superiority leads to their strong patriotism. When students finally head back home, it's easy to see the numerous American flags take center of stage in the garden of many houses. Thus, patriotism is implied in every aspect of an American student, from the school's inside, to the way home, or even in sports.

Anaïs G. and Louane N.



Time for school

You are probably wondering **how much time an American student spends at school or how much holiday they have.** Thanks to our trip to the USA, I can now give you an experience of what an American school can be like and compare it to French school. The first thing that I noticed is that schooldays in the USA are shorter than schooldays in France and more importantly, they are less exhausting for students. In fact, an American student goes to school from 8 :00 am to 2 :45 pm, but this can be explained by the fact that most American students join a sport club afterschool. I also noticed that there is the same schedule every day, at first it surprised me because it's very different from France but I got used to it and even liked it. Moreover, Americans have some holidays that we don't have, for example they have Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, and even Snow Days in several state. One might think that American students work less than French students but in fact French students work only 144 days a year whereas American students work 180 days a year.

Maxence T.

Communication and mentalities



While in America we saw a big difference in people's behaviour. They were really open minded, and this is not saying that in France we are not, but in America it is easier to understand a person's intentions and way of thinking. People are more explicit and show their emotions much more. This makes communication between individuals much easier and thus creates less tensions and misunderstandings between them. Of course that doesn't mean there are none though. After staying a few weeks, we easily saw how easier it was to talk to just anyone which made our stay much more pleasant. Whether in class, where people openly participated without any second thoughts, or just normally talking with their friends, it was just pure fun together. I think it is thanks to their mind set that my stay was so pleasant, which might prove the same for the rest of my class of course. As a French student I found it very interesting and it opened a whole new way of thinking for myself. I of course think that this mind set should be much more present around the world, I don't think enough people actually think and act this way but hope that it will change in the near future.

Damien D.

Food for thoughts !



It is 6 o'clock on Monday... Let start with breakfast! during the week it is often just a bowl of cereals, but during week-end, families prepare huge American dishes such as pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon or waffles... With maple syrup of course! As on school day breakfast is light, students are used to eating during classes. Sometimes a kind of "brunch" box might be provided by school. After several little snacks such as candies, cookies, bagels, berries or doughnuts, American families dine around 7PM. It is often a traditional meal with meat and vegetables. In this case they might eat together but contrary to France, dining does not mean end of the day and they might snack again after... Snacks are generally available for free in every classroom and a lot of students bring coffee or any kinds of drinks to school... It seemed really shocking according from an article of the Time. Despite of that really alarming figures, hamburgers and pizzas are still an option every day at lunch. On the other hand, we observed that most of the families try to improve their food habits by preparing healthy meal or bringing food for lunch, and that most of the teenagers practice sport at least once a week. Not to mention that fruits in grocery store are not so expensive... They are just not seasonal...You'd think that they have to choose between reason and health!

Salomé D--R.



Let's do Art !

Let's figure out French school system looks really old fashion for a lot of students... In the United States, a lot of extra-curriculum activities are enhanced such as... **arts!** A lot of schools see it as a way to develop students' creativity and culture. It is also a good way to motivate everyone to do what they like. Specific classes exist only for art section and they are way more reputed than in France. Indeed, the students do not have to do only art or only artistic classes. They can use this section to try new things and to get college credits (College credits measure the number of applied hours that are recognized for successful completion of a particular course of study). What a good way to escape from high school pressure! Moreover, various art classes such as picture, audiovisual, or scene art... A lot of cultural events are organized by the school such as musicals or different types of show. The idea is to add value to the students for what they are and know, more than what they have to stick to.

Salomé D--R.

A painting made by Pania in Art class



Unusual initiatives

We have found in most of the schools we attended, a positive initiative the existence of **a class for handicapped people, either mental or physical**. Contrary to what you may think, these people weren't discriminated against. They were very well integrated within the school, and students were trying their best to make them feel at ease by talking with them and helping them. These handicapped students have special teachers and equipment, including dogs. Dogs were essential to help these students to develop responsibility skills and also to distract them from their disease. We appreciated the fact that in America school is inclusive and teach pupils to live together no matter your differences.

