

Focus

VOL XXXIV · ISSUE 2

A BLIND BROOK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATION

FEBRUARY 2017

Robotics Team Revels in Recent Successes

By Allison Chien

The Robotics Team has recently had numerous successes, including their eighth place win at the Somers Qualifier that took place on January 7.

Founded by current presidents Adam Fleishaker and Owen Xie, the Robotics Team, also known as “The Jellyfish” has brought together technologically minded students from both the high school and middle school.

The team meets during activity period and after school in the room of their advisor, middle school Robotics teacher Steven Giglio, to build, discuss, and improve upon their projects.

A test area exists in the center of the room so that the team can observe its robots, complete with a child size basketball hoop and a barricade closing off the rectangular space.

The robots are able to move freely throughout this area, completing their programmed tasks, which include shooting a small ball, which the team refers to as a “particle”, through the basketball hoop, and picking up the particle. The team has extensively worked to refine the mechanisms that the robot uses to complete these actions.

“We’re using two spinning wheels that rotate at a high velocity and we shoot the balls through these wheels,” said Xie. “[The robot] uses a conveyer belt system to pick up the balls. It pushes the balls up a ramp we made out of sheet metal, and we put them into a sort of storage holding area where we can then retrieve the balls to to shoot them,” he added.

At the Somers Qualifier, the team had to complete several challenges with their robot.

Continued on page three



Photo courtesy/Dr. Michele Sugantino
Science Research seniors after the JSHS Awards Ceremony. From left to right: Owen Xie, Paul Soden, Divya Kumaran, and Petal Samrow.

Blind Brook Wins Big at Local Science Symposium

By Hannah Marrow

Seven students and from the Honors Science Research program attended the Westchester-Rockland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (WR-JSHS) with program director and science teacher Dr. Michele Sugantino on Saturday, February 4. Of the students that attended the symposium, three were juniors: Sarah Rogers, Caroline Levine and Julia Levine, and four were seniors: Paul Soden, Divya Kumaran, Petal Samrow and Owen Xie.

Soden took home the first place speaker award in behavioral and social sciences, and will be moving on to compete at the state JSHS competition in Albany on March 7 and 8. Kumaran won the third place competitive poster award in the medicine and health category.

Soden’s project focuses on the effect of stimulant medications on the academic behavior of children and adolescents with ADHD.

“I am so honored to have my research recognized in this way and I look forward to representing Blind Brook at the state JSHS competition in Albany next month,” said Soden.

In order to conduct his research, he worked under the guidance of Dr. Peter Acker, a local pediatrician. Soden distributed a questionnaire to parents of children with ADHD in order to determine how their course of treat-

ment impacted their academic lives.

After analyzing the results of his questionnaire, Soden concluded that alternative medications, contrary to popular belief, yield higher academic index scores and thus work to maximize the academic potential of minors with ADHD.

“These results give parents of children with ADHD a new perspective on the effectiveness of different treatment plans for this condition while also emphasizing the importance of motivation in the classroom setting,” he said.

Kumaran’s research aimed to test three different anxiety-controlling sounds for preoperative patients. The three sound waves that Kumaran evaluated in her study were hemispheric synchronization (hemi-sync), a type of white noise, classical music, and silence. Her results demonstrated that hemi-sync was, in fact, the most effective type of noise to calm the anxiety of patients preparing to undergo surgery.

“I expected that my hypothesis would be proven to be true, but did not expect that there would be so much evidence to support it,” said Kumaran.

Students interested in learning more about the studies of any of the participants in the Science Research program can contact Dr. Sugantino to obtain copies of their abstracts.

Marketing Classes and School Store Club Attend Gift Show at Javits Center

By Stacy Gerchick

Business teacher Charlene Decker took her classes to the NY NOW gift show at the Javits Center, located in downtown Manhattan on February 7 and 8. Select members of the School Store Club, more commonly known as the Blind Brook Marketplace, joined Decker’s classes.

Students who attended the trip gained valuable insight into the marketing techniques used by different brands.

“I think that it is helpful to see how what we learn in class translates into real world practices,” said senior Alana Applebaum.

Throughout the trip, students walked throughout the Javits Center and visited the booths of different vendors. These vendors sold items ranging from novelty toys to artisanal foods.

“My favorite vendor was definitely Yogibo, which is a company that sells different types of beanbags. They had such a colorful display and were letting visitors test out their products,” said Applebaum.

While students of the marketing classes were only able to observe the different sellers, members of the School Store club were given special passes that allowed them to interact with and ask questions to the vendors.

“The trip exposed us to new product and marketing ideas for our store,” said junior Isabel Steinberg.

The Marketplace took home fidget cubes and a number of phone accessories in bulk that will be sold in the store in the near future.

“I really hope that we attend the show again next year. I think it’s a great opportunity for members of the store to expand their business knowledge,” Steinberg said.

Politics

Junior Hannah Steinthal shares her experience at the Women’s March in New York City.
See page 5.

Features

What’s all the hype about Rye Ridge Shopping Center? Junior Allison Chien explores new stores on pages 12 & 13.

Sports

Senior Ethan Finkelstein brings Focus to the lanes with Blind Brook’s new Bowling Club on page 19.

Inside Focus

News.....	1
Viewpoints.....	4
Politics.....	7
Features.....	12
Arts and Entertainment.....	14
Health and Science.....	16
Sports.....	19



More High School Student Awards



Congratulations to the following students for their recent achievements!

Senior Miranda Rasch has been nominated by the Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. This program was established in 1964 by Executive Order to recognize some of the best and brightest graduating seniors in the country. The distinction is awarded for academic scholarship, leadership, service, talent in the visual, creative, and performing arts, and/or outstanding achievement in the in career/technical skills. Miranda is required to apply for the award to advance to one of 800 possible semi-finalists.

The Speech Team had two award winners, **senior Lauren Asen** and **junior Josh Schlactus**, at a recent tournament held at Hendrick Hudson High School in Montrose, NY. The award was given for placing in the Top 10 for the Novice Public Forum at the Malcolm A. Bump Memorial Tournament that took place on Saturday, February 4. They had a speaking record of 3-1.

Senior Sam Brandeis was an honorable mention winner at the recent Golden Dozen awards dinner at the Westchester Country Club in Rye. Senior varsity football standouts who excel both on the football field and in the classroom were honored as Westchester's chapter of the National Football Hall of Fame held its 44th annual Golden Dozen award banquet on Thursday, January 26.

Seniors Rowan Reddy, Bryan Weintraub, and Jonah Glick, all three of our National Merit Semi-Finalists have advanced to the Finalist status and now qualify to receive National Merit Scholarships.

At the Model UN Conference held at John Hopkins University (JHUMUNC) from February 9 to 12, Blind Brook had an unprecedented total of eleven award winners. **Seniors Sammy Landino, Haley Feuerman, and Will Hartman**, as well as junior **Sarah Rogers** and sophomores **Rachel Penn** and **Carly Kabot** received the honor of Best Delegate (1st Place). **Senior Spencer Kaplan** and sophomores **Bryan Wei** and **Spencer Gladstone** earned the title of Outstanding Delegate (2nd Place), and **senior Dylan Robins** and freshman **Shivani Thaneer** took home Honorable Mention awards (3rd Place).



Photo courtesy of Ms. Simmons
(From left to right) Seniors Haley Feuerman, Sammy Landino, Dylan Robins and Will Hartman celebrate their achievements at JHUMUNC.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Simmons
The Model UN team smiles after yet another successful conference.

Students and Faculty Saddened by Sudden Retirement of Dave Centofanti



By Mitchell Saunders

After nearly fifteen years, security guard David “Dave” Centofanti retired from his position at BBMHS on November 29, 2016. Centofanti worked tirelessly over the years to ensure the safety of students and faculty members.

One of Centofanti’s main roles as security monitor was to control the morning and afternoon traffic proceedings. Rain or shine he and his coworkers regulated the pickup and drop-off lines of cars and helped students safely cross the parking lot to reach the school building.

Centofanti also worked in the security office at the front of the school signing in and assisting visitors.

Security monitors William “Billy” Santoro and Denise Longua have taken over Centofanti’s morning and afternoon routines, while security monitors Gary Leibstein, Joseph Funigiello and Don Ahrenburg have also shifted responsibilities at the security desk.

“Everything has been running smoothly,” said Santoro. “Dave taught us well.”

Ahrenburg is now working night shifts and Santoro has switched from working afternoons and nights to working the full school day. Leibstein has remained working his normal hours, though willing to assist whenever necessary.

“We’re bringing in new people for different shifts and I think the new system is working well. Dave is hard to replace and we will miss him, but everything is running as scheduled and I am not concerned about the organization or the security of the school,” Leibstein said.

Robotics Team Revels in Recent Successes

Continued from page one

“Our team participates in FTC, First Tech Challenge, where what we’re trying to do is score as many points as possible with an alliance partner. And from there, we are able to move up to qualifying for regionals, then the state competition, and so on,” said Xie. “We went up against a lot of tough teams. We did really well though, I have to say. Our robot did really well. We have an autonomous phase, where our robot basically works by itself and it worked rather successfully. It was able to get us a lot of points.”

“Each team has a single robot, and there are 20-30 teams, depending on each competition. The robots all compete on a field, where there are lots of objectives that they must complete, from scoring into vortexes, to hitting lower field beacons, to other different tests. It’s sort of like a basketball game, but for robots,” said Fleishaker.

The Jellyfish won eighth place in the Somers Qualifier, and earned two awards. They won second place for the Motivate Award, and also won the Connect Award, for, as Xie said, “[doing] a really good job

of appealing to our local community”. These commendations allowed for the team to advance to regionals.

Members of The Jellyfish attribute their success to their ability to work together as a team.

“I think a lot of it is the fact that we are willing to have conversations. So, when anyone has an idea, we talk about it. Sometimes there are good ideas, and others we get rid of. There’s always a discussion, debate, and argument. Everyone’s pretty friendly with one another” said Xie.

“This year our team all

had very different ideas, but we were still able to work together as a unit,” said Fleishaker.

However, Fleishaker also believes that The Jellyfish have room for improvement.

“Our outreach and our communication as a team was good, but the biggest thing we want to improve is the functionality of the robot. We are able to drive fine, we’re able to score points, but the big catch is the autonomous phase. We want to refine it so that we can score even more points and therefore move farther in the competition,” he said.



Photo courtesy of Ethan Tillison
Juniors Orsen Wei and Claire Weiser work on their robot.



Photo courtesy of Ethan Tillison
The Robotics Team, aka The Jellyfish, touch up their robot before the First Tech Challenge competition.

Hey, Blind Brook!

**HOSTING A
PARTY
WITH
UNDERAGE
DRINKING
DOESN'T MAKE
IT SAFER.
IT MAKES IT
ILLEGAL.**



Did you know? **HOSTING A PARTY WITH UNDERAGE DRINKING ISN'T GOOD FOR ANYONE.** Some parents mistakenly believe that allowing underage drinking in their home is no big thing. They may think they can keep youth safe if they drink at home. Underage consumption can lead to further risky behavior including sexual assaults and rape as well as cause a range of physical consequences including alcohol poisoning, suicide, and traffic crashes. We also know that alcohol can have lasting negative effects on the developing teenage brain. As for the adults, allowing underage drinking to occur is illegal. Period. There are plenty of activities for our kids that do not include drinking. Don't be a party to underage consumption. **WHAT YOU PERMIT, YOU PROMOTE.**

We are your local community coalition, here to provide tips and resources to families, centered around youth substance-use and underage drinking. Please visit our website and join our mailing list:
BLINDBROOKCOALITION.ORG



Facebook.com/BlindBrookCoalition



@BBCoalition1



YouTube.com/BlindBrookCoalition



communitycoalition@blindbrook.org



**BLIND BROOK
COMMUNITY
COALITION**

The Women's March on NYC

An Opinion

By Hannah Steinthal

On Saturday, January 21, the day after President Trump's inauguration, protests erupted, not only countrywide, but worldwide. Waking up to the panoramas on the news of protestors around the world was a reassuring and inspiring sight, because I knew that I was about to do the same thing. I was lucky enough to be able to experience one of these protests first hand by participating in the Women's March in New York City. I asked my mom about her motivation for going to the March and she said that she believes in equal rights and a woman's right to make choices about her own body, which is what she wanted to advocate for when she marched. I then asked her what it was like marching alongside me, her daughter, and she told me that she is so happy that we agree on this matter and that it is something that brings us closer, while doing good for others and standing up for human rights.

