

FoCUS

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

June 2019



Photo/Julia Rosenberg
Former Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jonathan Ross smiles for a picture at his desk.

Ross Resigns, Assumes Old Post

By Shivani Thanneer '20

After four years serving as Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jonathan Ross has resigned from his position. At the Board of Education meeting on May 6 Dr. Ross spoke openly about how gracious he was for the experience of serving the Blind Brook school district while making his decision to resign official.

Dr. Ross's official position as it stands encompasses the duties of the Superintendent of Schools as well as the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Facilities. Coming into the positions, Dr. Ross had three main goals:

- To provide much needed infrastructural changes and see through various construction projects in the Middle and High School;
- To see through changes to curricula and a shift towards problem-based learning;
- To set in place a plan of action for the coming school years, with efforts combined from all the faculties and administrative positions in the district.

While interviewing Dr. Ross, he felt confident that two and a half out of his three goals were accomplished. Funding for major construction projects, including the tear-down and rebuilding of the 1960-wing of the Elementary School and the Fabrication Lab in the Middle/High School, was approved in 2017. Thus, Dr. Ross has chosen to resign but maintain his position as Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Facilities.

With 28 years of experience in the area of school business administration and four years of experience as a chief school administrator under his belt, Dr. Ross knew that these leadership changes were in the best interests of the District. He said that "I hope to stay involved and plan to keep in touch with the mainstream activities of our schools so that there is little for me to 'miss'". After maintaining good relations with the School Board throughout his time as superintendent, Dr. Ross is confident that the last of his goals will be accomplished no matter what position he holds for the upcoming school year.

For the 2019-2020 school year, Dr. Colin Byrne will be acting as the Interim Superintendent. Dr. Byrne said that he is "nervous but excited" to take on this new role in the school district. Dr. Byrne has served as the Director of Technology and the Assistant Superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and assessment before taking on this new position. Both Dr. Ross and Dr. Byrne have been incredibly receptive to these changes in position.

With the introduction of BLOC Scheduling and a problem-based learning initiative for the upcoming school year, it is imperative that the Superintendent of Schools is prepared to handle any unforeseen challenges. Dr. Ross and the School Board have confidently stated that Dr. Byrne is prepared and will have the guidance necessary to ensure that this transition in educational structure is seamless.

As Dr. Ross resigns, Blind Brook is not nearing an end, but a beginning. Dr. Ross's skills and degrees will be most useful in the position of Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Facilities, marking the beginning of an even more efficient and productive year in Blind Brook's history.

Election Season

By Lauryn Weintraub '20

On May 31, Blind Brook students gathered to listen to speeches from their classmates and vote for their student government representatives for the 2019-2020 school year. Students can run for Senate which is in charge of planning school-wide events like Homecoming and Pep Rallies; Congress, which deals with representing students' issues to the administration, Board of Ed., and PTA; or Class Officers, who plan fundraisers and events for each grade.

Every year, there are six open spots for Congress, five for Senate, and four for Class Officers. However, the juniors elect five Class Officers because one more representative is added for senior year. People can first start running in 8th grade in preparation for their freshman year, although, the beauty of elections is that new people can be elected each year.

For the actual elections, all grades gathered in separate areas of the school to hear their classmates deliver speeches. Candidates from every grade sought to justify why they were running and explained their plans for the upcoming year if they were elected. Everyone running is only allowed to run for one branch of government, and they need to hand in signed petitions prior to the elections to qualify. In addition, Congress and Senate students must attend at least one of their 7 a.m. meetings in order to run at elections. In addition to the general election, Congress and Senate both hold internal elections where they vote for board members. Class Officers do not have any special elections for board members because all the officers work together and only represent their respective grade.

Senate recently held their board elections for four board positions: Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, and President. Junior Matt Pariser was elected as President of the Senate after three years of dedication to the club and serving this year as Vice President. He's looking forward to an exciting year filled with fun and spirit and wants to see the school get more involved moving forward: "Creating QR codes that will be posted around the school will give students a chance to 'Speak Up Speak Out Speak To Senate', and QR codes for students to request songs for morning music." Congress has yet to elect their board members—Secretary, Parliamentarian, Vice President, and President—for next year, but Alex Weiss is running unopposed for the President position and is looking forward to the endless possibilities for next year: "I'm really excited to see the members who have joined in the past few years take over more responsibility and become leaders within the school."

However, student government is not just about the board members since everyone involved takes part in bettering Blind Brook and representing the needs and requests of their fellow classmates.

Congress	Senate	Class Officer
Senior: Daniel Croce Sean Keilman Nicole Rosenzweig Ben Simon Shivani Thanneer Alex Weiss	Senior: Emily Faustino Lily Janjigian Michael Lieberman Joe Kohn Matthew Pariser	Senior: Anna Campbell Evan Dogus Matthew Rose Amanda Weinberg Lauryn Weintraub
Junior: Zach Berger Anna Leland Chloe Ng Abby Ochs Justin Schuster Alexy Theuerkauf	Junior: Nick Chien Laura Penn Sydney Savage Lindsay Schwartzman Lauren Wexler	Junior: Darah Greenbaum Ellie Sternschein Emma Wagner Jesse Zimmerman
Sophomore: Ben Jaffe Archana Kumaran Josh Rosenblut	Sophomore: Katelyn Faustino Jack Kohn Jack Miller Madison Muoio Zach Van Gelder	Sophomore: Ben Berk Jordan Cassuto Jenna Kamin Shira Mallah

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Arts & Entertainment

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Sports

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2018-2019

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Graduation. One word, but it means so much to high schoolers, and students anywhere. It is the word that justifies all of our work. If we never graduated why would we be showing up to class or studying for tests—besides for the sake of learning of course. It amazes me that this day is actually here. The fact that I am currently writing this editorial is pretty crazy in itself, but you get the point. For so long everything has felt so far away, but now it is actually here. While you are reading this, I could very well be sitting on the stage right in front of you waiting to receive my diploma.

For years, my classmates and I have been awaiting this day, but it is indeed bitter-sweet. Since 2006, I have been a part of this very special Blind Brook community. I have recognized almost every face in every hallway since as long as I can remember. The small, close-knit community that is Blind Brook is part of what makes saying goodbye so hard. Growing up with the majority of my classmates allowed me to gain the confidence and sense of security I had not only throughout High School but throughout all the years of my education at Blind Brook.

I would like to think all of the wonderful people who are reading this editorial are loyal Focus readers, but sadly I know that is not the case. Parents, siblings, and grandparents alike may be wondering why you are seeing my face and reading my editorial right now. Well, it is this editorial that is a prime example of how Blind Brook students can grow throughout their four years in high school. Starting as a staff writer freshman year, becoming Web Editor last year and finally Editor-in-Chief this year, I could not be more grateful for Focus in allowing me to develop my journalism skills when the classroom could not. Without Focus I would never have been able to understand that journalism is a career I wanted to pursue. In the fall, I will be attending journalism school, and would not have had the determination to do so, if it weren't for Focus. The ability to apply skills outside of the classroom is extremely valuable, and Focus gave me that opportunity.

I could not have made this issue possible, or any, this entire year without the help of many people. First off, I would like to thank my parents for their endless support and encouragement throughout high school. I would also like to thank Mrs. Deborah Dubin and Ms. Stephanie Jacobs for constantly being my go-to for anything, and always having an open ear. I could not thank my entire staff enough for always picking up the slack when needed and taking initiative. Mr. Andre Soto also played a large role in the production of our issues and I thank him for supporting me every step of the way. Additionally, I need to thank Mr. Mark Greenwald for letting me into his office whenever to just talk or ask a question (or two). I also need to thank all of my English teachers throughout the past four years who have encouraged me to pursue my dreams and develop my skills as a writer. Lastly, a huge thank you to everyone who continues to support Focus and developing the skills of every aspiring journalist who walk through the halls of Blind Brook.

Congratulations to the Class of 2019! I wish everyone the best in all future endeavors.

Jack Wells

Jack Wells
Editor-in-Chief



Photo courtesy of Jack Wells

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

Senior Awards

Faculty Awards

- *Leadership* - Carly Kabot
- *Participation* - Lucy Shearer
- *Service* - Jack Wells

Departmental Awards

- *Excellence in Photography* - Paige Tankel
- *Excellence in Business Education* - Daniel Malley
- *Excellence in English* - Adena Kibel
- *The Pati Sherlock Creative Writing Award* - Carly Kabot
- *The Valerie Weimar Memorial Award for Poetry* - Alisa Mejia
- *The Journalism Award* - Jack Wells
- *Tom Reistetter Math Award* - Matias Goldfeld, Agustin Otero
- *Mike Dockwiller Award* - Nate Crennan
- *Outstanding Achievement in Instrumental Music* - Agustin Otero, Noah Sergio
- *Dedication to Instrumental Music* - Lisa Brady, Sydney Klein, Malena Otero, Sabrina Schwartzman, Andrew Silverstein
- *Outstanding Achievement in Choral Music* - Julia Short
- *Dedication to Chorus* - Julia Morlino
- *Senior Science Award* - Lisa Brady, Agustin Otero
- *Mad Scientist Award* - Matias Goldfeld
- *New York Microscopes High School Biology Award* - Matthew Giuliano
- *Excellence in History* - Carly Kabot
- *Jean Hurley Memorial Award for Citizenship* - Rebecca Weiss
- *Thespian Award for Outstanding Senior Performance* - Julia Morlino, Julia Short
- *Thespian Participation Award* - Amanda Cappelli, Salvatore Morlino, Emma Stevens
- *Theatrical Renaissance Award* - Mackenzie Drangel, Isabel Steinberg, Jack Wells
- *Excellence in Spanish* - Michael Borrelli, Carly Kabot
- *Excellence in Italian* - Gabriel Landau, Agustin Otero, Malena Otero
- *Community Service Award in Memory of Ms. Barbara Sunshine Sitner* - Carly Kabot
- *Steven J. Piccolo Memorial Award* - Dylan Polombo
- *Dr. Carlos A. Lithgow Memorial Scholarship Award* - Julia Rosenberg