Irina Z. and Lisa B.



And let's get athletic !

As an American high-schooler, it is very unusual not to practise any sport. In fact, more than half of all high-school students play on a sports team.

But why?

First of all because they have a lot of facilities, buildings, sponsors and time. Usually, American students finish school at 2:45 pm every day. But it is not the main reason. In fact, it is mostly because high school sports benefit students in several ways. For example, it permits students to bond together over a common passion and create new friendships, it helps students to become more involved and to proudly represent their community but also, it teaches high-schoolers new skills such as leadership and time management. Finally, college can be very expensive in the United States and sometimes high school sports help them to get a good scholarship.

Mathilde F. and Léna C.



An example of sports : Léna practiced hockey with her correspondent during her stay.



COVID-19 – AN INTERNATIONAL PANDEMIC : It's official! The new coronavirus, scientifically called COVID-19, has been recognized as an international pandemic on March, 11th 2020 by the World Health Organization. Since our last article, the situation has taken on a completely dramatic scale in Europe. In fact, while China is slowly recovering thanks to its quarantine measures, Europe is seriously affected by this virus, becoming the new epicenter of the pandemic. with more than 416.000 reported cases suffering from the disease, and more than 18.800 deaths (these are the figures at the time of writing this article), worldwide countries are announcing a Health War. Exceptional measures have been taken: several European countries announced quarantine, like Spain, France or Italy. Each of them is struggling with medical care, as the COVID-19 is unknown, medically speaking. In Italy, the situation is very worrying as the number of deaths and cases increase excruciatingly every day. The Italia government announces the peak of deaths one day, but the next one it's even worse: it is a real disaster for Italy. That's why a total quarantine has been put in place, and no outing is allowed, except for emergencies. Measures are drastic; however they are vital and essential to face this annihilating plague. In fact, more and more countries are adopting the Italian model and hope the same recovery as China. Nevertheless, there is still hope! Despite the quarantine, Italian people gathered on their balcony to sing heartwarmingly the Italian anthem "Il Canto degli Italiani" and other famous songs. These gestures emphasize the hard and dogged work of all the medical staff; they are the heroes of this health crisis. The Italian patriotism and recognition of the main players in this fight win the hearts of other countries of the World. Thus, the determination and motivation to

overcome this virus are stronger than anything!

Lenny P.



The Six Nations Tournament

Since 2000, the 6 best national rugby teams of Western Europe meet to face each other during February and March. This year is a special one. England at the top of the championship, France, second... But because of the risks of spreading "covid-19", the 3 last games of the tournament have been postponed. New players especially in the feminine Scottish team have been infected by the disease but finally were released from the hospital. For the postponed games, we know that France-Ireland will occur this year on October 31st. The other postponed games might also occur during this period.

Timothé M.



March 8th was International Women's Day, an opportunity to be reminded of the substantial effort we still have to provide to make the world an equal place. Many countries decided to show support toward the cause of women. In London, the Gatwick Express train broadcasted several quotes, in honor of famous women, or in Rio de Janeiro, military officers distributed flowers to women, as a sign of respect. In Ohio, both men and women took time to celebrate the contributions of women in their lives, during marches. But in most areas, the celebration was not as peaceful. Protests were organized in Paris and Madrid, to claim pay equality, and to denounce domestic violence. Hundreds of Indian women marched, to address the issue of rape in the country. Kosovo, Pakistan, Philippines, Australia and South Korea were also shaken by all sorts of demonstrations, to promote women's rights and to decry other abuses, as femicide, or sexual harassment. International Women's Day was originally established to fight for gender equality. However, women do not have to wait until this date to reassert their rights which they are deprived from, on an ongoing basis. As an example, we can bring up the Chilean anthem to the feminist fight, taken over by thousands of women all across the world, to open up the world's eyes on any violence against women.

Ana B.