The day before the March, my mom invited a group of women over to help decorate signs that we would hold during the demonstration. By the end of the day we were set with a huge pile of signs, each with a different message.

Some said, "Love Is Love," one said "Build Bridges, Not Walls" and others said "Only Love Can Drive Out Hate." Mine read, "MY body...MY rights!" with #IStand-WithPlannedParenthood underneath it.

My day started by arriving at the Port Chester train station to catch a train that would have us in the city by 12:30 to meet the rest of our group. As I walked onto the platform with my mom and her friends, we ran into two other friends who were also on their way to the March. A large number of people on the platform appeared to be in their marching gear, and later we found that almost the entire train was planning on marching, too. As we boarded, rows of women of all generations cheered in their pink cat ear hats. Like us, each had their own sign and different message to share. We took photos together, socialized, and took in all of the positive and supportive energy offered by each passenger.

When we first reached the city, we realized that this March was not the organized March we had seen online, rather it had become something entirely new. There wasn't a starting point anymore because the March had grown so

big that there were far too many people to fit at one starting point. Participants were marching in seas through the streets and up avenues to reach the final destination of Trump Tower, so we jumped right in, making our way through walls of emptied taxis stopped in their tracks. Some of the drivers even joined in chanting from the tops of their vehicles. The sun was shining so vibrantly on the diverse faces in the crowd and their beautifully crafted signs. It drew us right in and I felt so comfortable marching next to all of the welcoming people, with their warm smiles and inspiring messages. I met incredible people on our way to the finish line that had their own unique stories to share and we discussed what we would like to see change. Many protested Nancy DeVos's nomination as Secretary of Education, while others were concerned about climate change, marriage equality and immigration reform. As a whole, the people at the March stood to advocate for tolerance and love. The Women's March was all about acceptance, respect, and humanity. I felt as if I could feel the support and pure compassion radiating from the hearts of everybody around me. It was a

truly empowering environment.

As we kept on, our group began to disperse into small clusters because there were too many of us to stay together in such a huge crowd. We didn't all end the march together, but there was an overwhelming sense of solidarity in the streets, so we were still together in spirit. What struck me the most was how wonderfully diverse the crowd was, but also how peacefully and willingly everyone could join together for a powerful cause. The day was so inspiring to me that it was all I could think about for a few days after it happened. I feel even more motivated to bring change and justice to our country during such a controversial time. I will continue to look for opportunities to advocate for human rights. The power we have together is incredibly strong and I hope that as time goes on, we continue to grow stronger and fight together. There are so many things that make us different and forces that may tear us apart, but one thing I learned at the March is that, united, we can achieve so much, so it is important to stand together. The Women's March was a truly moving and stunningly beautiful experience that I will hold in my heart for years to come.



Photo courtesy of Hannah Steinthal
A group of marchers pose with their signs in Grand Central Station.



Photos courtesy of Hannah Steinthal
Marchers hold up signs and flood the streets of Manhattan.



How Trump Actually Won the Election

An Opinion

By Kellie Franzblau

The 2016 Presidential Election brought many surprises, the biggest of which was Trump's unforeseen victory. Millions watched on election night as then-candidate Trump brought down the "blue wall" and achieved victory in the traditionally Democratic states of Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. The Trump campaign's ability to defy all the pollsters in their predictions of a Clinton landslide in these states won him the election and is a feat that political analysts are only now beginning to unravel.

Trump's unexpected victory is often attributed to the underestimated, "Secret Trump vote," which is made up of poor, white, and recently unemployed males. According to CNN, in the past eight years since President Obama took office, 14.4 million jobs have been created and the unemployment rate has dropped to 4.9%. Despite this decreasing unemployment rate under President Obama, many white, blue-collar workers in rural America have yet to share in this economic prosperity. This is largely due to the globalization of the economy, which has outsourced many blue-collar jobs. Many of these individuals lack college educations, and rely on manufacturing jobs that are being shipped overseas to sur-

vive. These workers have become increasingly angry with the, "establishment," in Washington, which Hillary Clinton represents, that supports the outsourcing of their jobs to foreign countries.

Donald Trump harnessed the anger, fear, and despair of this now unemployed population in his promises to, "drain the swamp," in Washington and to bring jobs, wealth, and prosperity back to America. Support from this frustrated community, especially in manufacture-dependent states such as Michigan and Wisconsin, ultimately won Trump the White House.

Although Trump has promised to bring many of these blue collar jobs, especially in the field of coal mining, back to America, it is unlikely that he will actually be able to uphold this promise. With the increase in renewable energy and technology, the coal industry is declining. As the world advances, the country needs to keep up with other nations technologically by improving education and allowing for workers to develop new skills for a new job market.

Trump, himself has also spent years building his businesses by shipping jobs overseas. According to The Washington Post, "at least 12 countries where Trump products were manufactured... [and] Trump prod-

ucts transited other countries through the packaging and shipping process — meaning workers in more than 12 countries contributed to getting many of Trump's products made, packaged and delivered to the United States." It is rather ironic that Trump won support from this voting block by promising to stop outsourcing jobs overseas, which he has been a major culprit of throughout his professional life.

Trump has also convinced many Americans that illegal immigrants are the cause of job loss among blue collar workers and ran his campaign on a platform of stricter immigration regulation, which will presumably improve the nation's economic situation.

This is where Trump's logic falls flat, as Mexican immigrants typically perform the jobs that Americans do not want to do. Therefore, the American economy would greatly suffer if all illegal immigrants were deported. According to CNBC, the deportation of illegal immigrants would result in "a [net] loss of \$1.6 trillion." The American Action Forum also estimated that attempting to remove all illegal aliens and secure the border would cost upwards of \$500 billion, which would certainly strain the already weak American economy.

Since winning the elec-

tion, Trump has also already changed this unreasonable position and plans to only deport violent illegal immigrants, despite campaign promises. Yet, Trump still stands firmly on his pledge to build a wall to keep illegals out, a project that, assuming he does not convince the Mexican government to pay for it, would cost taxpayers over \$25 billion.

Partisan media outlets such as FOX news and MSNBC also played a large role in Trump's victory on Election Day. His often bold and controversial statements to the press, especially regarding his immigration policies, gave him over \$2 billion of free media coverage throughout his campaign. This constant coverage allowed Trump to spend less time and money on getting his policies across through advertising and more time to spend on speeches, rallies, and campaign events.

Trump's victory can be largely attributed to his controversial promises that have served to win him both air time and votes, yet it is questionable that he will follow through, as we have already seen with his flawed immigration policies.

Although surprising, Trump's win is not as shocking as the fact that millions of Americans have been deceived into believing that President Trump will actually keep his promise to make America great again.

All Dressed Up®

Betty Dayan



Monique Gootkin

Unique Party Attire For Girls, Pre-Teen, Junior & Contemporary
 17 RYE RIDGE PLAZA • RYE BROOK, NY 10573 TEL: 914-690-1593 FAX: 914-690-1327
 WEB: shopalldressedup.com • EMAIL: alldressedup2@aol.com
 Join us on facebook 

**Stay up to date
on the latest
Blind Brook News!**

Visit our new
and improved website
at bbhsfocus.com

Download our free app
in the App Store

Follow @bbhs_focus
on Twitter
and @bbhs.focus
on Instagram



Villa Rustica

Fast Free Delivery:
(914) 939-8888

261 South Ridge Street
Rye Brook, NY 10573

World Leaders Respond to Trump in the White House

An Opinion

By Abe Baker-Butler

On election day, outsider Donald Trump stunned the world in his slim victory against former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Over the course of the raucous campaign, Donald Trump's unorthodox style and blunt statements made news headlines around the world. On an international level, Brexit, Russia's suspected interference in the election, and the rise of populist political parties across Europe, further inflamed the ever-changing political landscape across the globe. As a country and a global community, we have very little idea of what these significant changes portend for the future of international relations.

In the months since Trump's election, many world leaders have released statements of congratulations to the President-Elect and have shared their desire to cooperate and collaborate with the incoming Trump Administration.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his optimism regarding the upcoming Trump Presidency in his November 9 statement: "President-Elect Trump is a true friend of the state of Israel. [We hope to] continue to work together to promote security, stability, and peace at home and abroad." Netanyahu added that he was optimistic about further strengthening the strong relationship

between the United States and Israel.

Meanwhile, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto has reacted much more adversely to Trump's victory. For over a year, Nieto has rejected Trump's plan to build a wall on the Mexican border, claiming in an interview with the Guardian, that he, "does not believe in walls."

In Europe, responses to Trump's election varied. While centrist leaders in France and Germany expressed their concern about Trump's promise to withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), far-right populists across the continent celebrated Trump's victory as a huge boost for their cause. Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council, cited Trump's election as a wake-up call for those who believe in liberal democracy.

American allies in Japan and South Korea expressed their desire to cooperate with the Trump administration despite anxiety over Trump's promises of disengagement in Asia. Overall, world leaders seem to be uncertain about Trump but ready to work with him to fulfill their common goals.

But what will Trump actually do? It seems that even he himself can not make up his mind. Last April, in his first and only foreign policy speech, Trump promised to be both "reliable"

and "unpredictable," two qualities that seem to contradict each other. However, confused citizens can gather a rough idea of what Trump may do from all his campaign trail bluster. With promises to renege on the Iran nuclear deal, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the NATO charter, and other international agreements, we can at least tell that Trump has an affinity for isolationism and promises to be a radical leader. However, we cannot necessarily say that Trump will live by this philosophy, given that Trump has lavishly praised Russia and pledged to be a "true friend" to Israel.

Throughout his campaign, Trump has promised a policy of American renewal and to place "America first." As part of that promise, Trump has preached isolationist trade and alliance policies as well as demanded that American allies pay for U.S. protection abroad. Accordingly, Trump has called the NATO alliance "obsolete" and has greatly alarmed the nations of the EU by referring to himself as "Mr. Brexit." In addition, he has suggested that Japan and South Korea should develop nuclear weapons instead of relying on U.S. forces for protection. With these promises, it is extremely likely that Trump will provide less support to American allies than

past Presidents, even in the face of aggression. Moreover, his isolationist views hint that Trump will not necessarily fight against the disintegration of the EU. Rather, he has stated that we will pick a fight with countries that have signed "unfair" deals with the United States.

Another major concern of many Americans is Trump's extensive praise of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Even after it was proven by multiple government agencies that Russia was in fact behind the hacking of Clinton and Democratic National Committee emails, Trump still refused to accept it. During a Trump presidency, we can expect to see a closer relationship with Russia and a cooler relationship with traditional allies, especially those that are existentially threatened by Russian aggression.

As for predicting Trump's success in interacting with foreign officials, many major news outlets speculate that his extensive background in business will give him the skills he needs to develop strong and lasting relationships with political leaders across the globe. Nicole Rosenzweig commented, "I think Trump will encounter troubles cooperating with foreign leaders at first, but his experience in business leads me to believe that he will ultimately establish good relations with other governments."



Fast Delivery * Catering * Dine-in * Web Ordering

Join Our **LOYALTY CLUB** & get **\$10 off**

frankspizza23.com

23 Putnam Ave Port Chester, NY

(914) 939-8299

CUT OUT THIS AD
FOR 10% OFF YOUR
NEXT PURCHASE



fine lingerie
and
Sportswear

Clarkstown Mall · New City, NY 10956 · (845) 638-1133

Rye Ridge Shopping Center · Rye Brook, NY 10573 · (914) 934-0775



172 SOUTH RIDGE ST.
RYE BROOK, NY
(914) 939-1379

lennysbagels@gmail.com

Don't Give Up the Fight

The fight for female equality is far from over. In the United States and even more so in other countries throughout the world, women face significant discrimination and lack opportunities that are readily available to their male counterparts. For many individuals, the sexism that women are confronted with is difficult to understand because it is usually not obvious. In many cases, women feel forced to conform to the expectations of their gender role due to overwhelming societal and familial pressure.