- *The Bruno M. Ponterio Award for Excellence in Social Studies* - Bryan Wei
- *The Bruno M. Ponterio Award for Excellence in Humanities* - Bryan Wei
- *The Dave Centofanti Memorial Scholarship* - Isaac Grodin, Evan Ketchabaw, Paige Maizes
- *Ted Reed Memorial Scholarship Award* - Christopher Bucci, Alisa Mejia
- *James F. Spano Scholarship Award* - Lisa Brady, Bryan Wei
- *Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from Nita M. Lowey* - Bryan Wei
- *American Association of University Women Writing Award* - Carly Kabot
- *American Association of University Women Outstanding Student* - Hannah Smith
- *Geraldine and Charles R. Gevertz Human Relations Memorial Award* - Thomas Chason, Andrew Silverstein
- *Prudential Spirit of Community Award* - Eric Wagner
- *PTA Scholarship Award for Character Development* - Julia Rosenberg, Ryan Wallace
- *The George Trautwein PTA Scholarship Award* - Agustin Otero
- *The Kyle Frand Award* - Samantha Kalt
- *Senator Shelley B. Mayer NYS Citizenship Award* - Lisa Brady
- *Rye Brook P.B.A. Criminal Justice Memorial Scholarship* - Gabriel Landau, Emily Savino
- *Port Chester Teachers Federal Credit Union Award for General Excellence* - Rachel Harris
- *The Wegman’s Scholarship* - Emily Savino
- *The Kiwanis Club Scholarship* - Leo Huy
- *Glen Schuster Memorial Scholarship* - Rohan Dayal
- *40/40 Club Scholarship* - Michael Borrelli
- *The Blind Brook Community Service Award* - Karyn Handler, Rebecca Reichman
- *The Blind Brook Enrichment Program Scholarship* - Evan Ketchabaw, Joelle Maitland
- *Office of Attorney General Triple “C” Award* - Evan Ketchabaw
- *New York State Scholarship for Academic Excellence* - Agustin Otero
- *National Merit Pfizer Inc. Scholarship* - Adena Kibel, Kidar Kooverjee
- *Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents Achievement Award* - Lisa Brady, Agustin Otero

Junior Book Awards

Alex Chao	Peri Glick	Lily Janjigian	Alexander Weiss	Charlie Schloss & Gabriella Fern
<i>Brown University Book Award</i>	<i>Bryn Mawr College Book Award</i>	<i>Cornell University Book Award</i>	<i>University of Rochester Frederick Douglas & Susan B. Anthony Award</i>	<i>Saint Michael’s College Book Award</i>
Sydney Mayer	Daniel Croce	Jacob Lewis	Nikhil Sharma & Aliza Kibel	Wyatt Hauben
<i>Oberlin College Alumni Book Award for Achievement in the Science</i>	<i>Columbia University Book Award</i>	<i>Yale University Book Award</i>	<i>Dartmouth College Book Award</i>	<i>University of Rochester Xerox Award</i>
Martin Gonzalez	Lauryn Weintraub	Shivani Thanneer	Bryan Moroch	Sabrina Vuong
<i>University of Rochester Bausch & Lomb Honorary Science Award</i>	<i>University of Rochester George Eastman Young Leaders Award</i>	<i>Brandeis University Book Award</i>	<i>The Rensselaer Medal</i>	<i>Wellesley College Book Award</i>
Mitchell Saunders	Abraham Baker-Butler	Lauren DeMarco	Nicole Rosenzweig	Livia DeLuca Almeida
<i>George Washington University Book Award</i>	<i>Harvard-Radcliffe Book Award</i>	<i>Mount Holyoke College Book Award</i>	<i>University of Pennsylvania Book Award</i>	<i>Tulane University Book Award</i>

Senior Awards Ceremony

By Rebecca Weiss '19

As the end of the school year approaches, many exciting things are in store for seniors including prom, graduation and senior options. However, one of the more unknown senior traditions is the senior awards. While Blind Brook is not focused on awarding students for every little feat, this is one instance where numerous students are recognized for their outstanding achievements throughout their high school career. The ceremony took place on Tuesday, June 4 in the auditorium at the high school.

Every year, a committee comprised of school faculty from many different subject areas and disciplines convenes to nominate students for the 60 awards that they have. The awards cover any topic from academics to community service to the arts. Awards are given out in every subject area based on GPA and other criteria such as leading discussions. For the awards in each subject the respective teachers can all nominate students and they deliberate within the committee. However, for subjects where there's only one teacher, that teacher gets to choose the winner by themselves.

"The most important aspect of picking a winner for each award is making sure we choose the person who best matches the specific award," said Mrs. Decker.

While many of the awards are academic-based, there are also many awards that come from other areas. Students can earn awards for their choral or band accomplishments as well as community service. The community service award is determined by Mrs. Romm, since she's the one that keeps track of it. In addition, students can receive awards from outside organizations or awards in memoriam of specific people.

The senior awards ceremony is an important event for the seniors despite having a lack of recognition. Although sports teams give out awards every year for the best athletes, many other aspects of high school have very few ceremonious moments. As a result, this

ceremony is a nice little way to recognize those who have excelled in these fields. Like any awards ceremony, it also allows the students to reflect. When the recipients think about the award they'll receive, they will certainly think back on their rigorous four years of high school and all that they have accomplished. Additionally, it instills pride in many students who worked extremely hard and now have substantial proof that their dedication and time didn't go unnoticed. This awards ceremony is also important as it is one of the last times that many of the students will be together in a moment purely about success and positivity. Each and every student who receives an award feels like all their effort and time finally paid off.

However, aside from celebrating past achievements, award ceremonies are also about motivating students to continue to work hard in their future. Throughout high school, many students solely work towards the goal of getting into their dream college. High school is about learning from classes and learning from experiences. Many students can fail to see that through maintaining tunnel vision focus on one goal. Learning is a continued process that is a journey, not a destination. Award ceremonies foster this idea by showing students that what they do will be recognized by others. On the other hand, students should be motivated by themselves and should work hard regardless of the recognition they could potentially achieve.

Before the ceremony, the students know only that they were invited to receive an award. It's not until the actual ceremony that students found out what award(s) they won. While some students were surprised at their awards, many felt validated for the hard work they had put into that subject. 47 students received at least one award with some receiving multiple. Some awards came with scholarships to help fund the recipient's college education, while others came with gifts like books or gift cards. Overall, it was a great night as the senior class came together for one of the final times to recognize their outstanding achievements.

Senior Explore Life Outside of the Classroom

By Abby Ochs '21

Classes did not end for all students last week, Seniors have been out of classes since May 3. So what have they been up to? The overwhelming majority of students participated in the Senior Options program. Getting a taste for the real world, Senior Options enables students to experience the workplace in a field of their choice. The high school has been providing this experience for students for many years, proving to be successful. This internship program ensures that students can have an adequate suggestion of the real world before heading off to college while also giving the anxious-to-graduate seniors a chance to have independence. Experiencing internships gives students an outlet to apply the skills and knowledge they have learned throughout high school into the workforce and the community.

In regards to the actual work that Senior Options entails, seniors have many different realms that they can pursue: an internship, community service, independent projects, or an internship/independent project combination. Some seniors may prefer to fulfill an independent project, such as a research essay or a podcast, while others may actually intern at anywhere from a country club to a doctors office.

However, the seniors do not get off scot-free. They are responsible for a four-page paper that outlines their experience at their internship. Additionally, they are required to turn in a slideshow with pictures from their workplace as well as a daily log which highlights their day-to-day activities. With all of this completed along with the required 25 hours per week, seniors can receive their diplomas.

Charlene Decker has been the lead force in Senior Options for quite a while. Decker does many things such as conducting on-site visitations at student's internship sites, making sure the seniors stay organized, and keeping track of the entire senior class throughout the duration of this program. Seniors have time to choose and develop what they want to do with their internships, which takes lots of care-

ful planning between both the teachers and the students. Senior Options mentors such as Dr. Colin Byrne and Marko Markolovic have been extremely helpful in keeping track of the senior's individual works of study and making sure that they stay on top of their schedules. At these weekly meetings that students have with their teachers, they discuss the importance of networking, the use (or non-use) of cellphones during work hours, and any other questions that they might have.

Students themselves have given extremely positive feedback about this program. The general consensus is that it is a great experience to be able to learn in a place that isn't necessarily the classroom. Michael Mariam, a senior who will be attending Emory in the fall, has taken a lot from the Senior Options program. For the past few weeks, he has been interning at the Metropolitan Golf Association in Elmsford where he has been helping out in the communications department. The type of work he has been doing is extremely immersive in applying school to the real world. In Mariam's eyes, the program "gives students a chance to get a taste of what working is like and proper etiquette". To him, it is important that the school continues on with the program for other reasons besides experience too. He believes that students can "form relationships and may even be able to use them after college when looking for a job." If a student realizes through interning somewhere that that is the path that they want to stay on, they can now use the new connections they have made to aid in doing so.

