On the Francis Howell North publications team, I worked on making comics for the website, the paper, and the weekly newsletter while it was in circulation. I also illustrate for the school newspaper, the North Star, to the point of even designing the cover for the paper for the January special edition. I have used both Adobe Photoshop as well as Adobe Illustrator for this work.

During the first semester, there was a weekly newsletter dubbed the Polaris. This was only one page, and was only in black and white. As a result of this, those who were making comics for the Polaris had to be aware of the values they were using. Darker colors made it hard to see the solid black lines, and a some gradient just would not show up as they did on the computer screen. To solve this issue, I learned to work in variously toned grays, to cut out the middleman of coloring everything in normal, brighter hues, checking to see if they worked in monochrome, seeing they don't, and having to alter the colors accordingly.

Working on Polaris was not the only time I had to worry about color choice. The North Star prints on a paper that soaks up printer ink very easily. This causes darker colors to spread into the areas surrounding their planned placement. It is also worth noting that not all colors accessible on illustration programs are able to be printed. Most bright hues, for example, could not be printed.This is where I learned how to make use of my color choice while still making the image pop. I learned that it was also important to take note of where the image was on the page, in order to make the image guide the eye of the reader to the text, or hopefully the headline, of the story it accompanied. I aimed to figure out various forms of contrast to grab the reader's eye, including color, lines of action, and various props to point towards the story.

The use of mimicry -- or in many cases, parody -- is often used in describing opinions to a larger audience. I learned how to study the style of popular media and how to apply it to my work. Being able to make the reader recognize the media that is being referenced makes the reader relate to the content, and draws them in to read the story that the image was made for. This will also help in the future in situations where all of the artists working on the same project will be expected to have the same general style when working on said project. It is also a good way to study the art that inspires me, to push my art closer to what I want it to look like.

Compromise is another skill that is very helpful when illustrating for any sort of workplace. If an image doesn't quite fit the page, it is best to be able to say "of course I can fix this in an efficient manner, it's no problem." It not only reduces the stress of the work environment, but it also causes peers to have more trust in their illustrator. Adding legs to a cutout illustration doesn't become a catastrophe when you know it will only take about ten to fifteen minutes.

Before working on the North Star, I did not have experience drawing people from photos. I had mostly done personal character designs. This changed when I had to draw specific people involved in the articles I was illustrating for. The first experience with this was the January edition of the paper, but it was by far not the last. Since then, however, I have grown more comfortable with the concept, and am willing to go deeper than simply the hair and eye color, but now go into facial features and expressing the personality and emotion of the person I am depicting.

My first year publishing my art has helped me in many ways, as not only have I learned concepts to apply to my technique and compatibility, it has also helped me realize that I can put my art to good use in my community.

For the illustration of the cook:

This illustration was made for an article giving a chef's opinion of cooking with box recipes. It was a cutout, and the illustration is of the chef herself in her usual uniform. On the page, the spoon is pointing towards the headline, and while her line of sight normally would guide the reader off the page, the box prevents such thing from happening.

For the comic:

This was made for an article concerning the stress of adding a job to the list of things that high schoolers have to do. I made the two characters stand out in the comic by making them nearly opposite colors. I made the dialogue so that the reader would understand that all of those hours of doing the things necessary to be a good student as well as the hours of your average high school job just don't add up to give the student enough time to rest.

For the illustration in the style of a marvel comic:

The article that accompanied this image was about the opinions of Marvel's current cinematic universe. It was requested of me to make the images look like those who were quoted were popular Marvel superheroes. In this case, I drew Black Widow, but altered her appearance to make it look like the person whose quote was taken -- the most prominent alteration being the hair.

For the cover:

This was the cover for the North Star's special edition, which was about the nostalgia of elementary school. I depict many children on a playground -- probably at recess -- playing with each other, with a kickball used as the dominant for where the title of the issue was going to go. The playground itself was slightly inspired by the playground that was at my elementary school, Henderson Elementary.

For the illustration concerning the use of the confederate flag:

This was my first illustration for the North Star, for an article sharing an opinion about the use of Confederate flags and the preservation of Confederate monuments. This illustration was actually changed a few times before its final form, as the focus for the article changed a few times as well. However, compromise was not an issue, and it now depicts the disagreement between those following the Black Lives Matter movement and those following the belief that the Confederacy was something that should be presented with pride.