While it may seem like a simple fix, passing new legislation is not the only solution to ending discrimination toward females. Although there are many exam-

ples of laws passed in the United States intended to bridge the gender gap, these laws have not fully been able to do so. Considering the fact that much of this legislation has already been in place for decades, the deficiency in its effectiveness is highly concerning.

According to The Institute for Women's Policy Research, in 2015, full-time female workers made only 80 cents for every dollar earned by men, a wage gap of a shocking 20%. In addition, while women hold almost 52% of all professional-level jobs, they are only 14.6% of executive officers, 8.1% of top earners, and 4.6% of Fortune 500 CEOs, according to the Center for Ameri-

can Progress. According to The Institute for Women's Policy Research, in 2015, full-time female workers made only 80 cents for every dollar earned by men, a wage gap of a shocking 20%. In addition, while women hold almost 52% of all professional-level jobs, they are only 14.6% of executive officers, 8.1% of top earners, and 4.6% of Fortune 500 CEOs, according to the Center for American Progress.

These statistics show that women are lagging behind in the workforce despite the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 (which prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, and religion), and several other lesser-known pieces of legislation intended to give women equal opportunities in the working world.

Clearly, these laws are not helping women enough in the way that they were intended. The unfortunate reality is that legislation cannot be effective if it does not have enough public support. And even though it may be well-concealed, there is still an underlying mindset—even in America, the land of the free—that women should not have the same opportunities as men. The first step in ensuring that women gain equal rights is to target the traditionally-accepted beliefs about the role of women that have existed for centuries.

While most of the students at Blind Brook are fortunate enough to have grown up in upper-middle class households, millions of individuals do not have access to the same resources that are available to us and our families. Many of us have parents who both work full-time jobs. However, this requires enough money to afford daily childcare, which can often be quite pricey.

For families who do not have this luxury, it is almost always the mother who stays home to take care of the children. Even in situations where families have access to childcare, women still choose not to work. Accord-

ing to the Huffington Post, only 16% of stay-at-home parents in the United States are men as of 2014.

The fact is, women are not going to achieve true equality until every last person believes that women deserve to be equal. I am tired of hearing people complain that women do not face a real struggle. That protests and events such as the Women's March are useless because women already have equal rights. Words written down on a piece of paper have no meaning to the thousands of women in our country facing daily oppression.

There is still so much work to be done. Individuals who are taking an active role in furthering the women's rights movement through protests and other forms of civil disobedience are helping to raise awareness of the need to close the gender gap once and for all.

However, the primary means of influencing the American public should be through the education system. The best way to eliminate biases and stereotypes toward females is by targeting the generations that have not yet had prolonged exposure to the sexist undertones in American society.

Unfortunately, the curriculums in primary and secondary schools often fail to address the fact that women still do not have the same rights as men. It is easy to explain the advancements that women have made over the past few decades. However, it is much harder to explain why and how these advancements have failed to provide women with full equality.

Nevertheless, children and young adults need to be informed of these shortfalls. In order to be able to confront the problems that women face, the first step is to ensure that everyone knows the extent to which they are prevalent in our society.

Though these efforts may be arduous and time-consuming, they are absolutely necessary for women to win the fight for the treatment that we deserve.

Stacy Gerchick
Editor-in-Chief

Focus

- Editor-in-Chief** Stacy Gerchick
- Managing Editor** Lauren Rothmann
- Layout Editor** Hannah Marrow
- News Editor** Emma DePaola
- Viewpoints Editor** Hannah Brady
- Features Editor** Sydney Goodman
- Politics Editor** Paul Soden
- Arts and Entertainment Editor** Rachel Goodman
- Health and Science Editor** Eliana Rosenzweig
- Sports Editor** Lily Koenig
- Design Editor** Julia Mendelsohn
- Photography Editor** Rachel Brown
- Business Editor** Gabby Applebaum
- Web Editor** Spencer Kaplan
- Webmaster** Bryan Wei
- Multimedia Editor** Rachel Sarch

Staff

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Mike Abrutyn | Alexa Limb |
| Alexis Anello | Julia Morlino |
| Alana Applebaum | Olivia Morrissey |
| Lauren Asen | Sam Naveran |
| Abe Baker-Butler | Joie Ng |
| Alyson Barsky | Sydney Panzier |
| Danielle Barsky | Matthew Pariser |
| Kaitlyn Basset | Rachel Penn |
| Ayden Bauer | Lee Price |
| Jordan Bellin | Ethan Richard |
| Jared Benson | David Rosenberg |
| Anna Campbell | Drew Rosenberg |
| Amanda Capelli | Julia Rosenberg |
| Allison Chien | Nicole Rosenzweig |
| Zoe Cohen | Scott Rosson |
| Meghan Comstock | Sabrina Rubinshteyn |
| Christine Crumley | Ben Sachs |
| Damien Cuk | Mitchell Saunders |
| Jeffrey D'Ambrosio | Hannah Schaeenman |
| Michael Discolo | Margot Schwartz |
| Spencer Feuerman | Emma Seguljic |
| Ethan Finklestein | Alex Simon |
| Kellie Franzblau | Ben Simon |
| Samantha Gibbs | Sarah Simon |
| Brett Goodman | Rachel Sosin |
| Lily Janjigian | Emma Stevens |
| Jackson Jarvis | Abby Strauzer |
| Carly Kabot | Ben Striar |
| Evan Ketchabaw | Lilli Trevino |
| Abby Kimmel | Sabrina Vuong |
| Joie Koenig | Jeremy Weingarten |
| Arianna Kohilakis | Alex Weiss |
| Kidar Koverjee | Jack Wells |
| Isabella Lazar | Erica Wels |
| Caroline Levine | Noah Zeitlin |
| Julia Levine | |

Adviser
Dr. Kenyon

Focus is a student run public forum. Staff members make all content decisions.
Focus is a member of CSPA, NSPA, and Quill and Scroll.

Feeling strongly about something you've read in Focus?

Respond in a Letter to the Editor!

Send your letters to
blindbrookfocus@gmail.com

Submissions should be no longer than 350 words.

Focus reserves the right to edit for length and/or content.

Why Don't We Read Anymore? Senior Hannah Brady

This break I was blessed with little school work, and unfortunately, was stuck at home for the holidays. As days of Netflix slowly turned monotonous, I returned to my roots, to the love of my younger self: reading. At first I found it too slow. Not having all the information at my fingertips is difficult- and with reading, it can take hours, even days, to see a conflict worked out. But as I continued on I began to remember why I used to love reading so much, and wondered why so many of us have stopped.

According to the National Book Foundation, almost half of our generation's nine year olds stopped reading by age seventeen. Why? Though I hate to hear technology get such a bad rap all the time, is it possible that it plays a role? According to Psychology Today, technology teaches us to scan for facts efficiently while reading teaches us how to focus for sustained amounts of time. As teenagers, our brains are more malleable than those of older generations, and this means that technology has a particular-

ly large influence over the way we think. As we upgrade from pages to screens, we lose our ability to focus, and this can cause books to seem dry and uninteresting. Of course technology has its merits and is both important and useful to society, but in my experience, Netflix, social media, and other forms of communication cannot completely fill the shoes of reading.

Another reason not to read? Lack of time- probably my biggest excuse. School is not only exhausting but seemingly never ending. Just because we get home around 3:00 does not mean we are done. There is homework, studying, extra credit, standardized testing, and so much more. This is all on top of community service, clubs, and sports. Though it is difficult to find time to read in all of this, we might actually be hurting our resumes and scores when we allow reading to take a backseat. The National Book Foundation found that children who read 90 minutes a day increase their standardized reading scores by 88 percentile points in

comparison to non-readers. Also, reading books is the only out of school activity for teenagers that is linked to getting a leadership position later in life, and reading for pleasure increases GPA more than required school reading. We all have to make our sacrifices in the face of time, but reading should not constantly be the first thing to go.

In addition to school taking up too much time, I often hear people complain that the books assigned are too boring. Now, many students routinely turn to SparkNotes instead of giving assigned books a chance. This is incredibly unfortunate because students allow a few poor experiences with reading to stand in the way of experiencing some of literature's best works, and they also cheat themselves out of a quality education and future. The National Book Foundation found that 500 books in a home library is the equivalent of 2.4 extra years of education. This means that a person with a 500 book library could make up to \$14,000 more a year than a person with no books

in their house. When students refuse to give the books in school a chance, and then allow that attitude to extend to their personal life, they hurt themselves and their future opportunities.

There are plenty of good reasons to stop reading. It is hard to focus, there is hardly any time, and a lot of the books we are familiar with are not very interesting. But the positive aspects of reading outweigh these factors. Reading allows us to be more imaginative and to experience stories in our own unique ways. It improves our ability to communicate by making writing easier, and fiction has also been proven to increase theory of mind (the ability to understand what others are thinking) in younger children.

It is easy to allow reading to take a backseat in the craziness of my busy schedule, but whenever I stray for too long I always find myself coming back to it. We should all make an effort to read more because at the end of the day, nothing else can truly measure up to it.



A Thank You Note to the White Helmets Sophomore Carly Kabot

With every new horror story and gruesome photo, the situation in Aleppo has caused my faith in humanity to waiver. Despite this, my pessimistic perspective was changed by a segment on *60 Minutes* that left me in awe of one courageous group. This is my thank you note to the White Helmets, Syria's non-governmental and voluntary civil defense, for restoring my hope in today's world.

This ragtag team of ordinary Syrians- ranging from tailors to teachers- have saved over 73,530 lives. Their motto from the Quran explains their purpose for risking their own lives each day, "To save a life is to save all of humanity." Although hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost during what has been deemed the worst humanitarian crisis of all time, this small group of 3,000 civilians has stopped at nothing to save every life they can.

The White Helmets are the first to rush in when barrel bombs rain down on an already desolate wasteland that screams of death.

Instead of sitting in silence like much of our world, they have chosen to fight on the front lines of a war that has no end in sight. The White Helmets vow to help those on all sides of the conflict, upholding a policy of neutrality. Instead of fretting about religion or politics, they chose to let their core principles of humanity, solidarity, and impartiality guide their actions.

The bombings are never few nor far between, as the White Helmets respond to an average of thirty five attacks a day. With the knowledge that the next devastating blow could be mere minutes away, their goal is to save as many lives as possible in the shortest amount of time. Digging through mountains of rubble, they search for any sign of life before those trapped are suffocated or bleed to death. They work furiously against a ticking clock, knowing that they could very well be the next victims.

As I watched the segment on 60 Minutes, the footage of this bru-

tal reality resonated with me in a way it had not before. The leader of the White Helmets, Raed al-Saleh, shared that 150 of his men had died and his sorrow showed on his worn and haggard face. Though unarmed and neutral, the Assad regime still sees them as a threat and has turned them into targets. I sat in complete shock of what was on my television screen, a grimy gray land with people of all ages covered in dust. The only color present besides this gray was a deep red on each of the zombie-like figures. The dehumanized people in front of my eyes sent a nauseating feeling through me-the chaos on the screen more like a horrible movie than an actual account.

A few minutes later, a woman came on and an interview began, allowing me to breathe again. She was the mother of the "miracle baby", a ten day old infant that was rescued from the rubble by the White Helmets. It then showed him two years later as a healthy boy, and I understood

their motto. I was witnessing one life that could have easily been another causality be given a chance to see tomorrow, all because of someone's immense and unflagging bravery. We see life as a as a right. They see it as a gift.

The White Helmets were nominated for the 2016 Nobel Peace prize and though they did not win, they are now a worldwide symbol for hope. These volunteers are who we all should aspire to be: selfless and unafraid. These are difficult traits to have in a world filled with things to be fearful of, but we must think like they did and create light, hope, and dignity when there is none. There is no greater contribution to the world than human decency and compassion, and the White Helmets are a chief example of this. I have tried to internalize their motto as an oath to those who have died fighting for the greatest cause: "To save a life is to save all of humanity." Thank you, White Helmets, for showing us what humanity means.