Overall, this program has done wonders for Blind Brook seniors. The mission statement of senior options sums it up perfectly: "Senior Options will be a culminating activity available to all eligible high school seniors. It will enable students to enhance their education by encouraging them to utilize their knowledge skill in an area of personal interest outside of the traditional school setting."

Let's Give Up on Giving Up

By Rachel Sosin '20

The famous football coach Vince Lombardi once said, "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." As ill informed as this statement is, it has caught on as wisdom. America loves to win, and in our society, we put so much pressure on the idea of winning that it shadows everything else. It is no wonder that the moment some athletes feel that winning a game is beyond their reach, they give up. Why play if you aren't going to win? I'm sure their logic says that if you are going to lose anyway, you might as well not be exhausted doing it. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

There is no problem with wanting to win. It's the desired outcome. But losing should also remind us that the real desired outcome should be feeling proud of ourselves and knowing our self-worth. Failure doesn't have to mean that everything is over, it means that there are more steps you have to take to get to where you want to go.

And, who knows, in the end you might just get what you're looking for.

Everyone wants to root for the underdog, but those amazing victories wouldn't happen if the players gave up in the middle. During The Miracle on Ice, the United States Olympic hockey team beat the all-powerful Soviet team in the 1980 Winter Olympics. At not a single point throughout the whole game did the American college athletes give up, and their results speak for themselves. The only way to be a part of one of those amazing stories is to keep persevering.

This ability to fight through adversity and keep going is called grit. In her best selling book, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, Angela Duckworth argues that grit is a predictor of success in nearly every aspect of life. One finding, as summarized by American Public Media, goes as follows: "At the elite United States Military Academy, West Point, a cadet's grit score was the best predictor of success in the rigorous summer training program known as "Beast Barracks." Grit mattered more than intelligence, leadership ability or physical fitness. Sticking with something, even though it's hard, is one of the most important

things we should be learning in life.

Everyone loves a comeback story. Unfortunately, these comeback stories are not common, especially in high school when it's easy for players to lose their confidence. Take the 2019 Blind Brook Girls Varsity Lacrosse team, for example. We were down by two goals at the end of the first half. Two goals in lacrosse can easily be gained back. However, my teammates all walked off the field with their heads down. With a pep talk from our coach and captains, everyone found their optimism by the time the second half was about to start.

Sadly, it didn't last long. The minute the clock started running, the other team scored another goal. We still had almost the whole half yet to play, but at that moment, all of the fight drained out of our team. Our opponents had beaten us, and yet the clock said the game was far from over. Why did they give up? It was not physical exhaustion, because these same athletes can play a full game with ease. It was emotional, and the motivation was gone.

It seems as though giving up also sprouts from the burning desire of our generation to seem perfect to the outside world. Because everyone wants to "look good," they forget that it is okay to fail. People give up because trying is painful and difficult, and when losing seems inevitable, that pain and difficulty overpowers and stops a person from fighting on and possibly failing. Jonathan Haidt summed it up perfectly in his new book, *The Coddling of the American Mind*, when he described "Trigger Warnings". These are warnings that college professors are now encouraged to give, if something in their curriculum might be more dense. For instance, college students can refrain from doing assignments based on *The Great Gatsby*, because of the misogyny and violence portrayed in the novel. These students want to censor themselves from things they don't like, because they don't want the world to know they once had hardships.

There is power in feeling like a winner when in reality you might have lost. Facing problems head-on until the end makes you look even better than someone who has never failed.

Gluten Not-Friendly

By Hannah Marasa '20

On a college visit, my parents and I were given passes to get food in the cafeteria, which has become one of the most important aspects when looking at colleges for people in the same situation as I am. We asked the employees at the cafeteria about their gluten-free options. The woman working there showed us a section with no safeguards against potential cross contamination. I ended up eating a partially rotten apple for lunch and later overheard her saying that "none of these allergies existed when I was a kid." It was quite disturbing to think that people would be skeptical of a serious medical condition. I have an autoimmune disorder called celiac disease, which up to three million Americans have, according to the FDA. If I eat wheat, barley, or rye, it results in an immune response in which my body attacks my small intestine. The only solution is a strict gluten free diet. Unfortunately, this woman's reaction is an all too common belief my family and I have encountered.

Ever since my diagnosis, I have wanted to be able to eat in restaurants with my friends and family like I used to. There is a misconception surrounding gluten free food in that those working at the restaurant view one as a snooty person on a fad diet. This dangerous assumption leads to the necessary precautions not being taken because people do not regard it as a real condition. I cannot stand in the kitchen and make sure correct precautions are taken. I have found that restaurants and college kitchens do not take into account the issue of cross contamination when preparing and labelling their dishes. A 2018 study by the American College of Gastroenterology found that 32% of gluten free dishes served in restaurants contain gluten, which results in symptoms that range from having a mild skin rash to becoming violently ill.

Individuals with celiac disease cannot walk into a restaurant and order off the menu. Before eating at a restaurant, I have to go through a checklist and do research and even with all of that, there is no guarantee that the food will be safe. Restrictions and regulations need to be put into place in any food establishment when labelling something gluten free because it presents an un-

known and unnecessary danger to the consumer. It does not seem outrageous to ask for food to be honestly labeled. If I was told that I could become ill from the food, I would not eat there.

Another concerning issue I have discovered is the confusion in labelling food. The term "gluten friendly" is used in many restaurants and colleges. It might bring images of a smiling stock of wheat, but that is far from what it means. It means that the main ingredients do not contain gluten, but there is no guarantee that the food does not contain gluten. The lack of clarity in labelling should not be allowed in any food establishment because this gives someone a false sense of security when seeing "gf" written on a menu. Gluten friendly has the same initials as gluten free which can lead to confusion and sickness.

Several states such as Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Michigan now have laws that require at least one person on staff at all times to be trained in food allergies. This policy should be put into place nationwide. The National Restaurant Association in 2012 found that 43% of restaurants admitted that they did not train their staff on food allergens. It is appalling to think about that restaurants are willing to serve people food that can result in them becoming violently ill. People with allergies or medical conditions should not be ostracized because food is unsafe and restaurants need to be honest with their customers. Eating is a social activity in college and life and students should not be isolated because of their medical condition. There need to be more regulations because people with celiac disease should be able to eat more than a piece of rotten fruit. I would greatly appreciate if you join me in a dialogue and contact legislators about the need for stricter laws governing restaurants. You can contact Westchester County Executive George Latimer at (914) 995-2900 and New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer at (914) 934-5250 to advocate for the change we need. You can also contact the Food Allergy Research & Education Organization for further information on how you can help make a difference.

The Value of Earning a Dollar

By Aliza Kibel '20

Whether I am babysitting or working as a camp counselor, my high school work experience has provided me with invaluable lessons and skills necessary for college and beyond. As high school students, it is important that we begin to accept job responsibilities in preparation for college and adulthood. While having a job can take time away from homework and studying, it enables teenagers to gain self-confidence, practice financial responsibility, and prepare for their future careers.

For many high school students, college is the first time they are away from home for an extended period of time. Having spent their childhood years being cared for by a parent or guardian, college bound teenagers may doubt their self-sufficiency. Work experience teaches teenagers independence, as well as builds self-confidence and self-reliance. Adolescents who held jobs at ages 14 and 15 had higher self-esteem at ages 16 and 17, which, in many cases, according to the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, proved to be long lasting. Teenagers can take pride in their paycheck knowing that they earned their pay as a result of their hard work. Self-confidence and self-reliance during adolescence eases fears and doubts teenagers may have as they enter adulthood, creating a more comfortable transition.

Financial education is essential as teenagers begin their adult lives. The Durham Voice, a community news publication serving Northeast Central Durham, states that teenagers need experience managing their finances beyond an allowance supplied by their parents. An allowance, unlike self-earned money, does not provide teenagers complete financial independence. The ability to pay for expenses, such as gas, food, entertainment and clothing, teaches teenagers the value of a dollar. These financial skills are indispensable as teenagers head to college and work towards a future in which they financially support themselves.

Irrespective of the job - whether scooping ice cream, babysitting or working at a law firm - teenage work experience provides long-lasting benefits. Employment Policies Institute (EPI) published a study by the University of Virginia and Middle Tennessee State University showing that high school work experience directly translates to a life of higher hourly wages, increased annual earnings, and less time spent out of work. In the six to

nine years after graduation, teenagers who worked part-time jobs in their senior year earn wages 20% higher than their peers who did not work. These benefits are not only experienced in the short-term. Individuals in their 40's and 50's are still reaping the benefits of teenage work experience, earning wages 9.4% higher than their peers who did not work as teenagers.

Lack of time can make having a job difficult for high school teenagers already engaged in school and extracurricular activities. Oftentimes, the flexibility of a part-time job such as babysitting or dog walking can accommodate a busy schedule. Teenagers may choose to babysit only once a month, thereby gaining necessary work experience without interfering with school work or extracurriculars. Teenagers can also find a job over the summer when they have more free time. Significantly, managing busy school and extracurricular schedules along with a work schedule teaches teenagers important time management skills that will be helpful in the future.

I still remember the first time I babysat my neighbors, Madison and Austin, one Friday afternoon during my freshman year. As I walked into their house, I was a little nervous but excited to be able to earn my own money for the first time. When Madison and Austin's mom came home a few hours later and I received my earnings, I felt accomplished and independent. Since then, I have continued to babysit throughout high school. In addition to babysitting, I have also worked over the summer as a camp counselor. My increased free time in the summer enabled me to fulfill the commitments of a full-time job, which was extremely rewarding. Both work experiences have boosted my confidence and given me practice managing my own earnings. I now feel more comfortable entering the adult workforce and providing for myself in the future.