THE FOOD THAT'S REALLY GOOD TO EAT

People have strayed away from cooking to eating out, but making meals at home is healthier and more valuable

by Ashya Roberson

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Wake up. Eat McDonald's. Go to school. Drive home. Pick up Bread Co. Sleep. Repeat. The past few years, all we do is go out to fast food places or restaurants to eat. We, as a whole, hardly ever eat at home with our parents, let alone cook an actual homemade meal, which can be healthier and way more flavorful for the taste buds. Ever since I was little, I wanted to be a chef and make good food for the soul.

Nowadays, it's always our friends first, family second. A homemade meal is prepared with love and patience, not to be rushed in a hurry. Dishes can be more fun to make with family than just by yourself because cooking with your mom or dad is fun. Plus, you can make memories with them that can last a lifetime. My mother showed me the basics, but over the years, I learned more complex foods and separated the good from the bad, like greasy foods that lead to bad arteries and strokes.

Dinners at home are less costly and way healthier. The many types of food, ranging from American to Asian, can lead to tons of new food experiences. Restaurants and dinners at home are both very good and delicious. However, most foods have MSG, which is used as a flavor enhancer that causes many health problems, leading to high blood pressure and even diabetes. Cooking food at home is just a better experience than waiting 30 minutes to an hour for a plate of unhealthy chicken tenders at Popeyes.
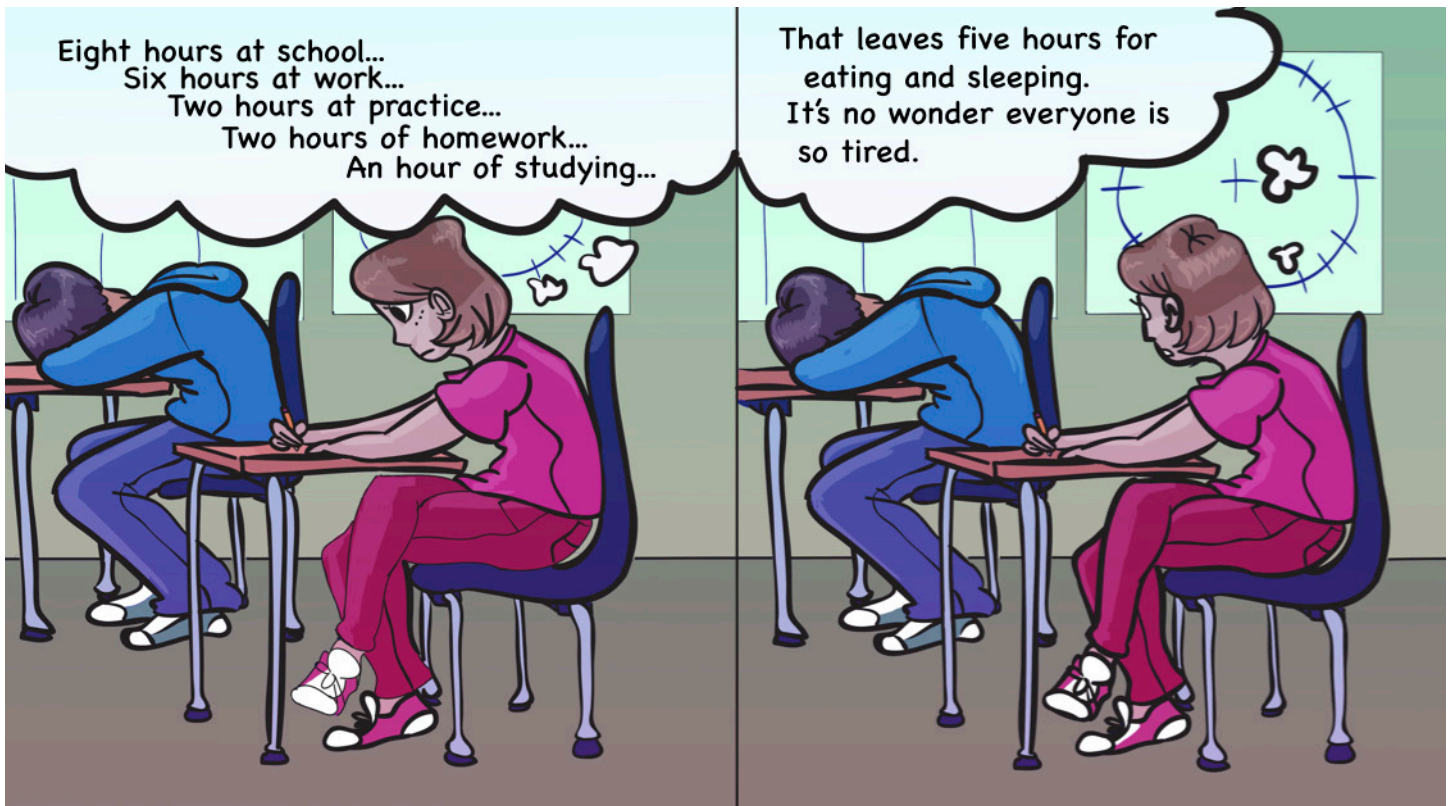
Eating out isn't bad every once in a while, but going out to eat almost every day will cause more weight and more ache. A single McDonald's burger has 280 calories, and eating a burger every other day will lead to at least 3000 calories. Places like Fazoli's, Burger King, Chinese Express, Fish N' Fries and Steak 'n Shake are all good, but you can easily make a burger that has less than 200 calories with turkey meat, homemade mayo, tomatoes, avocados, whole wheat buns and pickles. Don't get me wrong, I don't mind having Fazoli's chicken alfredo noodles, but have you made homemade pasta? All you need is olive oil, wheat flour and eggs. That actually equals up to 300 calories.