Responsibilities

New School
Sleep
Pressure
Deadlines

College

Exhaustion

Health Change
Grades
tension
death
Money

Friends
Appearance
future
Jobs



Illustration/Ben Striar

to Strength

Positive

Change

Goals

Management

Believe
Gratitude
Acceptance

Strength

Help
Friends
Family

LOVE

Harmony



Illustration/Jessica Scher

By Jeffrey D'Ambrosio

Between progress reports, report cards, midterms, finals, clubs, and college admissions, Blind Brook students are bound to encounter stress at one point or another along their four-year high school career. These stress inducing events, called stressors, can come in more shapes and sizes than assignments and deadlines, with some actually proving to do more good than harm. Our bodies undergo physical alterations after we become stressed as the region of our brain called the hypothalamus stimulates our bodies to release hormones into our bloodstream. Scientists link these hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline, with the “fight or flight”

including delivering adrenaline to our muscles, increasing cortisol levels to raise one’s blood sugar, and aiding in metabolic processes. This can be beneficial for us, seeing as short term stress requires enhanced performance of one’s body to function and cortisol also directly aids in our sleep-wake cycles to stimulate wakefulness. Since cortisol and epinephrine facilitate the movement of immune cells from the bloodstream to organ cells, short-term stress can aid in our defense against centralized attacks in our systems.

While short term stress can often be helpful in efficiency and productivity, stress that persists over long periods of time can often prove to be detrimental, disabling our bodies from entering a calming period that allow hormone levels return to normal resting levels before we are exposed to another stressor. This chronic stress takes a direct toll on our immune system, with systems such as our digestive tract being suppressed as adrenaline and cortisol levels remain upwards of the norm in individuals undergoing long-term stress. A combination of studies by Sheldon Cohen and a multitude of other scientists have found that high levels of psychological stress affects our glucocorticoid receptors. From this constant state of stress and elevated levels of cortisol, our bodies are subjected to more tension than

physically tolerable.

Consequently, according to science journalist, cortisol is unable to stop pulling glucose from our body fat and tissues for use. Students usually receive a refractory period in which they are able to collect themselves as their bodies’ hormones level off, giving our systems allowance to cope again with our environment, says Brigham Young University scientists.

Stress, as powerful as it may seem, has simple remedies that all students and adults alike can apply to their lives at any moment. Since perception of a stressor is a vital factor in our body’s stress-related processes, the easiest way to handle stress would be to assert more control over the actions one feels stresses them out. In fact, one of the easiest methods to avoid overbearing stress is as easy as pre planning. Having a mental assessment of stress takes a toll on our bodies only if we allow it to, with negative effects only having a potentially harmful outcome if unflinching.

For Blind Brook students, the easiest method for dealing with short-term stress is a simple reassessment of a stressor in their life. Diving headfirst into the pit of fears that causes one’s stress is the best medicine against allowing it to offset their hormone levels. Altering perception of stressors allows people to define clearly the variable

that is provoking stress. According to BYU researchers, some remedies such as eliminating perfectionism from one’s mindset help to convince our bodies that we both have control over its physical responses and that we have the power to change ourselves for the better.

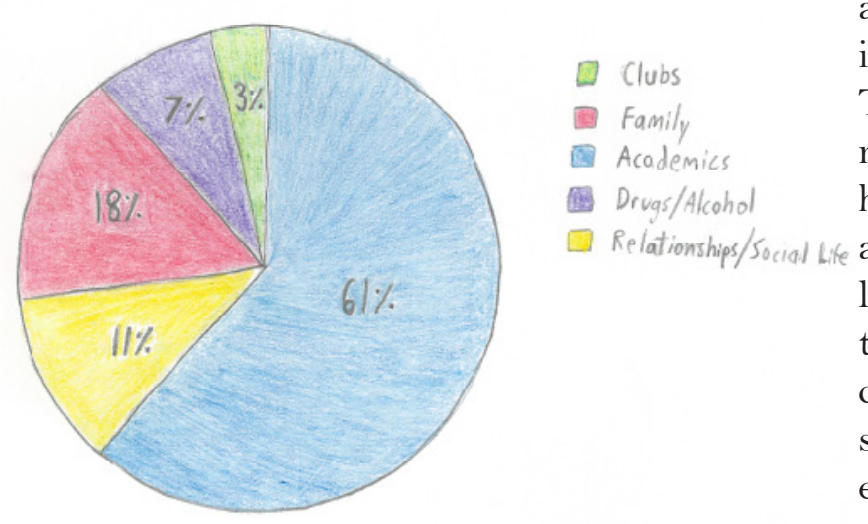
Procrastination strikes deep in the heart of many students, and is proportionally the largest catalyst for stress. Changing our capacities for dealing with stressful situations has seen great success in coping with stress caused by menial tasks like homework and studying for tests. Additionally, a good sleep cycle goes hand in hand with a system free from stress, seeing as cortisol is released to wake the body up. Exercise has also been found to have a positive effect on stress-related hormones in our bodies, giving ourselves energy to contribute to physical activity. Finally, finding time to just relax or even taking naps after school can prove to be extremely beneficial because hormone levels can regress to their norm. Although the physical response can be harrowing in individuals living under constant stress, the ability to reassess our lives can better our fears for the future and save us from events we never thought to be stressful.

“For Blind Brook students, the easiest method for dealing with short-term stress is a simple reassessment of a stressor in their life.”



Illustration/ Ben Striar

Causes of Stress



Illustration/Jared Benson

Redefining the Teenage Stereotype

By Carly Kabot

Our generation often gets a bad rap for coming off as narcissistic, materialistic, and being way too immersed in social media. While this claim may hold some truth, many teenagers don't fit into this stereotypical description. In fact, all over the world more and more teenagers are becoming involved in world causes and advocating for issues they feel most strongly about. Throughout nations all over the world, young adults are standing up for their beliefs, rights, and change itself. Teenagers are fighting for causes such as equal education, women's rights, and climate change, not waiting to reach adulthood to pursue making their impact on the world.

Many of them have become household names, their voices reaching far and wide. In 2015, Time Magazine named thirty of the world's most influential teens, with some of them being a mere thirteen years old. Many of them, such as feminist Rowan Blanchard or girl's education advocate Malala Yousafzai, are world-renowned leaders in their field. While we can't all be like Malala, who has won a Nobel Peace Prize and has spoken at the United Nations General Assembly, we can use stories like hers as inspiration and motivation. People like Malala are helping to redefine the stereotypes we are often labeled with and show that there is no age requirement when it comes to helping the global community. When it comes to humanitarian causes, it's not about how many people know your name. It's not something that is done for oneself, but rather for the injustice one sees and how one can help influence change.

When we look at our own community, it's clear that students do care about more than just themselves. The number of community service clubs is higher than ever before; opportunities range from helping to beat cancer to feeding the hungry. Not only are these programs opening the door for students to become involved in larger causes, but they are directly helping change our society. The Soup Kitchen, which feeds 150 people each week, is helping to eradicate hunger in Westchester. Clubs such as Little Wishes, Pediatric Cancer Foundation, and Relay For Life provide awareness for cancer and raise funds for local hospitals. Community Learning Partnership, which offers library tutoring in Port Chester, supports equal education. We often don't look at how our small actions truly have a large impact, but it's important to see that the work students are doing is just as significant and necessary as those listed in Time magazine.

Although adults may think all we care about is the number of likes a selfie got, many students are constantly thinking about issues across the globe. Because of the internet and the level of access we have to information, students can develop

opinions and gain exposure to much more than ever before. Many times what we see online in terms of the world is upsetting and shocking, but powerful stories and images are exactly what spark us to take action. When it comes to topics students at our school care most about, we have an immense diversity. Students have a keen awareness that the state of our community is a paradox to much of the world and wish to improve various facets of life for others in any way they can.

Equality, whether it be racial or gender based, is always at the top of the list for young people. During our time, there has been a major push for equality between women and men. "I really hope there comes a time where we are not treated as sexual objects, that women around the world get paid just as much as men for doing the same work. I want

to see the day where every woman and I can walk outside feeling safe, wearing and doing what I please," said sophomore Rachel Harris, an avid feminist. She hopes to one day be a therapist with a focus on women who have been victims of sexual abuse or who have been discriminated against.

Without our health, we have nothing. In many parts of the

world, people don't have close to what they need to sustain, nourish, and treat their bodies. "One substantial issue is the privatization of pharmaceutical companies. Much of the medical care in the U.S. and abroad has been limited as a result of these companies. Medical treatment in of itself is not cheap, and the fact the price of drugs is so heightened is something that is entirely aggravating," stated junior Jared Basset, who is set on one day working in the medical field.

It's no secret that climate change is an extremely threatening and ominous issue. Demographically, it's an issue millennials tend to lean towards since we know it will affect us greatly in due time and certain repercussions, such as intense drought and a decrease in biodiversity, are already present. "The environment is a major worry of mine because I'm concerned about the way that I'm leaving the planet for my children's generation," said senior Bryan Weintraub.

As a generation, there's a lot more to us than adults expect. Before anyone makes the statement that we are shallow and self-absorbed, they should be asking our opinion. As a group, we clearly have a lot to say and a burning desire to be heard. We have grown up in a time where we can see poverty, destruction, and inequality without being a part of it. We have grown up in an area that grants us the opportunity and support to stand up for what is right and condemn wrongdoings. Together, these two components bestow upon us a chance to become part of something greater than ourselves, to effect something larger than Rye Brook, and to redefine the teenage stereotype.



Photo Courtesy of Carly Kabot

Finding Food Love and Adventure at Rye Ridge Shopping Center

By Allison Chien

As the acropolis of our town, Rye Ridge Shopping Center has been reinventing itself to be trendier and more modern. While I shall forever mourn the loss of Waldenbooks, popular new chain franchises like Chipotle, Chop't, and SoulCycle are quickly filling store space and replacing classics with shiny new storefronts. Recently, several new shops have opened in Rye Ridge, and even more are set to arrive in the coming months.

The most buzzed about installment is Dig Inn, which has locations in New York City, Boston, and now, Rye Brook. The chain prides itself in serving ethically sourced, mostly vegetable, seasonal dishes. It's healthy bougie people food, making it a natural fit for Rye Brook. Dig Inn occupies the space which once was the beloved Family Discount Center. However, Dig Inn only takes up half of the space Family Discount Center did, with a small seating area in front, a kitchen and ordering/waiting area, and a larger seating area in the back. It's minimalist and hipster, with an exposed brick wall, menus hanging by brass colored clips along the walls, and tiny succulents in earthy-toned pots everywhere.

The first time I ate at Dig Inn was for lunch on a Friday afternoon. It was wild and confusing for both layout editor Hannah Marrow and I. We got two Marketbowls, which are quite similar to Chipotle's burrito bowls in concept. The Marketbowls consist of a base, either salad or some form of carbs, two market sides, and a protein, as well as extras if desired.

I got farm greens, roasted carrots, Sicilian cauliflower, and herb roasted chicken breast with sriracha dressing, while Hannah got brown rice, brussel sprouts, broccoli, and also chicken breast. The veggies were very fresh and good, however I was NOT ex-

cold. "Roasted" generally connotes warm, does it not? I only got the carrots to try something new, but apparently no one else does that and the carrots end up sitting there. I'm iffy about carrots in the first place, since raw carrots are for rabbits, and overcooked carrots are mushy and disgusting. Thus, when I bit into my mushy AND cold carrots, I was rather underwhelmed. Nevertheless, I soldiered on and conquered my entire bowl of artisanal fancy food.

Hannah and I both agreed that lunch at Dig Inn got three out of five stars, one for the aesthetics of both the dish and the restaurant itself, one for the really good chicken breast, and one for the quality of the veggies. We took off two because of the unappetizing flavor of the carrots, broccoli, and brussel sprouts.

We also came up with a list of tips for coming for lunch:

1. Sit in the back area because it's less crowded than the front;
2. Get there before 11:30, which is when all the stay at home parents and babies start showing up;
3. Get the chicken breast- it's really good;
4. The raspberry tea is unsweetened so it'd probably would taste better with sweetener;
5. Don't be a wimp and get nervous about talking to the staff- they're wonderfully helpful.