Teenage work experience is essential for a smooth transition into college and adulthood. Acquiring a job as a high school student may seem daunting at first. However, programs such as Youth Employment Services (YES) are designed to help high school students obtain jobs. Blind Brook students can take advantage of YES services by contacting the Rye Brook coordinator, Emma Saghir, through their guidance counselor or the school's website. Every teenager should take advantage of these resources to gain work experience and prepare for a successful future.

Perfectionism: A Form of Self-Sabotage

By Amanda Weinberg '20

The pursuit of perfection is perpetual and exasperating. Intangible and abstract, perfection is an illusion — a realm of thought beyond reality. Here at Blind Brook, there is a common misconception that success should be effortless — good grades without studying, fitness without exercise. We look up to “flawless” individuals, comparing ourselves and feeling resentful. We overlook, however, the underlying, interminable hours of hard work — the insecurities and realities associated.

As the rising seniors, our class is known for comparing ourselves to each other. Driven by unattainable expectations, many of us base our self worth on numbers — GPA, standardized test scores, even Instagram followers. Internalized and irrational, these social norms demonstrate our ill-willed desire to succeed, as perfectionism, a combination of high personal standards and critical self-evaluations, is rampant among teenagers. It is a pervasive epidemic that must be halted immediately, for the welfare of high schoolers is at risk.

Perfectionism is often discerned as ideal, for a constant need to prosper can increase one's motivation, promoting productivity. Although this is true to a certain extent, there is a fine line between those who aim high and perfectionists. While high achievers strive for progress and growth, perfectionists obsess over failures and are unable to derive satisfaction from their accomplishments. This focus on deficiency is menacing, for it fosters impractical standards and renders individuals susceptible to low self-esteem rates.

Social Psychologist Thomas Curran Ph.D., in his article “Perfectionism Is Increasing Over Time: A Meta-Analysis of Birth Cohort Differences From 1989 to 2016”, states that from 1898 to 2017, rates of adolescent perfectionism have increased by 18%. By 2050, 1 in 3 teens will be plagued by the epidemic. The cause can be attributed to society's gravitation towards materialism. According to the Pew Research Center, eighty-one percent of Americans born in the 21st-century report that becoming materially rich is among their most important life goals, a figure that is almost 20% higher than those born in the 1970s. From blog posts to daily tweets and Instagram posts, materialistic lifestyles are displayed in great detail on social media

platforms. The visual culture created by these platforms establishes a public image that, according to Shelly Grabe, a professor in social psychology at the University of California Santa Cruz, amplifies one's own body image concerns and senses of social alienation. Social media glorifies the idea of the perfectible self, often leaving adolescents feeling incompetent and unaccomplished, since perfection does not exist.

For high schoolers, self-esteem gut punches go beyond social media. The American education system is infested with merit-based comparisons and quantified evaluations. Intense competition for prestigious college admissions heighten perceptions of educational calibers and competitive dynamics. Students are classified by numerical standings and, as a result, associate meritocratic status with self-worth. Curran states that U.S. students take some 112 mandatory standardized tests between pre-kindergarten and twelfth grade, all of which classify students into academic factions and categories. It is no surprise that high schoolers obsess over perfect achievement, for we have been trained to define ourselves based on a small window of a percentile. Students attach themselves to these numbers, because they stand as a means of comparison. The drive to stand out against one's peers is dangerous, for it elicits a desire for perfection.

While perfectionism is complex and can be difficult to treat, those who choose to address it need to start somewhere. With internal compassion, perfectionists can use already acquired ambitious character traits to inspire positivity, rather than self-hate. It is imperative that we, as high schoolers, understand how important it is to take care of ourselves and acknowledge that perfection does not exist. The first step is to make more realistic personal goals. Prioritize mental health and learn to be okay with our mistakes. Not only can this positive mindset combat perfectionism in one's own life, but it has the power to create a healthy environment for others to find self-love as well. It is essential that we encourage those around us with positive feedback, rather than providing judgment and stirring insecurities further. We need to celebrate the joys and beauties of imperfection as a normal part of every day. We need to stop comparing ourselves, for we are more than just a set of numbers.

Viewpoints

Senior Viewpoint

By Julia Morlino '19

From being the freshman who couldn't find a place to eat lunch on the first day of school, to a senior graduating and starting the next chapter of their lives, I can confidently say that my experience as a student at Blind Brook was one that I will cherish forever. I remember missing the seniors when they went away for Senior Options, going to preprom to see all the girls in their gorgeous dresses, and watching the rock transform each year with a new coat of paint and signatures. Getting to experience those things from a senior's point of view was all I aspired to take part in. Now, looking back on those dreams of mine, I wish I had taken a step back to enjoy the moment I was living in right then. Although four years seemed like a century back then, it felt nothing of the sort. Now that the moment I have been waiting for all my life is finally here, I wish it hadn't come so soon. I am going to miss daily gville runs with my friends during lunch, the rowdy sports games that made me lose my voice, and the exciting feeling the whole class gets

when finding out the test is open-note.

Not only is it bittersweet to be leaving the Blind Brook School District as a whole, but also to be leaving my classmates, whom I have known since kindergarten. Getting to watch your grade grow up before your eyes is a very special experience Blind Brook students get to have, and it is surreal to believe that all the kids who danced at The Snowball together will soon be parting ways. I am so thankful for the bonds I have formed within my grade and others, because I know they are bonds that will be kept throughout college and beyond. I can't wait to hear about the amazing things my friends and peers are going to accomplish in college, and I am happy to have been a part of their high school career and watched them grow into the intelligent and kind people they are today.

As I take my last right turn into the high school, I will never forget the friendships I have formed, the teachers I have loved, and the memories I have created here at Blind Brook.



Photo Courtesy of Julia Morlino

Not Shy, Just Thinking

By Sabrina Vuong '20

“Are you still listening to me?”

Yes. As an introvert, I like to gather all my thoughts and ideas in one basket before I present them. I'd also like to give you the chance to finish your train of thought. Just because I don't respond to every word you say doesn't mean I've stopped listening. I'm just thinking about it. I've been like this all my life, and all my life I've been overlooked because of it.

Growing up, there seemed to be no solution to my plight. My only models for behavior outside of the house were my peers who talked nonstop and the television shows depicting children having the time of their lives in large groups. When I felt like I had nothing substantial to contribute, my classmates were quick to whisper, “She doesn't like talking to anyone.” When I had something to say, people talked over me because they assumed I didn't have anything to say. I tried to create a space for myself during lunchtime, only for someone to plop themselves in front of me a few seconds later, saying I looked “lonely” and asked why I was sad. “It's okay,” they plowed on excitedly, “I'll keep you company. Mind if my friends sit here too?” I didn't understand. How could something that seemed to give them endless amounts of energy drain so much of mine?

Children are told to think before they speak, that if they don't have anything nice to say, they shouldn't say anything at all. They're praised for being “mature” and are welcomed when they act quiet and respectful, unlike their rowdier peers. Yet in America, as they grow older, this trait becomes frowned upon. Being quiet has been noted as a token quality that makes introversion unfavorable. The first descriptions that come to mind are “shy, antisocial, lonely,” as noted by Carly Breit from Time Magazine. When asked to describe extroverts, the first words are along the lines of “outgoing, talkative, friendly.” Yet introverts can be friendly, and extroverts can be lonely. These generalized stereotypes make it difficult for introverts to pursue higher paths. The official websites of many colleges state that they seek students with leadership qualities. In The Atlantic, journalist Tara Burton notes that leadership is culture-specific, and as a result, that

definition of “leadership” is ultimately biased by this American ideal of extroversion.

According to Allison Abrams, a licensed psychotherapist from Psychology Today, it's not that introverts are antisocial, it's that their work process flows better when left to their own devices. The energy they gain from working alone improves their final result. However, schools have been using group projects and participation points that benefit the extrovert. They miss the value of individual work, the value of being able to have time and space to think to oneself. There is an underrated power in quietly listening, and those who say less know more than they let on. Introverts wait for the right moment to express their ideas, and prying an answer out of them is like taking a cake out of the oven before it's finished baking. The ability to listen is just as important as the ability to speak, yet because of the silence it's easily disregarded.

We as humans aren't fans of silence. Studies from the “Orfield Labs Quiet Chamber” in Minnesota have shown that absolute silence can begin to drive people insane in under an hour. The term “awkward silence” has made itself popular for describing the lapse in conversation, but why? According to psychotherapist and philosopher Piero Ferrucci, our minds perceive silence to represent solitude and death. When arguing, people will often repeat statements, thinking that filling the silence with their opinion will enforce their point. It seems that the louder someone is, the better they are. Yet, somehow, some of the influential people of today's world are introverts. Bill Gates, Elon Musk, and Steve Wozniak are all introverts who managed to create some of the most successful companies.

But even the most accomplished introverts needed some extraversion along the way, including taking up speaking classes themselves. There is worth in being able to waltz into a room and strike up a conversation with a stranger, but the amount of time we spend talking to people should not determine what our ideas are worth. Next time someone sits quietly, don't assume they have nothing to contribute. Silence doesn't mark the end of a conversation, but the beginning of a new one.

