Loading the **Fear**

by Meredith McCoy

The one thing I know for sure is that negative actions make the world move and stall at the same time. One minute it’s another sunny day, as Trump stains his suits with controversy, and then there’s chaos, from violence to tears. Maybe it’s not just negative emotions, but **fear** itself. Valentine’s Day of 2018 was almost a day for those who had someone close to their delicate hearts. Then, Southern Florida lost 17 people and suffered many more wounded from a wild nineteen year old upset at the world. Lost lives do wake silent souls. Still, I believe the shots coming out of my phone, as I gazed through someone’s lens when the shooting was taking place, were even scarier. I believe listening to the shocked testimonies from students the next day was horrifying. No, I am not saying censor those who need to get the **fear** out of their skin. I’m saying that witnessing their **fear** is terrifying, too.

Living in this day isn’t easy for a teenager. We have stress on our backs and expectations of everything we touch, as we breathe, and we have to act like we’re not a chicken with its head cut off. I understand this too well. I can say I have too many **fears** hidden under my eyes, but I am terrified that someone is going to threaten my life while I’m trying to get out of school. My ears have heard gun shots twice, causing real **fear** but costing no lives. The first was at a normal band competition, where high school students were arranged in hierarchy as they danced and marched for first place in their category. As the sky turned from pink to a calm blue, shots pounded from the right side of the field, hidden in the forest. Bodies weren’t collapsing from bullets, but it was hard to tell where the gun was firing. It was scary for a seventeen year old. The other incident was small, a couple of bangs coming from seemingly nowhere outside my window, and I couldn’t sleep after that. I never found out why I heard them either.

Because of these current events, and these two incidents, I will say I have a **fear** of a deranged individual firing a gun with intended harm. Recently, I was trying to enjoy lunch with my friends in the commons, a room full of people, and the lights go off. My mom told me that when the lights went out at her school, back in her day, students would celebrate and party like they were going to leave early. When the lights go off in 2018, you don’t know what to expect. Within the first five seconds, as teens became confused and rowdy, my group of friend and I were running outside. Our legs, our hands, and our words were trembling because we had no idea what to expect. And, my eyes looked to the adults to say, “Don’t worry. It’s just a power outage. Go back inside, but they didn’t. Teens were going back in, coming back out, joking, and pacing around the parking lot, but no one said that it’s alright. The adults made sure no one left the premises. I had to go home after signing out. I **feared** for my life for twenty minutes.

What I’m saying is that these negative feelings impact those who don’t personally witness it. And, with the world we live in, there needs to be a solution to cease those feelings, to move on, just as much as regulation to stop it from happening again.