Not one to be deterred by a single bad meal, I went back for brunch the weekend after, this time with my friend Sabrina Rubinshteyn. I got the egg sandwich with bacon and avocado with a matcha latte, and she got the avocado toast with a latte. It was at this point that it became definitively obvious to me that I'm a breakfast person. We both loved what we ordered. Sabrina gave it a 6/5 and I gave it a 5/5. We got there at around 9:20 am, since it opens at 9 on weekends.

Continued on next page



A healthy breakfast is enjoyed at Dig Inn. Photo courtesy of Allison Chien



Above: Shoppers at Balducci's are greeted by a welcoming entrance. Below: Hannah Marrow finds excitement at a table of cannoli. Photos courtesy of Allison Chien



Continued from previous page

There was a decent crowd, which was surprising considering that it was pretty early. Sabrina thoroughly enjoyed her avocado toast, which also had some ricotta cheese on it. The avocado toast was ready serve, with fresh batches of it being brought out every few minutes. My egg sandwich, on the other hand, took a solid eon. There must have been a dozen other people's orders called before mine. Anyway, I got bored after that, and sat down and my meal ended up being brought to me, meaning I didn't have to spend those five minutes waiting around near the counter.

Another recent addition to the Rye Ridge complex is Balducci's, a gourmet, high-end grocery chain much like Citarella's in Greenwich. Hannah and I went to the grand opening for the free samples, and for this article, respectively. We concluded that Balducci's has lots of things, and lots of things of things. For example, there were so many different types of pasta, and so many different brands of the different types of pasta. Keeping with the lots of things of things, there was also a stand with cannoli dip samples, with a display of a huge cannoli stuffed with smaller cannolis. Cannoli-ception. Brilliant. There was also a wall of artisanal bread, a huge tall cake specially made for the occasion, a radio show, and, our personal favorite, a trio playing classical music in the background. Another highlight

was the fact that they had representatives from different sections of the store milling about in their formal wear. Balducci's went all in on the authenticity, having Japanese men in suits serve as spokespeople for the sushi station.

Balducci's is the gourmet market of our dreams, stocking nearly everything under the sun from cheese enchiladas, to jumbo Fiji waters, fourteen types of frozen flatbread pizza, and eight different types of fresh olives.

We also visited Rye Ridge Pharmacy, which shares the space that the supermarket D'Agostino used to occupy with Balducci's. This store has undeniably the best greeting card selection we've ever seen, stocking a card for literally every occasion. A birthday card for your gassy dad? They've got it. A thank you card for your religious aunt? Got it. But the addition of a pharmacy right near two CVS stores seems pretty redundant, so the longevity of Rye Ridge Pharmacy seems debatable.

Overall, the new stores in Rye Ridge have made the shopping center much more diverse and appealing. Though Rye Brook is often referred to as boring, the fact that so many great and convenient options have been made available to us makes our small town seem much more exciting. If you haven't already visited these new locales, it would behoove you to give them a try.

Early Decision: an Option for Everyone? *an opinion*

By Arianna Kohilakis

Come Mid-December there is a one major thing on most high school seniors' minds: college. As a junior preparing to take my standardized tests and having discussed college visits with my family, I already am well into my journey that will hopefully end with an acceptance letter to my school of choice.

Yes, many schools notify their applicants about whether or not they have been admitted earlier in the year, but the reason why I focus on Mid-December is because this is when Early Decision applicants hear back from the university to which they have applied. The time period during which Early Decision applicants hear back has recently come to a close, but I wanted to take this opportunity to explore the pros and cons of this unique option and explore why it is so attractive to high school seniors across the nation.

The concept of "Early Decision" has perplexed and fascinated me ever since my sister, now a freshman in college, was faced with the decision as to whether applying under this possibly rewarding ultimatum was suiting to her interests. In layman's terms, or non-college application savvy speak for that matter, Early Decision is an option that many well-known

universities and colleges (450, according to the College Board) offer to their applicants in which you make a promise to the school that should you be accepted you will undoubtedly matriculate as a student there next fall. Why would a student limit themselves in such a way and make such a definitive decision contingent only upon whether the university decides to "like them back"? A few reasons.

First, Early Decision applicants are normally met with higher acceptance rates, ranging from a few to even more than ten percentage points higher than regular decision. (Don't be completely fooled, though! Many college athletes are accepted under Early Decision and thus may skew the acceptance rates upwards.)

Regardless, individuals have a greater chance of acceptance under Early Decision because they are making a promise to the school that they will come there, which, in many cases, is greeted with a certain kindness from the universities.

The second major reason to do Early Decision is that if you have had a "dream school" since the time you were little and you would choose that school over any other college you were accepted to, Early Decision allows you to find out much earlier instead of having to wait until February, March, or even April. This way, should you be accepted, the rest of senior year is rather un-stressful and there is no need to worry any more about college acceptances.

Current senior Haley Feuerman, who was recently admitted under Early Decision to Vanderbilt University, sheds light on her choice to apply early: "I've always wanted to go to Vanderbilt. For me, the decision to apply to Vanderbilt early was a no-brainer. I had a better chance of getting

accepted, I found out mid-December, and I didn't have to wait to hear back from any other schools. While the college process is very stressful, applying early decision made it all seem a lot simpler."

Despite the previously stated benefits of such an approach, there are obvious flaws. To begin, you are "placing all your eggs in one basket" and have to wait for the university to come back to you with a decision. For many individuals this is emotionally trying, especially when they do not receive the news that they were hoping for in the end. Individuals become obsessive about the university to which they have applied to and are also overwhelmed with a lot of stress around the time when individuals begin to hear back from the schools.

Another evident issue with Early Decision is that should you be accepted you are unable to change your mind. For individuals who may need to attend a



Photo courtesy of Arianna Kohilakis

different university for economic reasons there is a lot of pressure that arises under Early Decision, which I will examine below.

What type of students are choosing to apply under Early Decision you may wonder? Research points to a very specific demographic: those who are economically stable enough to be able to commit to paying a large tuition price tag, without knowing exactly how much of the tuition will be paid by financial aid. Many individuals are simply unable to take advantage of the higher admission rates that come along with Early Decision because their families need to take into account tuition costs when coming to a final decision as to what college their son or daughter will attend. This idea is explored in an article by the Washington Post entitled "A college-admissions edge for the wealthy: Early Decision", which comments on the individuals "who apply early and simultaneously pledge to attend just one [university], without fear of cost, at a time when the sticker price for private schools often tops \$60,000 a year."

Thankfully, however, should a student who is dependent on financial aid apply under Early Decision and not receive enough money, there is a way out of the bind that results. The Washington Post explains, "While most early-decision admits enroll, a few do not. The most common reason: If a financial aid offer is deemed insufficient, an admitted student may be released from their pledge."

The final thought that I will leave you with is this: College is a business. You may have been qualified for the school and competitive with the rest of the applicant pool only to have your heart shattered by an admissions committee who has turned you and all your accomplishments into a piece of paper. The endless letters in the mail, the published acceptance rates, and the large importance placed upon legacy and donations serves only to strengthen each college brand and thus help with their business. Universities are no exception to the seven deadly sins as they too act greedily in their practices.

CRISPR, Harbinger of Miracles or Disaster?

By Joie Ng

The rapid globalization of countries around the world over the past few centuries has increasingly raised dire environmental issues that must be addressed. This year, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere passed 400 parts per million, a milestone that many sources have identified as “a point of no return.” Levels of this greenhouse gas typically reach their low point around the last week of September. However, measurements taken at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s atmospheric observatories in Mauna Loa, Hawaii and at the South Pole, revealed that this year, CO₂ levels failed to drop below 400 ppm for the first time since the Ice Age.

The news, although alarming, is not altogether unexpected. Carbon pollution has been steadily increasing since the start of the Industrial Revolution, a period of time where most of the world rapidly began shifting from agrarian societies to urban, industrialized societies. According to Science News, the current rate of CO₂ increase is over 100 times faster than it has ever been in the last 800,000 years.

Ralph Keeling, a scientist who runs Scripps Institute for Oceanography’s CO₂ monitoring program, said, “Brief excursions toward lower values are still possible, but it already seems safe to conclude that we won’t be seeing a monthly value below 400 ppm this year – or ever again for the indefinite future.”

This is a cause for substantial concern as the crossing of this significant threshold is a precursor for the substantial intensification of widespread ramifications, particularly when considering the safe level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is considered to be 350 ppm. Scientists are beginning to see an increase in temperatures, ocean acidification, extreme weather patterns, and countless other consequences that have emerged as a result of rising CO₂ levels.

As stated by Inside Climate News, global temperatures have been risen by 1.6°F, or 0.9°C, since the start of the 20th century, largely contributing to the

melting of snow and ice, and thus resulting in rising sea levels. Scientists estimate that over 13 million Americans may be forced to relocate as early as the year 2100. Further, humanity has devastated approximately 1.27 million square miles, or 10 percent of Earth’s wilderness, in the last twenty years, while climate change has led to the damage of about 93 percent of the Great Barrier Reef.

Fortunately, in order to combat climate change and the myriad concerns that are raised along with it, leaders of nations around the world gathered at the Paris Climate Conference in December of 2015. At the conference, 195 countries endorsed the first universal, legally binding global climate deal.

The main goal of this agreement is to reduce emissions and slow the flow of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere in order to limit the increase in the global average temperature during this century to 1.5°C.

Earlier this month, the European Union and seven of its member states officially signed onto the Climate Accord, after the European Parliament voted in favor of passing the Paris Pact. This allowed the agreement to clear the ratification threshold, which required the treaty to be adopted by 55 nations and totaling at least 55% of greenhouse gas emissions, before it could be put into effect.

The Paris Agreement has been pushed forward at a much faster pace than previous deals, such as the Kyoto Climate Agreement, which took a total of eight years to be put into action. On November 7, 2016 many of the world’s leaders met in Marrakesh, Morocco for the annual U.N. backed Climate Change Summit in order to establish a formal plan for moving forward.

Countless problems must be tackled, including the settlement of common methods for documenting greenhouse gas emissions, and how aid will be provided to developing countries to help lower emissions and deal with the impact of climate change. This deal provides hope that nations will successfully collaborate to make the future of this planet a bit brighter.

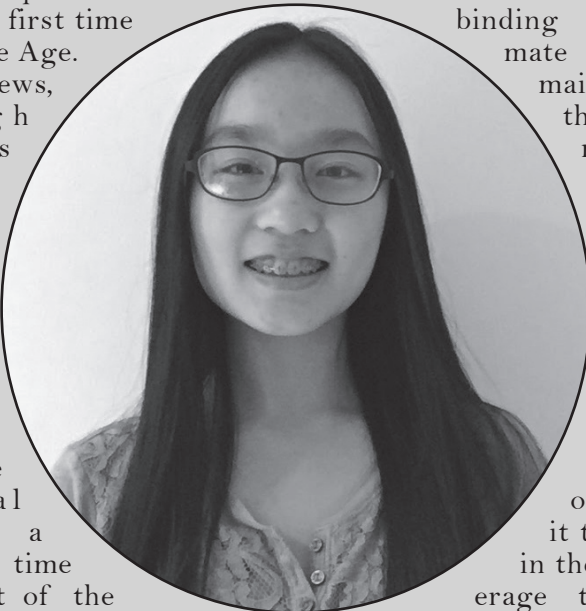


Photo courtesy of Joie Ng

Animal Research Controversy

By Eliana Rosenzweig

Animal research began in the time of the Greeks and Romans to find out how the human body and other complex organisms work. Ever since, such research has been a critical, yet at times a controversial, practice. Almost everything from genetics to cancer drugs have been discovered through knowledge that scientists have gained using animal models that closely resemble humans.

The United States spends more money than any other country on research. There is a significant focus on research using animals to help cure diseases, create novel devices and treatments, and to generate better and faster therapies. The U.S. Food

and Drug Administration (FDA) requires preclinical animal studies for virtually every treatment to ensure safety before testing in humans. With animal research, medical breakthroughs in the past century have included blood transfusions, insulin, prosthetics, anesthetics, vaccines, penicillin, MRI scanning, stem cell research and more.

Every federally funded research experiment using animals must have an IACUC, allowing for regulation of animal use in research and establishes a process of approval to promote the ethical use of the animals as research subjects. To obtain an IACUC, a justification for the use of animals and a specification for the number of animals, species, as well as any procedures or drugs that might be used on the animals to reduce pain is required.