Final Farewell to Mr. Levy

By Rebecca Weiss '19

After many decades of long days preparing for concerts and giving lessons, the school's beloved band teacher, Howard Levy is retiring. Levy's passion for music is unparalleled and has inspired students since he started. While band often gets overlooked as just another elective it requires hours of practice and dedication, as well as tireless support from Levy. Not only does he devote his time in school, he also runs many bands during after school hours, such as the jazz ensemble. In addition, he helps students practice every year for NYSSMA, New York State School Music Association.

"Mr. Levy's dedication to his students and the Blind Brook Music Program is incredible," said senior Agustin Otero, who participated in various bands throughout his high school career. "The sheer amount of time he gives to his rehearsals, arrangements, transcriptions, and concerts is inspiring to me. And that confidence and faith he has in us has been the motivation for all of my musical endeavors, at Blind Brook, and in the future."

Although students are only required to have two full art credits, Levy's passion is what drives band students to finish out all four years. He encourages his students and makes sure they get individual attention with the smaller group lessons by instrument. Aside from putting in the effort to teach his students, Levy also ensures that they are ready for their biannual concerts. Here, Levy makes sure to recognize everyone else before even thinking of acknowledging his crucial role in organizing these concerts. The students, however, always make sure that Levy's essential contribution gets recognized. Year after year, Blind Brook High School students perform well at NYSSMA, and thus get accepted into many prestigious county and state bands. They often credit to their success to Levy, saying that he instills in them the passion to do NYSSMA in the first place. Although the students do not currently know who is taking Levy's place next year, they would be lucky to get anyone as passionate and dedicated as him.



Photo/Drew Rosenberg
Mr. Levy stands in front of the Wind Ensemble to conduct.

Fun in the Summer Sun

By Nicholas Laterza '22

The sun is out. The days are longer. The weather is warmer. Summer is right around the corner. As the 2018-19 school year is coming to an end, a fantastic three months of endless activities, glorious adventures, and countless memories begins.

From new summer jobs, to astonishing travels, or even just relaxing at home, there are various activities that Blind Brook students will be participating in this summer. Freshman Amelie Schlueter talks about working in her dad's office. Of course, her main incentive is to earn money, but she will also gain a learning experience. On the other hand, freshman Damian Otero and Glenn Curreli plan on hanging out and going to the park with friends.

When it comes to summer activities, getting exercise is always a good, healthy option. Otero said, "I'm probably going to work on my basketball and soccer skills, and just get in overall good shape." There are plenty of places teenagers can go to play sports, stay fit, and have fun. With places always open like Pine Ridge Park, Crawford Park, and even the Blind Brook school fields, there is always a welcoming outdoor area within a few miles.

While relaxing at home may sound nice, traveling is also a favorite activity every summer. The possibilities are endless, ranging from destinations across the globe to more local places like New York City. Curreli visits Italy every year, excited to see his family members that live there. "I love Italy because I like relaxing on the beach and it is just an amazing place, with great culture, cuisine, and just everything about it." Italy is just one of many places people are traveling to where they can enjoy magnificent food. As a food lover himself, Curreli is looking forward to eating pizza, pastries, and splendid desserts in Italy.

Rather than traveling to far, exotic locations, many Blind Brook students plan on heading into the city with friends. With New York City just a quick train ride away, it is a very popular option for many students. Freshman Kelly Ma aims to explore the city with her sister. "I'm excited because it'll be a new experience and it'll give me more independence," said Ma. New York City is a very fun and active choice for students looking to venture out and explore restaurants, tourist sites, and other fascinating scenes.

With the blazing hot sun and 80-degree weather, the beach is a pleasurable way to escape the heat. Both Otero and Curreli intend on going to the beach many times this summer, and so do many other students as well. Popular beaches like Tod's Point and Jones Beach are a great way to have fun with friends while enjoying classic summer activities, like swimming, ice cream, and playing sports in the sand.

Aside from endless activities, Summer is not all fun and games. Most high school students are working in many different kinds of jobs. A big portion of these jobs include camp counseling. Many freshmen, sophomores, and juniors are now able to become counselors after years of experience attending various different sports camps, sleep-away camps, and day camps.

Despite heavy interest in working at camps, there are other popular jobs like nearby stores or beach clubs. At beach clubs, teens can get jobs as lifeguards, which is a fun way to earn money this summer. With multiple beach clubs, for example, Bailiwick and Coveleigh nearby, working by the pool is a very favorable job for students at Blind Brook this summer.

Although working at camps is very common this summer, students are attending them as well. Sophomore Amanda Winton is excited about a sleepaway basketball camp she is going to for a week in Pennsylvania. Otero is also attending various basketball camps throughout the summer, however much more local than Winton's. With basketball being a very popular sport at Blind Brook, multiple students attend camps to improve their skills.

From the looks of it, this summer is going to be fulfilled with all sorts of activities, travels, and jobs. The students at Blind Brook are counting down the days until they are stress and homework free, as a thrilling three months of excitement are nearing.

Alabama Abortion Law

By Zachary Schutzer '22

Over the past hundred years, technology has developed tremendously. A result of this advanced technology was social media. Social media has had some controversy as many positives have come from it, but also many negatives too. A discussion that cannot be ignored is the impact social media has had on politics.

Social media has made it possible for information, news, and more to spread at a lightning-fast rate. This could be a disadvantage for some people or a huge benefit for others. Back before the invention of social media, people would have to wait for the newspaper or radio station to find out information about elections, news, etc. Social media has changed that completely. With one click of a button a person can find out information in seconds. In the political world, information is everything, thus social media has effectively become another flow of information for politics.

The positives of the rapid flow of information that is social media in politics revolves around the increased transparency politicians now have with their followers. Social media has allowed politicians to get their perspective on issues out to the public and their supporters without having to meet face to face. They can express their feelings or their solution to the issue with a single post or tweet. This can be a massive boon for a politician because with this interaction comes feedback. This feedback can help them get more popular if the feedback suggested is an idea liked by the people. Our current President of the United States, Donald Trump, had this to say about social media: "I like it because I can get my point of view out there, and my point of view is very important to a lot of people that are looking at me." This explains President Trump's high usage of Twitter while campaigning during the 2016 United States Presidential Election.

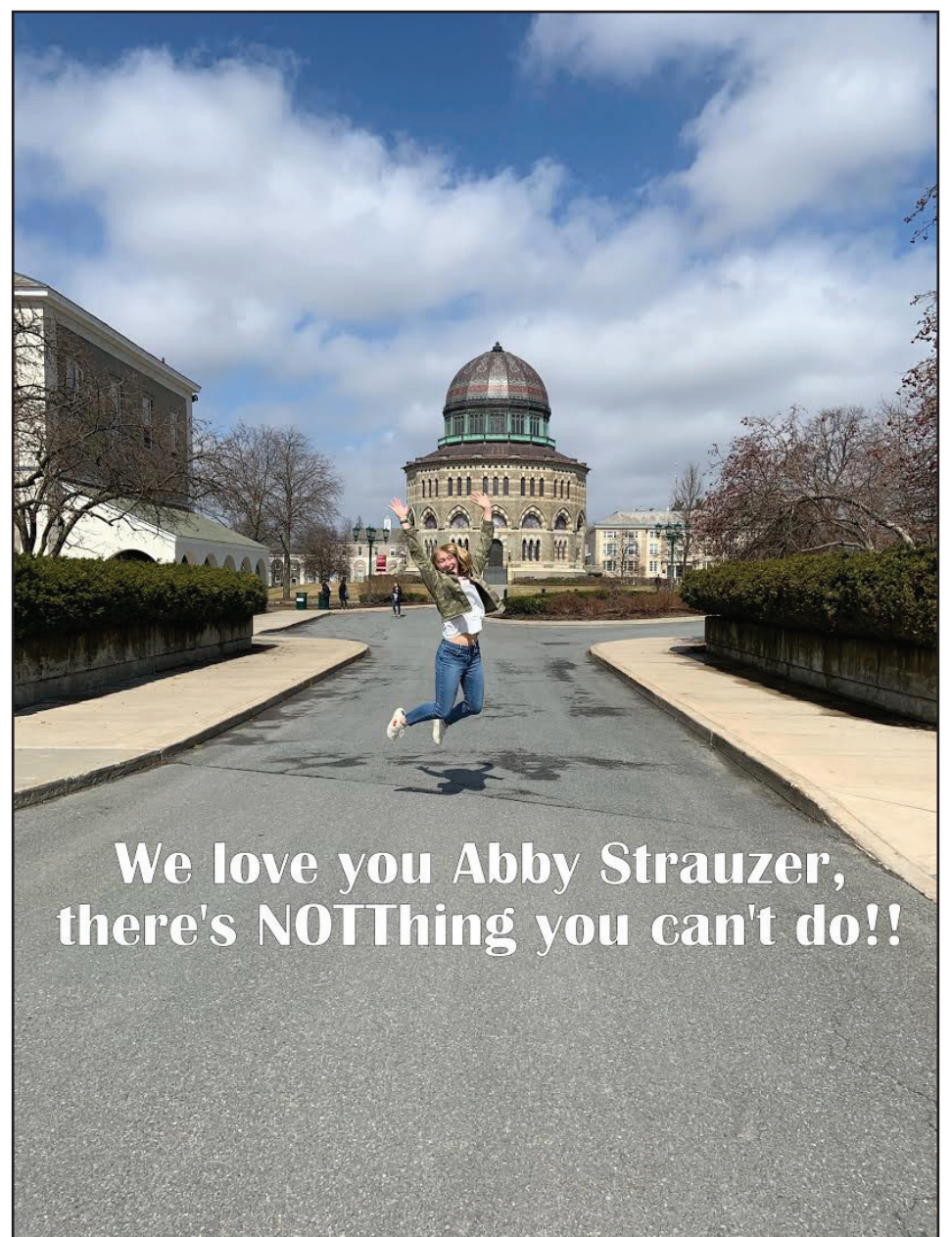
Another huge benefit of social media for politicians is they don't have to spend so much money on advertisements. Advertising on social media is much cheaper and more efficient than buying a TV advertisement or a slot to put their advertisement on a billboard. A third advantage of Social Media is politicians that are less known have a chance to "go viral" and get known. This can be especially convenient for politicians that are just starting their career and need to get their word out. 2020 Democratic candidate Andrew Yang has propelled his campaign from complete obscurity to one of the few candidates standing out of the 200+ candidates through his use of social media, garnering a massive following online that affectionately refers to itself as the "Yang Gang." With 79% of the American population having social media, it really isn't that difficult to "go viral" if the correct marketing techniques are used. However with all this good, social media also has a fair share of negative impacts for politicians.