Whether you like to cook or not, you should always try to be healthy and try to cook at home or even find food with less calories.

(Illustration by Rebekah Myers)

(Illustration by Rebekah Myers)

STRESSING OVER WORKING

Having a job during the school year can become unhealthy and can lead to bad habits. Trying to juggle work, school and any other extra curricular activities isn't worth the money and experience that working gives

by Zach Askew
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I know a lot of students who have quit their jobs because of how much it can interfere with school. It adds a lot to their schedule and doesn't give them time to focus on school. School is all about preparing for the future, so it makes sense to get a head start and get prepared by getting a job. However, students shouldn't have jobs. Getting a job this early is not worth the one benefit of money. While having a job may seem like a good way to earn money, it will also put a lot of stress on a student.
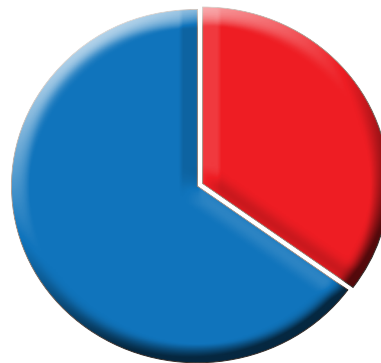
The average student works 18 hours in a school week and working this long can really drain the energy from a student, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. It can be especially harmful if they are going from school to extracurricular activities to work and then using whatever remaining time for homework and studying. Having to do this on a daily basis can mess up students' sleep schedules and cause them to fall behind in their classes.

It is very common for students to overwork themselves for the money. It isn't healthy. According to the American Psychological Association, school is the top source of stress among teens. Adding on to the stress can be really harmful to a student's health now and in the coming years.

If a student absolutely must have a job, they should still be careful of where they work. It is important to make sure a work can fit into a school schedule. Students need to do a lot of research and be sure it is the right job for them and not just the highest paying job. Make sure that the job can be really flexible so they aren't struggling to get everything done that needs to be done. It is important for a student to find a job they are comfortable with and not just the highest paying one. They should find a job that gives them time to focus on school and their future.

HIGH SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT

35% of high school students have part-time jobs

65% are unemployed or looking for a job.

(Data from The Atlantic 2015)

"Try to find a balance, keep up on the work ethic but don't work too much."
-Colin Levins, 12

"Keep searching until you find the job that you want."
-Jeremy Kiel, 10

A FORMULAIC SUPERHERO UNIVERSE

Marvel's films need to stray off the path they've taken and bring in something fresh, new to the franchise

by Jake Price
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(This story may contain spoilers from installments in the Marvel Franchise) Eighteen films. All hide behind a mask of colorful, sparkling light that blinds the audience from the ridiculous truth: every Marvel film is the same. This story may contain spoilers from installments in the Marvel Franchise.

This May, "Avengers: Infinity War" will be released, and it marks a historic event for the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) since it will be the culmination of the franchise. However, there is something that needs to be said. Marvel is guilty of giving their films a formula.