Students involved in the Honors Science Research program are able to conduct research using animals with a mentor, but there are regulations they must follow to protect the animals they are working with. The project must be approved by IACUC as it is research dealing with animal usage and in doing so the IACUC can prevent any harm that can potentially be done to creatures.

While research students are not permitted to have direct contact with the animals, they are able to act as observers and care for the animals in certain ways such as cleaning the cages or feeding the research subjects.

Sarah Rogers, Science Research student, works with mice. “I am a vegetarian and have pets so I feel really strongly about animal rights. However, I recognize, especially after researching this summer, that at a certain point animal research is necessary for the greater good.” According to Rogers, her mentor goes beyond IACUC regulations.

For many, their first reaction when hearing about animal related research is to speak out for their furry friends, however, animal research is undeniably responsible for almost all treatments and medical advances that are carving the future of medicine each and every day.

Mammals in Research

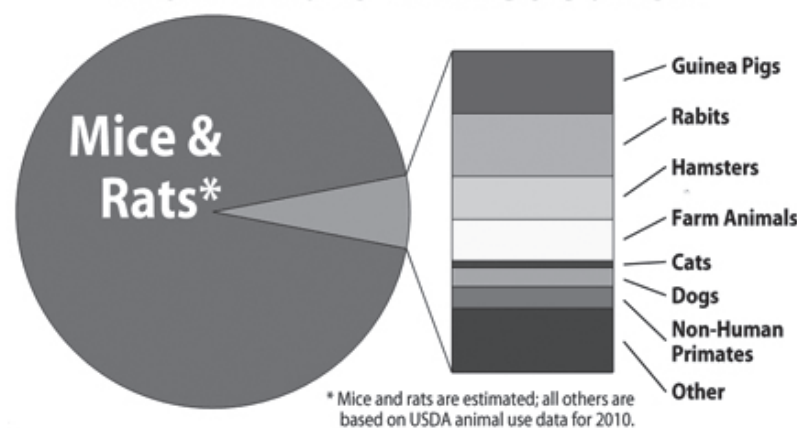


Chart courtesy of James Madison University

Most historians consider animal research the largest contributor in establishing the fundamental principles of human physiology and anatomy. However, some would argue that it actually detracted from medical research and instead it has solely presented information about animals, not humans. For example, some medications may work in an animal model of a particular disease and not in humans with the same disease.

Animal experimentation has remained a widely controversial issue to this day because, although it has been propagated by many inquisitive scientists, there are also many firm believers in animal rights. While animals may look different, they are still living creatures like human beings. In some cases, innocent animals are being killed and injected with deadly diseases solely for medical research and much backlash has tried to protect animals across countries from major research establishments.

Currently the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), established in 1966, is the only U.S. federal law that regulates animal research, testing, teaching, and transport. According to the New England Anti-Vivisection Society, the law installs standards for housing, feeding, handling, and veterinary care, however, the law only covers approximately 10% of animals while excluding certain animals such as rats, mice, and birds which constitute approximately 90-95%

Blind Brook Addresses Contaminated Water Concerns

By Abe Baker-Butler

In response to elevated lead levels found in the water of Newark, NJ and Flint, MI, the Blind Brook School District tested its water as a precautionary measure last April.

The results showed that one high school water fountain, of twenty two water fixtures tested, exceeded the National Drinking Water Standards (NDWS) and it was soon replaced.

At Ridge Street Elementary School, one sink for dishwashing was found to be contaminated, and a filter was added to eliminate pollutants. In the high school, the contaminated water sources are located in rooms H202, H203, H204, H216, H217, and H218, as well as all of the bathrooms, with the exception of the bathroom near the first floor faculty room and the auditorium women's bathroom.

The district has addressed the lead contamination issue by replacing faucets, fixtures, and even plumbing. "We installed two double filter filtration systems, one in the BMRSS nurse's office and one in the BMRSS kitchen. Additionally, we put in a new water fountain near high school classroom H201 with a bottle filling station," said Dr. Jonathan Ross, Superintendent of Schools.

Although remediation is not required by law, administrators believe it is important for the

wellbeing of students and faculty.

The results of the test also showed that about one-third of the non-drinking/cooking fixtures, many of which are located in bathrooms and science labs at the Middle/High School, had lead concentrations exceeding the National Standards. Soon after, the district publicized the results to the Blind Brook community via email. According to Ross, custodial staff also, "labeled all non-drinking and non-cooking water faucet locations with abnormal lead level as, 'Non-Potable Water' and 'Not For Drinking or Cooking Use.'"

Currently, the EPA limits the concentration of lead in public water systems to 0.015 mg/L. In Blind Brook's testing of non-drinking/cooking water, no samples exceeded 0.1 mg/L.

By contrast, some districts, such as Yonkers, according to LoHud, have found lead concentrations double that amount in their schools' drinking water and at one New Rochelle elementary school, all drinking water was shut off due to high levels of lead.

The NDWS are national EPA regulations authorized by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) of 1974. Although the standards have been revised over the years and only apply to public water systems, their ultimate goal is to prevent the negative effects of exposure to

natural and human-made contaminants. In addition to lead, the EPA standards regulate the amount of microorganisms, disinfectants, and chemicals that can be present in public drinking water.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, no negative health effects can result from washing oneself with lead-contaminated water because lead cannot be absorbed through the skin.

On August 30, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a law that required every school district to test their drinking water for lead by October 31. According to Cuomo, "these rigorous new protections for New York's children include the toughest lead contamination testing standards in the nation and provide clear guidance to schools on when and how they should test their water." The law also states that if the lead concentration is above the level established by the state, the school must enact a remediation plan or find an alternative water source for students and faculty. This legislation only applies to buildings built before 1986, when lead pipes for drinking water were banned. Blind Brook High School's pipes are from 1973, while the pipes in the Middle School are from 2002, and those at Ridge Street School were installed between 1950 and 1966. However, the

law also says that schools, such as Blind Brook, that had tested their drinking water after January 1, 2015, would be exempt from this new round of testing.

Blind Brook administrators believe that solder, a lead substance used to bind pipes, is the likely culprit of the contamination. In addition, when water with any lead concentration remains stagnant for an extended period of time, a process known as leaching can occur. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines leaching as, "the dissolution of metals, solids, and chemicals into drinking water." Although the legislation passed by Governor Cuomo states that water is supposed to sit stagnant in the pipes for 8-18 hours prior to testing, district administrators believe that water in the MS/HS science labs had probably been stagnant for much longer. In fact, Superintendent Ross said that, "in terms of the science labs, if we followed [water testing protocol], we might have had a different result."

"Please remember that all drinking and cooking water sources are fine - they follow the NDWS limits for both lead and copper. That being said, we will address other non-drinking water fixtures and the related plumbing [issues] in the months ahead," said Ross.

The school plans to retest affected faucets in summer 2017.

Sleep More for Better Study

By Danielle Barsky

Although cramming for an exam until the early hours of the morning may seem more important than sleeping, getting enough sleep is a vital aspect of life. Necessary activities throughout the body occur while one sleeps that are imperative to human functionality throughout the following day.

The repercussions of dismissing the value of sleep can be extremely harmful and even deadly if one is behind the wheel of a car. Fortunately, while injury and illness are more likely to occur under sleep deprivation, there are plausible solutions to this trend.

Teenagers across the world need approximately eight to ten hours of sleep each night to function at their best level, but many teens do not reach even close to

this amount. A study from the National Sleep Foundation showed that only fifteen percent of teens are actually sleeping eight and a half hours on school nights. Another increasingly harmful trend is staying up late during weeknights and "catching up" on sleep over the weekend, which hurts the quality of sleep and negatively affects a person's biological clock.

The consequences of a lack of sleep are endless and as society progresses indefinitely towards less and less sleep, problems continue to arise. Disorders such as narcolepsy, a condition characterized by "an extreme tendency to fall asleep whenever in a relaxing place", and insomnia are more likely to occur. Limited sleep also impairs one's ability to learn, listen, concentrate and solve problems.

Inadequate sleep is linked to mood swings, frequently eating unhealthy foods, and the effects of alcohol accordingly increase. When one is sleep deprived, they are as impaired as having an illegal blood alcohol content percent. In fact, drowsy driving causes over 100,000 crashes each year.

While negative effects are likely to occur, there are many solutions to this issue that can help teenagers function more effec-

tively throughout the day. It is recommended by experts to make sleep a priority by keeping a sleep diary in order to correct one's sleeping habits in order to stay healthy. Many students also find that if planned correctly, naps are a great way to make people work more efficiently. A quick nap after getting home from a long day of school can make a huge difference in a person's mood and proficiency. It is shown that making one's room a "sleep haven" can also help people fall asleep by keeping the atmosphere cool, dark and quiet.

It is additionally advised to avoid coffee, tea, soda, chocolate and other stimulants later in the day as well as to establish a bedtime and wake time every day. A consistent sleep schedule helps individuals feel less tired and allows the body to become "in sync" with natural sleep patterns.

Social Studies teacher Tayla Blatt teaches her students about the necessity of sleep in her Introduction to Psychology classes.

"When I survey my psych students on how much sleep they get it turns out that the most students usually say are six. One of the things that we are finding out now is that right before bed many students check their phones and that keeps your mind up. I've had



Illustration/Allison Chien

students say that they thought they were going to check their phones for five minutes but they ended up staying on their phones for an hour."

Along with Blatt, many teachers insist that in order to gain more sleep at night, students should avoid electronics before sleeping. By avoiding electronics, they are avoiding the light from the screen that stimulates the brain as well as social media distractions that can keep them awake.

If one instead tries more calming activities such as listening to music or reading a book, it will be easier to fall asleep at an earlier time and this easy trick will counteract heightened alertness that people often face before falling asleep.



Illustration/Allison Chien

SoundCloud Secrets

By Allison Chien

Students are often perceived to be listening to the same artists in the same genres over and over again, limiting themselves to a small selection of music. In reality, music on the Internet is like a gargantuan, gaping abyss. The trouble of dealing with such a massive collection is the sheer size of it. Sifting through millions upon millions of tracks would take eons, which is why I compiled a list of my favorite songs to make the task of finding good music much simpler. All of these songs can be found on SoundCloud; it is free, has comparatively few ads, and provides the freedom to select tracks.

“Goodnight” by Juss

Anyone who thinks of rhyming diarrhea with taqueria, as well as Ikea with fajitas, tops my list almost immediately. User Juss, also known as Yezlawd, exhibits his skills as a rapper and a producer in this track, creating an extremely catchy beat. While the bass is a consistently repeating melody throughout the song, the lyrics are really what takes the cake. 10/10 would recommend.

“Find My Socks (Feat Noah Hill)” by Jimmy Staple

This is probably my favorite song of all time. “Find My Socks” opens with the iconic lines from *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*, “Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in awhile, you could miss it.” This tune is a remix of the Chordettes’ “Mr. Sandman” interspersed with original verses, which also contain some fun rhymes: “wake up in the mornin’, hit that serotonin, livin’ in the momen’”. The cheery theme of the song embodies what I would imagine the quintessential relaxed but happy morning to be like. The iconic “bung, bung, bung, bung” background perfectly compliments the quick slew of well-paced bars. When you get passed the aux, this song is guaranteed to be a car bopping hit.

“You treat me like you hate me (ft. Gracie Abrams)” by dapurr

The name Gracie Abrams might sound a little familiar. Gracie is the daughter of the famed director, producer, screenwriter, and composer, J.J. Abrams, known for his work on *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, *Lost*, and the *Star Trek* reboots. It is evident the familial talent extends beyond cinematography.

Not only does Gracie have an amazing voice, but she also writes and composes her own songs. Her song, “In Between” is another one

of my favorites. Moreover, the combination of her musical ability with that of producer dapurr creates a fantastic track. The lyrics portray the melancholic, bittersweet thoughts of a girl lost in a world of love. The lyrics evoke the image of a forlorn teen picking away at a daisy, “he loves me, he loves me not”. The synth riffs and beats make the song less of a whiney rant and more like a powerfully charged, passionate fight of emotions. Gracie and dapurr are both teenagers, and the song highlights their young, creative energy.