The most infamous case of the dangers of social media are the hoax articles that seem reputable online, referred to as fake news. Fake news has a tendency to irreparably damage reputations of not only politicians, but also celebrities and even everyday people. This can especially hurt a person running for an office position. If a bad rumor was started and spread like wildfire all over the Internet, that politician's career would be seriously compromised or even completely decimated. Rumors

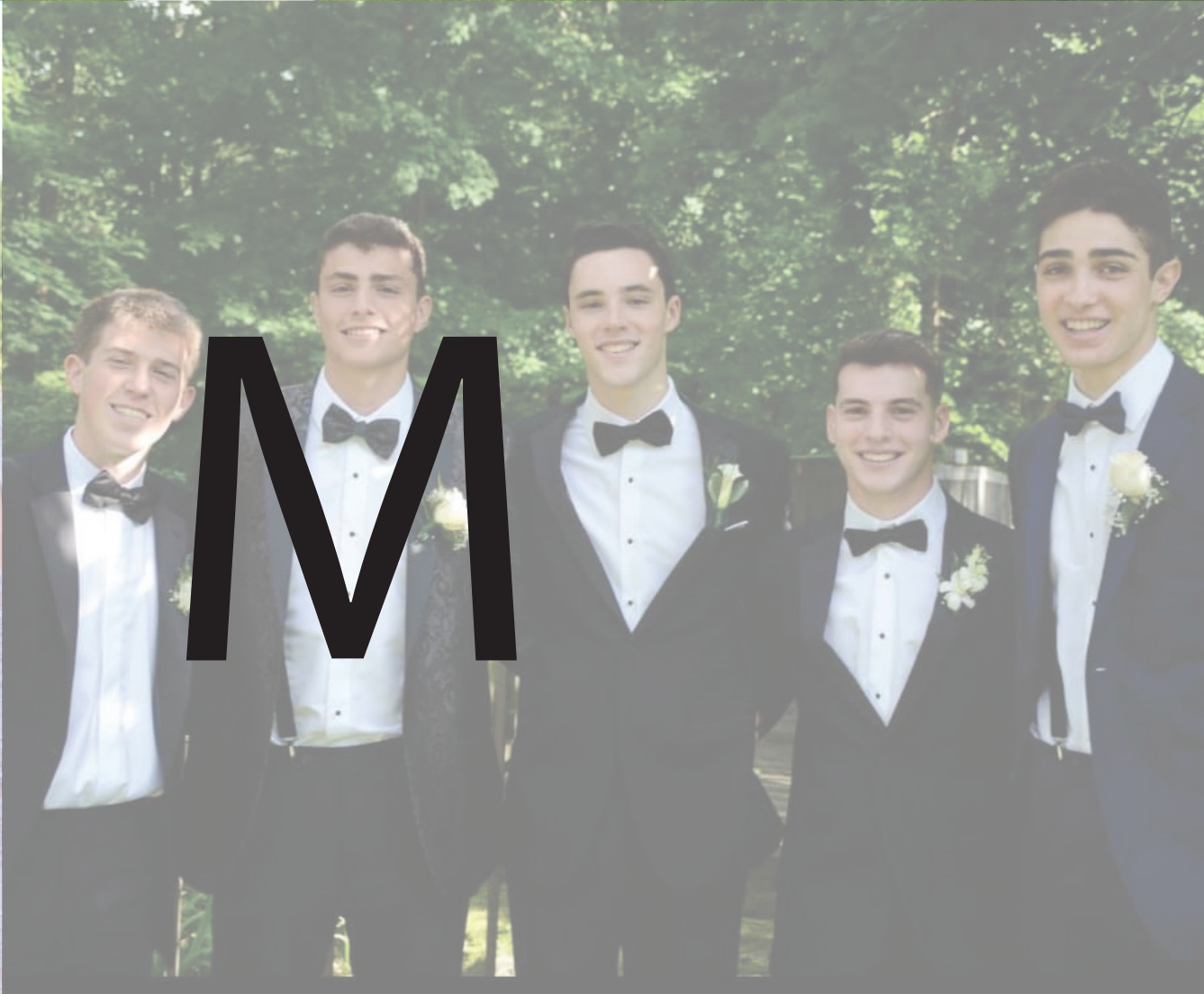
are hard to stop, so once they have taken over, there really is no solution. The worst thing about it is that the rumor in question could be completely false and have zero substance to it. It doesn't matter, their reputation could be gone in an instant due to something they never even did or said. Every day, politicians must be ready to have their world set on fire by one fake news article and be ready to put it out immediately or suffer drastic consequences.

Another issue with social media is the ability of people to send messages directed to the politician. People can say extremely harsh and rude comments towards politicians and these politicians try to stand up for themselves and respond in a statement that could make them look bad. There is no filter on social media so you can say whatever comes to mind, and these politicians might not realize right away what they could get themselves into by saying something. Although they can delete the comment right away, nothing that you say on social media goes away for good. Additionally, if there is something a politician tweeted years ago that was inappropriate, that Tweet could resurface while they are running for election and their chances of winning drop significantly.

Although social media has many positive aspects in the political world, one negative action done on social media could ruin a politician's entire career. As long as politicians are careful when they tweet or post, they should use social media to its maximum potential to help win the election to run for their position.







Second Generation of AirPods Announced

By Amanda Weinberg '20

The rumors are true! On March 20, 2019 Apple announced the release of a second edition of the popular AirPods. Who could blame them? The first edition AirPods were a huge success. Described as “incredibly popular” and a “runaway hit” by Apple CEO Tim Cook, AirPods have been a large source of Apple’s revenue over the past year—earning \$3.9 billion revenue in the March quarter, and over 35 million units sold in the year of 2018. Since their initial launch in December 2016, AirPods have consistently went out of stock on Apple’s website, due to a high demand.

AirPods are Apple’s first Bluetooth headphones. Conveniently wireless, this wireless device has earned the title of Apple’s most popular accessory product. They come with a charging case and an included iPhone charger. AirPods are accessible on the iPhone, AppleWatch, iPad, and Mac.

Although Apple’s AirPods have evident successes, Apple is always working to improve and develop their products—hence the 2nd Generation AirPods. The 2nd Generation AirPods were released in March of 2019. You can buy these AirPods with a wireless charging case for \$199.00, with a regular charging case for \$159.00. You can even purchase a separate wireless charging case for \$79.00. The wireless charging case is new to the 2nd Generation AirPods, with an LED indicator and a Qi-certified charging mat. You can, however, still charge the case with the customary Lightning port.

One of the most significant changes made to the 2nd Generation AirPods is the battery life. Although the 1st Generation AirPods received a lot of recognition for their 15 minute charge time, there have been a lot of complaints about the devices’ battery life. The 2nd Generation AirPods now guarantee more than 24 hours of battery life, up to five hours of listening time on a single charge.

Apple has also incorporated a “Hey Siri” functionality to the new AirPods. With this, users can control volume and song choice without moving a muscle. This function also allows you to play/pause music, skip songs, and turn off audio content completely. You can request specific playlists, add to your “favorites” and make phone calls. Siri can even tell you your battery life status, temperature, and the date! With a H1 chip, the 2nd Generation supports a stronger Bluetooth connection, facilitating the “Hey Siri” feature.

Despite various functionality changes, no design changes have been made. The 2nd Generation AirPods look identical to the 1st Generation and still only come in white. Maybe there will be a third edition with other colors in the future!

NASA Plans to Open Space Travel to the Public

By Charlie Schloss '20

Ever wanted to go to space? For the first time in recorded history, all of us would-be astronauts may have that opportunity. Early this June, NASA announced that they would soon offer the public a chance to travel to the International Space Station (ISS). This plan coincides with the decision by the Trump Administration to shift focus to space exploration, pushing NASA to send astronauts back to the moon by 2024, and on to Mars in the 2030s. With companies such as Space X becoming increasingly competitive (they recently announced plans to explore Mars in the coming years), it comes as no surprise that NASA is being challenged by the U.S. government to expand its range of services and explore more of space. Prior to the announcement, the ISS had never been open to non-scientific access.

The commercialization of the ISS will allow people to book trips and stay in space for extended periods of time, which will unleash incredible creative potential. This could be very beneficial for production studios; actors could visit space and film movies that provide a truly realistic depiction of life in a gravity-free environment. This would also give the common person a chance at an opportunity to experience and live the daily life of an astronaut for a considerable amount of time. Although the cost for a trip to the ISS is projected to be exorbitant (millions of dollars for a round trip), affluent clients will no doubt be lining up, and NASA plans to use the proceeds to fund upcoming projects, including eventual expeditions to Mars.