Each film introduces characters with flaws, then an event happens that causes them to rise to the occasion, then they have a half-baked climatic battle with an extremely unrealistic villain and then the hero saves the day once again with no feeling of threat or consequence. "Iron Man," "Captain America," "Thor," "Doctor Strange," "Ant Man" and "Guardians of the Galaxy" are all the same story.

Let's start from the beginning: "Iron Man". The movie is about an arrogant, selfish billionaire CEO, Tony Stark. He performs a weapons test, and he gets severely injured and is held hostage by a terrorist organization.

He invents a mechanical suit that allows him to escape and become the Iron Man. He is then betrayed by his own business partner, and they both use their own technological suits to fight each other. Stark obviously wins, and everything is back to the way it was; only now he is an invincible superhero.

Unfortunately, this is a story that has become way too familiar due to Marvel's repetitive use. Everytime a new installment is released, Marvel basically releases the same movie with a new attractive face slapped on the movie screen.

It is insane to think that a respected film franchise would cheat their audience like this. To be fair, however, the audience never really sees it coming. Marvel has distracted their audience by painting all of their films in an annoying, colorful, flashy substance called tone.
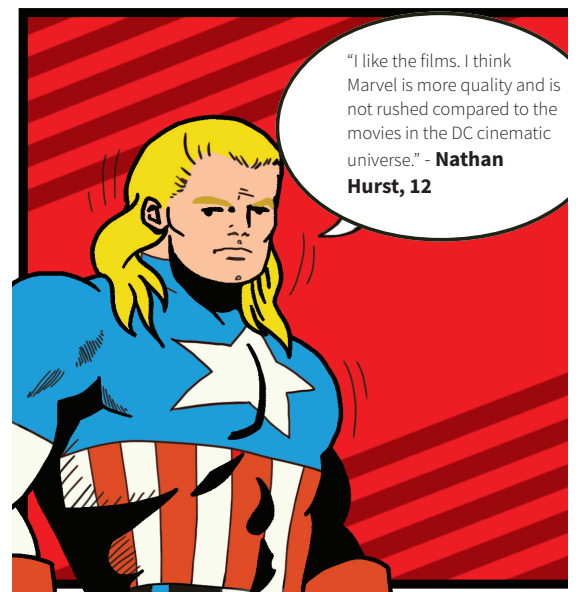
Marvel gives each of their movies the same tone by using bright colors, fun action and one-liner comedy to keep the audience engaged, which has helped Marvel, according to boxofficemojo, become the highest-grossing film franchise to date. However, just because something looks or sounds pretty does not mean the context is as interesting.

The tone of the movie is the main thing that separates Marvel comic book films from DC comic films. DC is, and will always be, darker, but that doesn't mean the MCU can't do the same. There have been plenty of dark, gritty storylines that Marvel Comics has created that could totally work in the MCU.

In fact, films like "Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol. 2" and "Thor: Ragnarok" have plot devices that encompass a lot of death and killing, which are extremely dark concepts for Marvel. However, they hid this behind screwball comedy to make it more "family-friendly" when the more box-office and critically successful comic book movies, such as DC's "The Dark Knight" or "Wonder Woman," have had darker thematic elements.

It's definitely possible to make a popular yet serious superhero film, but Marvel continues to block the slightest thought of an edgy addition to the MCU.