“Way I Live” by Skizzy Mars

Rap, melodic singing, electronic bops, and a clip of a recorded conversation are all artfully mixed together on Skizzy Mars’s “Way I Live” which delivers a great track about the lifestyle of an occasionally broke rapper who’s just having a good time and going through various bouts

of economic and social success. Somehow, even while describing his libidinous adventures, “Way I Live” incorporates some sophisticated piano notes.

“We could be (prod. dapurr)” by drumaq

I originally found Drew Macdonald on YouTube, but he has since then shifted

to focus on music exclusively. He has a few songs out, but “We could be” is my favorite out of all of them.

Drummaq describes this track as being under “dream pop”, which I concur with, as it has a glorious lilting melody. Plus, Drew’s voice is smooth as butter. “We could be” features a variety of different electronic edits, keeping the song interesting while still drilling in the takeaway message: “We could be beautiful”. I also highly recommend his latest song, “Neverland”.

“sweet n sour” by Waterbed

Indie duo Crystal and Cat of Waterbed are best well known for their feature on The Chainsmokers’ creatively titled “Waterbed”. This track is what I’d imagine an psychedelically emerald colored afternoon in Colorado to sound like. It’s essentially a song about how a bad relationship helped the person realize how great a truly good relationship is, as exemplified in the line, “if I hadn’t met sour, I’d have never known sweet”. This song has been out for quite a while now, but it’s still on the rise. The track is super groovy and bubbly, with a good portion of the song consisting of electronic riffs and airy ‘woo’ sounds. As one commenter described it, “This song is now swimming in my brain like a parasite. Integrating itself within my body and soul, with no sight of a potential cure. Score. Sweet.”



Photo courtesy of Allison Chien

It’s Not Easy Being Yeezy

By Caroline Levine

The past few months have been filled with high drama in Hollywood. On November 19, rapper Kanye West had a meltdown in front of more than 13,000 fans at Golden 1 Center in Sacramento, California, ranting about everything from Beyoncé and Jay-Z to the presidential election, before storming offstage.

Two days later, Dr. Michael Fazzam made a frantic 911 call, telling dispatchers that West needed to be hospitalized. He feared West would attack emergency responders due to his aggressive behavior. The famous rapper spent eight days at UCLA Medical Center for “temporary psychosis” brought on by sleep deprivation and dehydration, according to TMZ.

As a result, West’s U.S. Saint Pablo tour was cancelled, costing him over \$10 million. However, West has started to plan a 2017 European tour that will include stops in Paris, Britain, and Germany.

“I think it’s really sad that he had to cancel the tour because so many were waiting to see him,” junior Zoe Cohen said.

In addition to his recovery, West may need some time to work on his relationship with his wife, Kim Kardashian. People Magazine reported after returning from his brief hospitalization, he is currently living apart from his spouse. West and Kardashian are now said to be receiving individual counseling.

“I don’t think it’s really clear what’s going on with him,” said junior Ayden Bauer. “All of it is really sad. Whether or not he is having a ‘mental breakdown,’ he’s clearly

going through something and it’s terrible that all of it is very public.”

Neither West nor his wife have publicly discussed any of the reports surrounding his “breakdown”. Regardless, fans at Blind Brook are concerned about West’s wellbeing.

“I think it’s important for him to take time off if that’s what he needs because at the end of the day, health is more important than fame,” said sophomore Carly Kabot.

“It’s important to try to look at his perspective and see how overwhelming being in the industry can be,” said senior Danielle Goz.

West also found time for a very public meeting with President-Elect Donald Trump. According to The New York Times, “after weeks of reports of severe exhaustion and ensuing hospitalization, Kanye West walked into Trump Tower on Tuesday morning. Journalists who caught a glimpse of the musician entering the tightly guarded building in Manhattan took to Twitter to document the strange spectacle.” This meeting sparked rumors about West possibly performing at Trump’s inauguration.

According to the New York Times, Trump told reporters “We’ve been friends for a long time...we discussed life.” West tweeted later that he met with Trump to discuss multicultural issues including bullying, supporting teachers, modernizing curriculums, and the violence taking place in Chicago. He also tweeted, “I feel it is important to have a direct line of communication with our future President if we truly want change.”



Photo courtesy of ABC News

Kanye West appears on the cover of Time Magazine as one of “The 100 Most Influential People” of 2015.

A Night to Remember

By Danielle Barsky

Every February, celebrities from all over the country attend the Grammy Awards to celebrate the greatest music of the year. This year, the Grammys take place on Sunday, February 12, at 8:00 pm and will be hosted by James Corden, the star of *The Late Late Show*. Lucky fans can attend the event at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, however most can watch it from their homes on CBS.

Some of the most popular categories for awards are Album of the Year, Song of the Year, Record of the Year, and Best New Artist. These four categories are called the General Field. They are the standard awards for musical works, and do not restrict nominees by genre. There are also special awards, such as The Lifetime Achievement Award, that are given without nominations, typically for accomplishments that have occurred over a long period of time.

This year, the nominees for Album of the Year are *25*, *Lemonade*, *Purpose*, *Views* and *A Sailor's Guide To Earth*. *25* by Brit-

ish singer and songwriter, Adele, became a massive success as the world's best-selling album of 2015. *Lemonade* is praised as Beyoncé's boldest work to date, selling 45,000 copies in its first week and earning Beyoncé her sixth consecutive number one album in the country. *Purpose* by Justin Bieber features vocals from Travis Scott, Big Sean, and Halsey. Bieber's *Purpose* gave him the largest first-week sales of his career. *Views* by the rapper Drake was released in late April and had several producers, including Kanye West. *Views* remained at number one on the U.S. Billboard 200 for 13 non-consecutive weeks. Although not very popular at Blind Brook, *A Sailor's Guide to Earth* is the third studio album by American country singer-songwriter Sturgill Simpson.

The nominees for Song of the Year are "Formation" by Beyoncé, "7 Years" by Lukas Graham, "Love Yourself" by Justin Bieber, "Hello" by Adele and "I Took A Pill In Ibiza" by Mike Posner. "Formation" served as *Lemonade*'s lead single and "7 Years" is from Lukas Graham, the self-titled second studio album of the Danish soul-pop band. "Love Yourself" was first released as a promotional single in November

2015 but became Bieber's third consecutive number-one hit and was the seventh best selling song of the year. Similarly, "Hello" is a piano ballad that was the first song to sell over a million digital copies in a week and reached one billion YouTube views in record time. "I Took a Pill in Ibiza" was originally acoustic but was remixed in July 2015 by the Norwegian duo SeeB and became Posner's hottest single. It reached the top ten of the charts in twenty-seven countries.

"Hello", "Formation", and "7 Years" were also nominated for Record of the Year, as well as "Work" by Rihanna featuring Drake, and "Stressed Out" by Twenty One Pilots. "Work" was recorded on Rihanna's eighth studio album *Anti*. The song became Rihanna's fourteenth number one single and her song remained at the top of the charts for nine weeks. "Stressed Out", written and recorded by American musical duo Twenty One Pilots was released as a single in April and sold 2.4 million copies.

Kelsea Ballerini, The Chainsmokers, Chance The Rapper, Maren Morris and Anderson Paak received nominations for Best New Artist. Ballerini is a country pop singer and songwriter who signed a record deal

at only 19 years old. She is the first solo female country music artist to score a number one hit on her debut single. The Chainsmokers are an American DJ duo including Andrew Taggart and Alex Pall, who have become worldwide celebrities after releasing "#Selfie" in 2014, "Roses" in 2015, and "Closer", in 2016. Chance the Rapper is a hip-hop recording artist from Chicago who began to gain recognition following the release of his second mixtape, *Acid Rap*. In May, he released the mixtape *Coloring Book*, which is the first streaming-only album to ever receive a Grammy nomination. Maren Larae Morris is a country singer, songwriter, and record producer who began her career in 2005. She has released four studio albums and is the reigning 2016 Country Music Association New Artist of the Year. Anderson Paak is a singer, songwriter, rapper, and record producer from California. In 2011, Paak began to gain acceptance in the music world as he worked on his debut album, *O.B.E. Volume 1*. He later released three albums and performed six songs on Dr. Dre's 2015 album, *Compton*.



Photo courtesy of Twenty One Pilots
"Stressed Out" from *Twenty One Pilot's* fourth album *Blurryface* is nominated for Record of the Year.

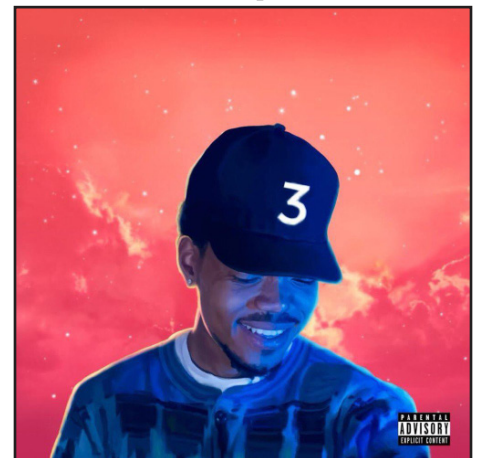


Photo courtesy of Genius
Chance the Rapper, creator of the album *Coloring Book*, is nominated for Best New Artist.

Gilmore Girls Revival

By Olivia Morrisey

Almost ten years after the finale of *Gilmore Girls*, Netflix decided to produce a four episode revival of the beloved show. Released on November 25, 2016, *Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life* continues the story of the lives of Lorelai, Rory, and Emily Gilmore, as well as many other characters from the original show.

The miniseries is exclusive to Netflix with 88 to 102 minute episodes. Fans of the original show are at ease knowing that many of the actors and actresses have reprised their roles in the show's revival. Lauren Graham returns as Lorelai Gilmore, Alexis Bledel as Rory Gilmore, Kelly Bishop as Emily Gilmore, and Scott Patterson as Luke Danes. Unfortunately, Edward Herrmann passed away in 2014, so he was unable to make an appearance as Richard Gilmore,

Lorelai's father and Rory's grandfather.

The last episode of the seventh and final season of *Gilmore Girls* left fans at a loss for words. In "Bon Voyage", Rory gets a job as a reporter covering Barack Obama's presidential campaign and prepares to leave in three days. Meanwhile, Lorelai must address her feelings toward Luke and cope with the fact that she may not see her daughter again for a long time.

Rory and her mother plan to have breakfast at Luke's Diner and cancel Rory's college graduation party. However, she plans a surprise party for Rory with the help of Lorelai's best friend, Sookie St. James (Melissa McCarthy) at the Dragonfly Inn. The next day, Rory and Lorelai drive into town to see that the entire community is at the party ready to bid Rory farewell.

Sookie informs Lorelai that

Luke planned the party. Luke then tells Lorelai, "I just like to see you happy," and they kiss. In the final moments of the episode, Rory and Lorelai stop at Luke's house, mirroring the final scene of the pilot episode.

"I love how the storyline came full circle and the infamous last lines left me speechless," said junior Caroline Levine.

In the revival of *Gilmore Girls*, Rory is now a freelance journalist and decides to sell her apartment due to frequent traveling. She chooses to live with Logan Huntzberger (Matt Czuchy) in London and they begin a relationship despite the fact that Rory already has a boyfriend. Rory is then fired from her job and meets with her ex-love-interest, Jess Mariano (Milo Ventimiglia), who pushes her to write a book about her life. However, Rory and Lorelai get

in an argument over Rory's book idea and Lorelai leaves to hike the Pacific Crest Trail.

Emily moves to Nantucket after accepting her husband's death and is independent for the first time. Lorelai then returns to Stars Hollow, makes up with Rory, and proposes to Luke. Rory visits Christopher, her father, to tell him about the wedding and confronts him about why he let Lorelai raise her as a single mother. Luke and Lorelai get married and Rory reveals a shocking secret to end the show, leaving viewers with a major cliffhanger.

"I loved the revival. I think it was great to bring everyone back. I'm so happy how Luke and Lorelai ended up, but I hated the ending because I don't like cliffhangers. They need to do another episode at least to tell us what happens," said Levine.