Perhaps more significant, funding generated from travel to the ISS will allow NASA to establish its first all-women expedition in space - Project ARTEMIS is the agency’s first initiative to send female astronauts to the surface of the moon. This would be a historic decision, considering that every previous NASA moon landing was executed by all male astronauts crews. Project ARTEMIS could also lead to women astronauts becoming more involved in the future trip to Mars.

The recent announcements by NASA leave the public with many unanswered questions: When does NASA plan to begin allowing commercial access of the ISS? Will this lead to commercial access to other parts of space? Will the program ultimately become a commercial success for NASA? While we may have to wait some time for the answers to be known, it is exciting to know that NASA may soon be able to send people to Mars and make further advancements in space travel.

**Congratulations Leo
& Best Wishes to
BBHS Class of 2019!**

*Be Bold. Be Courageous.
Be Your Best*

- Gabrielle Giffords



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Saving Lives with Artificial Intelligence

By Sam Lazar '21

It seems that each time you turn on the TV, a commercial flaunting the ingenious IBM Watson machine and a new ability that it has developed is played. Watson, among Siri, Cortana and other innovations are just a few instances of the ever-so-dynamic field of Artificial Intelligence. While it may seem as if artificial intelligence has already made huge impacts, the potential for AI is truly unlimited. Recently, doctors and scientists have agreed on the premise that new innovations could assist in accurate readings and diagnoses for lung cancer, a leading cause of death in the United States. Scientists believe that AI could even be better at detecting cancer than humans and that the employed technology would reduce the amount of error committed. In addition, AI could boost cancer detection by 5%, and lower the rate of people being falsely diagnosed with cancer by 11%. Early detection is key for both stopping the spread of tumors and improving patient outcomes, and one way to accomplish this is through improved screening.

A study was done to determine the effectiveness of said AI. One of the authors of the study, Mozziyar Etemadi, MD, Ph.D., a research assistant professor of anesthesiology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, explained how scientists are looking to find “earlier and more accurate diagnosis of cancer, and hopefully, better outcomes for patients.” Artificial Intelligence contains an embedded configuration, known as machine learning. This phenomenon allows for the machines to conduct more specific, deep investigating and integrating of information. An AI-created algorithm, deduced via deep learning, was recently used to detect lung tumors in

CT scans. Additionally, a separately derived algorithm marked malignant lung nodules on low-dose chest computed tomography. This deep learning can provide an automated image of the lungs, which can, as a result, detect potential lung cancer at earlier stages than ever seen in modern medicine.

Screening for the disease by using a low-dose computed tomography (CT), an alternative to chest x-rays, has been shown to reduce mortality from 43% to 20%. Despite the significant progress, AI can further improve on that. Essentially, deep learning trains computers to imitate the action of a human brain. This means that computers can practice learning different information through machine learning, in order to develop the intelligence to complete tasks such as x-rays, cat scans, etc. This would allow these inventions to do things with increased levels of accuracy. It seems as if AI machines could also play a significant role in the doctor's office: If doctors are pressed for time, perhaps an AI machine could provide you with a diagnosis from your cat scan. Doctors are able to see this data from a cat scan of a patient, and thus, they are left to make a diagnosis for the patient on their own.

With a multitude of benefits in the medical world and many other fields, AI is truly remarkable. Artificial Intelligence will continue to aid both patients and doctors looking for quick and accurate answers to cat scans and other tests. While impressive strides are being taken in the field of medicine, new innovations continue to emerge and take industries by storm. The use of Artificial Intelligence seems only limited by one's imagination, as AI continues to advance at an exponential, unprecedented rate.

Measles: Formerly Eliminated, Now in Half the States in the Country

By Nicole Rosenzweig '20

The United States declared measles eliminated in 2000. However, in the past six months, 28 states have confirmed cases of this viral disease. This adds up to the greatest number of cases of the disease in the country in over a quarter of a century. How did measles rebound from its supposed elimination in 2000 to a widespread epidemic?

Although measles was not observed in the United States for a full year in 2000, there are more Americans today who are unvaccinated and pose a risk to the rest of society. As a result, the “herd immunity” that protected communities for years is diminishing. “Herd immunity” is strongest when the highest number of people are vaccinated in a given community. Thus, vaccinations do not only help those who directly receive them; they have shown significant benefits for babies, immunocompromised individuals, people with specific allergies, or others who cannot be vaccinated.

Measles is typically characterized by white spots in the mouth and skin rashes, but its symptoms can become far more dangerous. Some symptoms include a high fever, cough, runny nose, and watery eyes. The disease is especially harmful among babies and young children.

The prevalence of measles spiked dramatically this past year. In 2018, there were 372 reported cases of measles in total, according to data collected by the CDC. However, the same data showed that, as of June 6, 2019, there have been 1,022 cases of measles reported this year. Therefore, last year's measles cases have nearly tripled in just the first half of this year.

According to the CDC, vaccination has reduced measles deaths by 80% since 2000, thereby saving more than 21 million lives worldwide. Outbreaks have persisted on a global scale, so the nation is continually at risk of disease if people are not vaccinated.

Federal health officials have reported that parents' refusal to vaccinate their children is the root cause of measles outbreaks. Many

parents have cited false reports that vaccines cause autism, while others have justified their decision with religious ideals. However, the measles vaccine has proven to be effective time and time again. According to a CNN report, the recommended two doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine have a prevention rate of approximately 97%, while one dose is roughly 93% effective.

Most of this year's cases of the disease have been in New York, primarily in Orthodox Jewish communities of Brooklyn, Queens, and Rockland County. Yet, many of the Orthodox Jews distrust vaccines for reasons unrelated to religious doctrine. They have been a vulnerable group to the propaganda of anti-vaxxers—people who oppose vaccination—because some Orthodox Jews avoid technology and mainstream life. This renders these communities susceptible to the misinformation spread by anti-vaxxers about the supposed harms of vaccination. This dilemma, coupled with the sheer number of Orthodox Jews living and praying amongst each other, has fueled the outbreak in New York.

The recent measles outbreak has been a major setback in public health. The CDC predicts that the United States could lose its elimination status if similar outbreaks continue throughout the rest of the year. The elimination of measles in 2000 was a huge accomplishment for United States healthcare services, but this long awaited achievement is now threatened by anti-vaxxers and circulating misconceptions.

In response to recent outbreaks, the CDC released a measles outbreak toolkit for healthcare professionals. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, this toolkit includes resources to help medical staff, patients, and parents understand the disease and the benefits of vaccination. Hope is not entirely lost for communities across the nation, as many organizations are working to increase vaccination rates while rooting out widespread misconceptions about vaccines.

The Problem of Personhood

Columnist Chloe Ng '21

The past few months have seen a wave of new abortion restriction legislation, with nine states passing laws that restrict or prohibit abortions with few exceptions. Some of these laws, known as heartbeat laws, could make abortions illegal as early as six weeks into pregnancy. While none of the laws have yet gone into effect and most are likely to be contested, this trend is a very concerning one from a scientific perspective.

Abortion, defined as the intentional termination of a pregnancy, is a very controversial subject. In a landmark supreme court case in 1973, *Roe v. Wade*, a woman's right to choose to have an abortion was protected up until the point where a fetus could survive outside the womb. The current cutoff is around 24 weeks into pregnancy. Although this ruling has since been upheld, attempts have been made to decrease its scope and there's a chance that it could be overturned in the future.

The debate over abortion is one that is deeply rooted in religion and ethics. At the core of the controversy is the issue of when an unborn human should be recognized as a person with fundamental rights. Many proposed abortion policies have been based on cultural milestones in the process of fetal development rather than scientific ones. These points for when a fetus qualifies as a person have been thought to be conception, detection of heartbeat, birth, or first breath. While there is little consensus over what really defines a person, a good starting point would be the presence of consciousness. Science has advanced considerably since the original court case forty years ago, so perhaps it can be used to shine a light on the matter.

Every human life begins with the fertilization of an egg. A sperm cell and an egg cell combine to form a single celled organism called a zygote. This zygote becomes an embryo as it divides and grows for the

next few weeks. Beginning at six weeks, the point at which many new laws would outlaw abortions, cardiac activity can be detected through a vaginal ultrasound. However, the term "heartbeat" is misleading, as the activity is just the vibration of the fetal pole, a tubelike structure that will eventually become a heart. It isn't even until two weeks later that the embryo becomes a fetus. At that point, it is only half of an inch long. For comparison, that's half the diameter of a quarter. The brain function of an 8 week old fetus is extremely limited, so if consciousness is required to be a person, then an embryo at six weeks into pregnancy certainly doesn't make the cut.

The question of consciousness is a tricky one. What we do know is that the complex system of nerves necessary for it doesn't connect until after the 24 week mark. Furthermore, the perception of pain doesn't develop until about 29 weeks, when the fetus' thalamocortical pathways start to work. Therefore, from a medical standpoint, to argue that an embryo or fetus before the 24th week of pregnancy is equivalent in personhood to a fully functioning adult is just absurd.

In addition to the fact that fetuses are unable to think or feel for the first two trimesters of pregnancy, and therefore should not have their rights prioritised over an adult's, there are a lot of reasons to be concerned about anti-abortion laws. Not all allow for exceptions for rape or incest. Not all are created with the interests of all people in mind. Currently, abortion is one of the safest medical procedures.