It's an annoyingly successful formula that the laboratories at Marvel continue to use to create each "masterpiece" that resides in the Marvel franchise. It causes a lack of variety and artistic integrity for the films. Maybe it's the directors or the producers, or maybe it's Disney's fault. Who knows? The overall problem isn't that Marvel needs a new formula. It's that they need to throw away the whole concept of one.
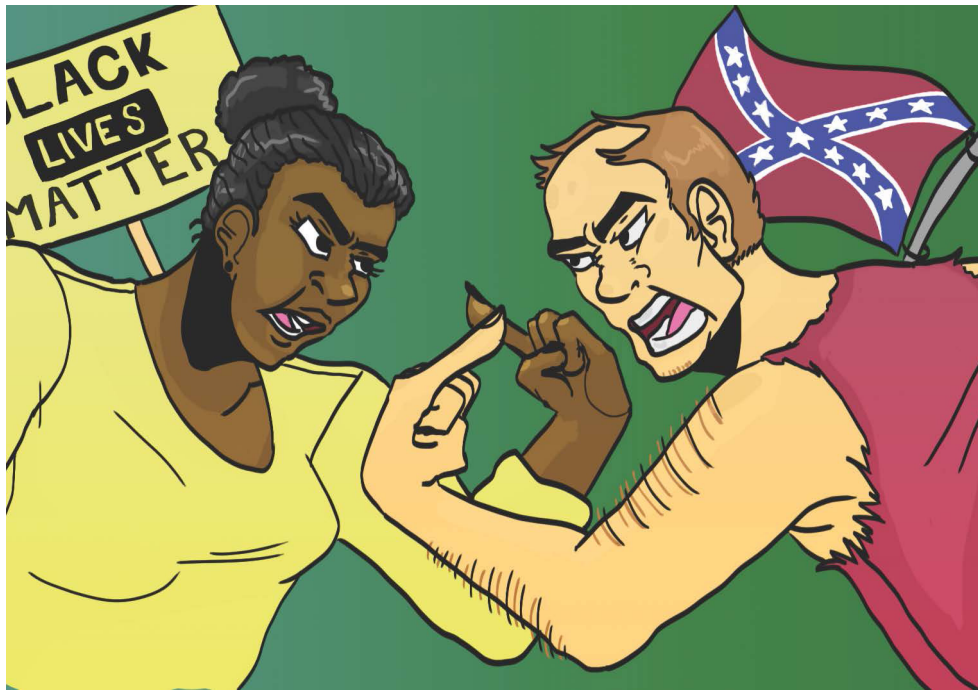

"The films not only set up a connection with the audience, but they're also just really good stand-alone movies in general."
- **Riley Kampff, 12**

"I like the films. I think Marvel is more quality and is not rushed compared to the movies in the DC cinematic universe." - **Nathan Hurst, 12**

"I like how all of the films are connected into one universe because it makes a good storyline." - **Marcus Carpenter, 11**

(Illustrations by Rebekah Meyers)

NORTH | STAR

THE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL EDITION

(Illustration by Rebekah Myers)

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF OUR NATION'S HISTORY

Many people are not educated on the history of our nation and the racism behind it, making it more difficult for them to understand the issues of racism people still face in the U.S. to this day

by Sydney Wise
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A big issue in the U.S. today is not being educated on our nation's history, especially on racism. Many people will choose their side of an argument without thinking twice. No research is done and nothing is known about the topic. Instead of jumping to conclusions, we should be educating ourselves on the issue at hand.

An important debate recently has been whether or not to take down Confederate Monuments. Some citizens believe that the monuments represent southern pride, but if they did their research, they would know it is so much more than that. The Confederate Monuments represent a dark and racist past, a part of our history that should not be put on display, and something we should not be proud of.

In the Civil War, the northern states in the U.S. fought for freedom of slaves, believing that owning a slave is immoral and wrong. However, the southern states, otherwise know as the Confederacy, fought to keep the right to sell and own slaves, and they despised the abolitionists. To keep Confederate Monuments would be representing the fight to keep slaves, which is inhuman.

The Civil Rights Movement is also often overlooked in our nation today. Martin Luther King Jr., along with other influential figures, worked essentially their entire lives to create equality between all races, especially black and white people. Fast forward to about 60 years later, the Black Lives Matter movement began. Because people are not educated enough on Black Lives Matter, they try to start movements like "All Lives Matter" and "Blue Lives Matter."

Black Lives Matter started because of the discrimination of black people by some police officers. All Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter began because the founders assumed that Black Lives Matter activists believed that all police officers are discriminatory toward black people, which is not true. If people don't do their research and learn more about the Civil Rights era and the Black Lives Matter movement, they won't understand the struggles people have gone through and still go through to be treated equally.

Being more educated on the history of the U.S. is important. Reading books or articles, going to museums and overall just trying to learn more about the subject will help with Americans make better decisions. The U.S.'s true history needs to be known, because without it we wouldn't be the nation we are today.

THE ISSUE OF CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS

62 percent of U.S. citizens believe that the Confederate Monuments should not be removed

(Source: NPR/PBS Newshour)

44 Confederate Monuments have been proposed to be removed across the U.S.

(Source: newyorktimes.com)

150 people or more protested to remove a statue of Confederate officer John B. Castleman in Louisville

(Source: DailyMail.com)

700 or so Confederate Monuments still stand in the U.S. to this day

(Source: fivethirtyeight.com)

1500 Confederate memorials overall are still standing all across our nation today

(Source: fivethirtyeight.com)

31 states across the U.S., plus the District of Columbia, still contain Confederate Monuments

(Source: USAtoday.com)

(Infographic by Sydney Wise)