Book Club
presents
Open Mic Night

March 16th @ 7pm in the MSHS Library

Contact
hbrady@blindbrook.org
if you are interested in performing or
volunteering.

Do you need Community Service hours?

The Community Learning Partnership is looking for tutors to help Port Chester Middle School students in all academic areas.

Tutors meet with their students after school at Port Chester's Don Bosco Community Center OR on Saturdays at the Port Chester-Rye Brook Library.

Contact bbhstutor@gmail.com for more information.



It's Time for the Big Leagues to Step Up

By Michael Discolo

While several other leagues have made huge strides in eliminating domestic violence over the past few years, there is still one league that has completely failed at handling these delicate situations. The league that is being referred to is the National Football League. From 2000 -2014 about 48 NFL players have been considered guilty of domestic violence. While this number may seem relatively small, the magnitude of the punishment these players receive is absolutely shocking.

Out of 48 players considered guilty of domestic violence under the league policy, the NFL suspended players for just one game or not at all in 88 % of the cases. This means that over 50% of players found guilty of a crime, punishable by huge fines

and even jail time in certain cases, received no punishment from the NFL at all.

Meanwhile Pittsburgh Steelers star wide receiver Antonio Brown has been fined nearly \$100,000 over the past three years for "excessive" celebration penalties and wearing customized cleats honoring the late Muhammad Ali. This shows that the NFL cares more about harmless dance moves and colorful attire than they do illegal crimes.

Even when commissioner Roger Goodell chooses to punish these players, his plans end up ineffective. After Carolina Panthers Defensive End Greg Hardy was found guilty assaulting his ex-girlfriend, he was moved to the exempt/commissioner's permission list for the remainder of the season. While this may seem like a job well done on the league office's part, they forgot one key part in their punishment toward Hardy. Unlike the MLB has done, the NFL failed to help teach Hardy why his actions were wrong. After his suspension, it was clear to the public that Hardy was continuing to objectify women as only "eye candy" and not as equals to their male coun-

terpart. "Have you seen his (Tom Brady's) wife? I hope she comes to the game. I hope her sister comes to the game, all her friends come to the game. One of my favorite games of the year," said Hardy.

This is not the only mishandled domestic violence situation in the NFL today with the revealment from New York Giants Kicker Josh Brown that he has had numerous encounters of domestic violence with his wife in the past few years. These incidences have mainly fallen in the timetable between the 2013 season, when Brown was suspended just one game

for domestic violence, up until present day. This shows that the NFL failed to give Brown a correct punishment in 2013 as Brown clearly did not learn from his mistakes and continued to commit horrible acts of violence against his wife for multiple

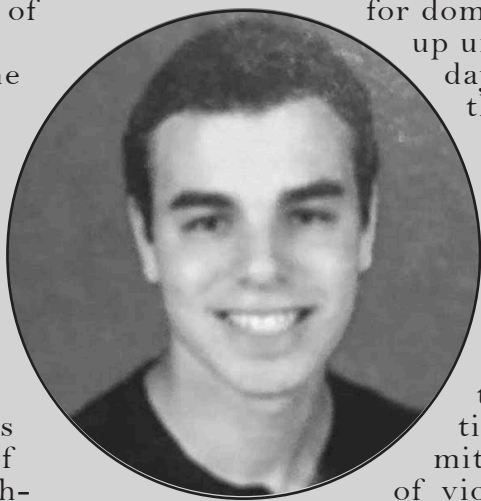


Photo courtesy of Michael Discolo

years. While the New York Giants have released Brown, who has decided to check himself into rehabilitation in order to fix his evident problem, the league office has barely stepped up during this time, only putting Brown on the commissioner's exempt list.

In doing this, the NFL sends a message to their players that even if they commit serious crimes, they will not send out a definite punishment of a certain amount of games, they will just put you on a list and take you off it when they believe the time is best fit.

The NFL's ratings are continuing to decline, many believing that it is caused by the general public not wanting to see criminals playing football and getting paid millions of dollars while doing it. Instead of handing out harsh punishments for celebrations or deflating footballs, Roger Goodell must come up with a more organized and efficient plan to halt the domestic violence cases in the NFL. If he continues to ignore the validity of this issue, the ratings will continue to drop and the NFL owners will begin to look in a new direction for the Commissioner position.

Rye Town Titans Talk Team Dynamics

By Ayden Bauer

With an 11-6 record, the Rye Town Titans are winding down an overall victorious season. The players attribute their successful performances to the hard work they put in both on and off the rink.

The team is made up of players from Blind Brook, Rye Neck, and Harrison High Schools and attracts fans from all over the tri-state area.

"I like playing with kids from other schools. The team is really close and everyone is working hard. Everyone is striving to get better and everyone is helping each other," said Blind Brook junior Kieran Storch.

"I like playing with kids from other schools because it gives me an opportunity to expand friendships just beyond Rye Brook. I think our team does very well because we are close-knit and have strong chemistry since we all play travel hockey together as well," added Blind Brook senior Ike Murov.

Most of the team plays on the White Plains Plainsmen, so they are all aware of how each player works and the chemistry is obvious on the ice. All of the players are hopeful that they will surpass the success of the team last year and make it far into the playoffs.

This year the Titans are focusing on improving communication both in practice and in games.

The team was lucky enough to keep most of their star players from last season, as only three of

the players from last year's team have since graduated. The team has also gained four new players, totalling 23 players that vary in different skill levels.

The captains of the team are from the other high schools, but players like Chris Megdanis, Ike Murov and Max Chalfin play key roles in the team's success.

"We have a deadly offense combined with a strong defense to back them up," said Blind Brook senior Chris Megdanis.

The season started in mid-November and the team practices on ice at Rye Playland four times a week for two and a half hours each day. Once a week, they meet up for team workout sessions and watch their game film to see how they can improve.

"Varsity Ice Hockey is definitely a sport for those who are willing to devote a lot of time for the team," said Murov. "Whether it's for team dinners or practices lasting until 10:30 pm, if you're not willing to put in the time and effort, the sport is not for you," he added.

The team is aiming to win the section title after losing last year in the finals against Pelham. This year the team is determined to win, but continues to focus on one game at a time.

"We obviously want to win the section title this year, but we focus on our short term goals, which is looking to improve at practice and winning each game as they come," said Murov.

Bowling Club Recruiting for the Count

By Ethan Finkelstein

All are welcome at Blind Brook's newest extracurricular sport--the Bowling Club. After years of pining and planning, co-presidents Robert DiGiacomo and Thomas Peper, seniors, are striking forward to recruit more than its current 25 members.

Each month, 15 members of the club take a trip to the White Plains Bowling Alley to practice and refine their skills. The club also holds weekly meetings after school to discuss strategies on how to improve their performance.

"One word to describe the season would be successful. We weren't sure if the club would work out or if we would get enough people to join, but my co-president Thomas Peper did some recruiting and our club grew big enough to be able to go on trips," said DiGiacomo.

While the two co-presidents have faced some difficulties in managing the new club, the duo has proven to be successful in managing any problems that arise. Due to a lack of funding,

Peper and DiGiacomo were not sure if the club could afford its practice space. However, they quickly took action to ensure the club would be able to pay for the venue.

"We went to the bowling alley prior to our first trip and worked out a deal to accommodate our club that gives us a discounted price for the practice space," said DiGiacomo.

The bowling club does not compete against other schools, but co-presidents Peper and DiGiacomo are working to ensure that the team will be able to enter tournaments next year. They already have Alyssa Angelori and Joanna Peper, both sophomores, lined up to take over as co-presidents next year. Adviser Carl Barnes will help ensure that the transition runs as smoothly as possible.

"My goal for the club is to expand it so that it is big enough so that it can continue for future years. I feel as if most of these goals are being met and that the bowling team will only continue to become more popular," said DiGiacomo.

Girls Varsity Basketball

Toughens Season Strategy

By Hannah Schaenman

As the majority of the Girls' Basketball team is a combination of underclassmen and middle schoolers, the young team has to work together to become a strong unified force.

"We are currently 1-3 which isn't a great record, but I feel like we are playing a lot better than what our record shows. At the end of the first half of all three of our losses, we were either up or down by 10 points, but we lost our momentum in the second half," said junior Lily Kamin.

Led by coaches Manny Martinez and assistant coach Alan Striar, the team is continuing to work hard and focus on techniques to improve their momentum in the second half.

Team unity has lead the team to success in the past. With a tough schedule playing Mamaroneck, a AA school, Ursuline B and Westlake the team has a 1-3 record. But the team is confident so that this record does not define them.

Looking for a successful season, the team practices Monday through Saturday with two hours of practice each day.

"The losses have been tough, but we are coming back and working harder than ever. We have been able to keep



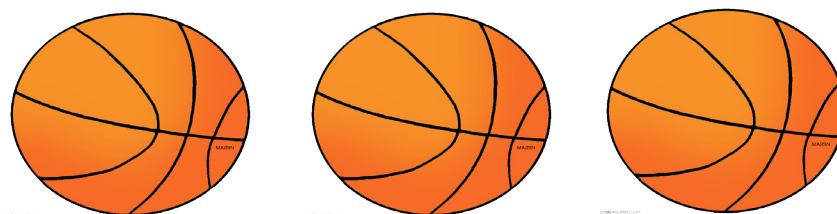
up with other teams but lose it in the third quarter so the goal is to keep up the energy.

Team chemistry is a key factor this year and working together to get future wins," said captain Kaveri Reddy, a senior.

With the loss of five players, four of whom were seniors, the team has been rebuilding. The team's strategy might change to deal with these obstacles. Will they move from their traditional half court offense to a transition, more fast paced offense to combat the lack of height?

"With the loss of our two tallest players we've been lacking some height but our captains Jamie and Kaveri have been playing really well and are doing a great job at their new positions. We've been putting our all into these games and practices and have been working our best to improve. I'm hopeful that we'll have some big wins in the future against John Jay, Ursuline, Rye Neck and Edgemont that will improve our record but for now I believe we have been playing very well and it can only go up from here," said Kamin.

This mentality is shared among all the players. The team will not give up and continues to work hard and progress throughout the season in order to work toward finishing off the year with a winning record. Having the same overall goal in mind every year, the team works to make it to playoffs and then to the County Center to compete for the Gold Ball.



Photo/Emma Seguljic

The Girls Varsity Basketball team tries to steal the ball away from their opponent.

Trojan Basketball

Reaches for Playoffs

By Evan Ketchabaw

The Varsity Boys' Basketball team is on the road to recovery after a rocky start to their season. Their current record is five wins to seven losses. Leading the team this year are senior captains Sam Brandeis, Garrett Hughes, and junior captain Jake DiGiansante.

After losing strong senior players from last season, juniors Michael Bucci and Alex Feuerstein are two players that have the talent to fill their shoes.

Some changes Coach Welsh made was having more of a run and gun style of play. This is because of their quick players, Bucci and DiGiansante.

They also want to try to push the ball and press as much as possible to generate quick steals.

During practice, the

team has focused on finding more ways to score. The team wants to spread the opposing team's defense and score points along the perimeter.

Off the court, improving team's chemistry has been vital late in the season. Getting to know each other's strengths has helped improve their cohesions and on-court abilities.

"I like how we move the ball around quickly and know where the open guy will be and feed him the ball. Also, having the full court press is a key point to our game: getting quick steals and easy points," said starting guard Michael Bucci.

Even though the Trojans were off to a slow start this season, senior Captain Sam Brandeis said that they would make a quick turn around on the season.

Photo/Emma Seguljic

Junior Captain Jake Giansante attempts to block a member from the opposing team from passing the ball.

"This tough start we had was a huge wake up call and has helped us learn from our mistakes and hopefully we will keep improving throughout the season," said Brandeis. To improve this bad start, they have to treat every opponent the same, forget about past mistakes and focus on the next team.

"The goal of this year's team is to not only make the playoffs, but to win some games in the playoffs," said Brandeis.

Having a strong lineup and a deep bench will re-

ally help them go far in the playoffs. The starting lineup consists of four juniors which is beneficial and creates high potential for next year as well.

The coaching staff is a huge reason why the team has success. Everyday they go into the gym to work on things they need to improve whether it is their shooting or strategies.

Practice has been key. To compete, the Trojans know success results from hard work on and off the court.