Access to abortion that is safe, legal, and effective saves women's lives. However, as with the time before *Roe v. Wade*, if women are denied access to abortion, they will be forced to turn to more dangerous methods of terminating a pregnancy. The bottom line is that the possession of a group of cells shouldn't invalidate the fundamental right that every person deserves: the right to decide what to do with their own body.

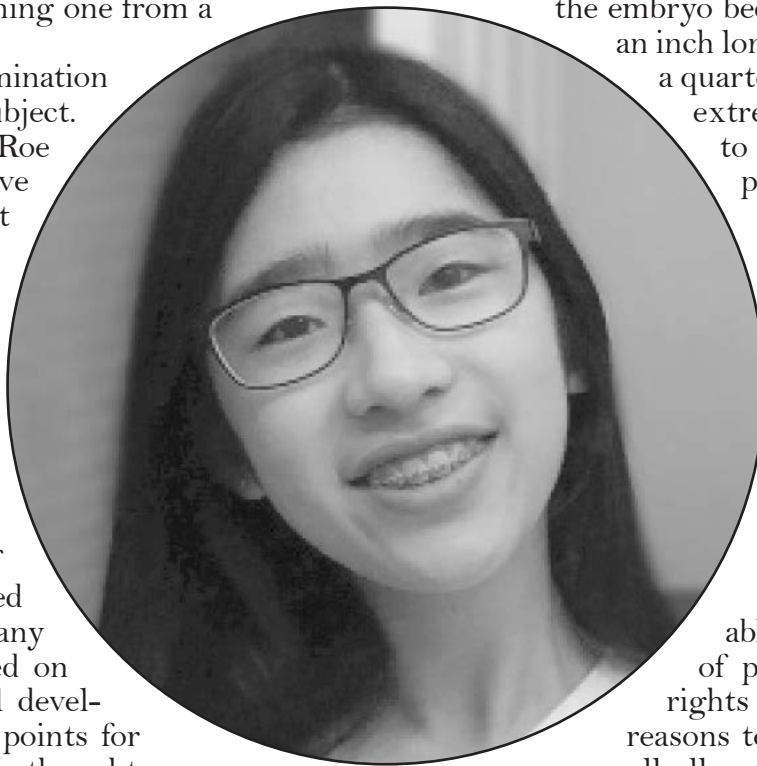


Photo Courtesy of Chloe Ng

Curious About the Weather this Summer? Here's the Nation's Forecast

By Ben Simon '20

As graduation comes and goes and school is out of session, parents and students alike all look ahead to the same thing: The upcoming Summer. Whether working at home, traveling the country or anything in between, there are clear skies and comfortable temperatures throughout the United States. Here is the forecast for this summer:

New York:

Unfortunately, the forecast for Rye Brook in July is not the best. The month has scattered thunderstorms throughout, with a handful of consecutive days with heavy rain. Most of the precipitation is predicted to arrive during the week, however, as most weekends throughout the month are sunny and range from 82 - 84 degrees. In addition, the July 4th forecast calls for a celebration, as there are clear skies starting on that Thursday and carrying out for the next 10 days. The month of August looks to offer beautiful weather, as there are mostly sunny skies projected for over two-thirds of the days. It will be a relatively cool month, as the average temperature is anywhere from 78-85 degrees. Looking far ahead, as school eventually is right around the corner, there are projected Thunder and Lightning Storms on Labor Day, or Monday, September 2nd. Similar weather is predicted throughout the Westchester County area and New York City, while there are forewarnings of more rain out in Long Island.

Across the Rocky Mountains:

Due to an extended snow season across the range, the region will take the entirety of July to truly warm up to its usual, beautiful summer forecast. Despite the unusual amount of tornadoes spiraling throughout the country, it is projected that this Summer will have its lowest recorded amount of the storm in Tornado Valley for the past few years. Cities like Park City, Vail and Aspen are predicted to offer sunny skies and low 80s carrying out until the end of August. Additionally, the world renowned national parks will each have an amazing upcoming forecast. You can expect cooler temperatures and clear skies at Yellowstone National Park, Bryce Canyon and more.

On the West Coast:

The temperature on the Pacific Coast is predicted to resemble the annual seasonal climate: Very warm, sunny, and scattered rain showers. In Los Angeles, you will experience two straight months full of clear skies, anywhere from 80 - 90 degrees. Several hours north, those in San Francisco will enjoy much cooler temperatures with plenty of sunlight. The average temperature of the city throughout the summer is 74 degrees. Although mostly sunny in the northwest, the forecast calls for more rain in cities such as Portland or Seattle. Further South, those in Sedona, the Grand Canyon or Reno will take caution in clear skies, with temperatures rising to as high as 103 degrees.

Rachel Zegler: Living the Dream As West Side Story's New Maria

By Lauryn Weintraub '20

For a theater kid, there's nothing more exciting than to play the leading role in a school musical, besides the ultimate dream of playing the lead in a Hollywood musical. For 18 year old Rachel Zegler, that dream is coming true. On January 14, 2019, it was revealed that Steven Spielberg was directing a remake West Side Story, with the lead role of Maria being played by none other than Rachel Zegler.

The high school senior was ecstatic when she got cast, posting on her Instagram account: "As a colombian-american woman growing up in this day and age, strong roles like Maria are so important. To be able to bring that role to life—a role that means so much to the hispanic community—is so humbling. I hope you're all as excited as I am." Spielberg had the intention of representing the Hispanic community in America when he went into casting. Zegler was able to audition because of an open casting call she saw on Twitter, and sent in a video of her singing. Over 30,000 Latino actors sent in video submissions, but at the end of the day the part went to Zegler.

Not only is playing one of Zegler's dream roles a thrilling opportunity, but she also has the privilege of starring alongside a cast of amazing actors. The male lead, and Maria's love interest Tony, will be played by Ansel Elgort, a famous actor who is well known for his parts in The Fault in Our Stars, Baby Driver, and the Divergent series. Ariana DeBose, a veteran of Broadway, is going to play Maria's

friend and confidant Anita, while Rita Moreno, who was Anita in the original 1961 film, will be making an appearance as a revamped character.

Zegler is from New Jersey and has been doing local theater for as long as she can remember. For Blind Brook students though, her name might sound familiar since she has often been nominated for the annual Metropolitan High School Theater Awards, or "Metros". Although she has been nominated numerous times, she has yet to win one. However, Zegler was nominated this year for actress in a leading role for her portrayal of Fiona in her high school's production of Shrek the Musical, so she still has a chance to win. However, Fiona is not the singular strong female character Zegler is accustomed to playing. Last year she was Belle in her high school's production of Beauty in the Beast, and in the past she has starred in shows like Les Mis, Thoroughly Modern Millie, Legally Blonde, Rent, and 42nd Street. She even did a production of West Side Story a few years ago and played Maria, but she never imagined to return to the character in such a grand fashion.

For Rachel Zegler, life turned upside down. She went from a passionate theater kid to a famous actress overnight. The movie is set to be released in December 2020, and from there Zegler's career will likely skyrocket. Yet, all it took for her to achieve stardom and live out her dreams was to have enough courage to send in a video of her singing.

James Charles and Tati Westbrook: The YouTube Scandal Taking the Internet By Storm

By Lauren DeMarco '20

If you watch Youtube videos or use social media, you have probably heard about the James Charles and Tati Westbrook scandal. To understand the whole story, let's look at the beginning of James' career. He started off as a young makeup artist with a very small following. Looking for ways to gain popularity on social media, James reached out to Tati Westbrook, a famous makeup artist on Youtube. James looked up to Tati as a role model and she decided to take him under her wing and guide him through social media. Tati put time and effort into helping James out of the goodness of her heart, as she never expected anything in return from him. Tati even let James do her makeup for her wedding. On top of this, she flew James out to her wedding because he could not afford a ticket.

Over time, James grew more and more famous on Youtube and Instagram. He gained millions and millions of followers and had a large group of supportive fans. His career seemed to be steeply rising with nothing stopping it. James recently came out with a palette collaborating with Morphe that was VERY successful. In addition, James has made many videos and worked with famous people like Kylie Jenner, Kim Kardashian, and Demi Lovato. It seemed as if nothing or no one could stop James Charles. Turns out, he was the one who led to his downfall.

The spark of the scandal was when James decided to partner with the brand SugarBearHair vitamins. The company gave James and his friends VIP passes to Coachella. This would be no big deal and a normal sponsor except SugarBearHair is Tati's biggest competition for her vitamin company, Halo. This angered Tati and she took to social media right away to express

her disappointment. She put time, effort, and money into helping James when he was nothing. Tati was very hurt to see that he betrayed her so easily. This was not the only thing James did wrong. Another more serious part of the scandal had to do with James trying to "trick a straight man into thinking he was gay". At first it seemed there may have been just one man, but then many people claimed James had done this to them. In Tati's Youtube video exposing James, she said that she told him he could not go after this boy because he was straight, and James' response, "Doesn't matter I'm a celebrity," really got people enraged. All over social media right away millions started unsubscribing to James' channel on Youtube. James lost around 3 million subscribers over the course of days going from 16.5 to 13.5 million while also losing around 1 million followers on Instagram. Tati on the other hand gained over 3 million subscribers on Youtube after she posted her video of the explanation.

Eventually, things calmed down but there have not been any resolutions. Tati made it clear she did not want to be friends with James. James took a break from social media and came back basically as if nothing changed. He even started gaining back followers and subscribers. Many people have different opinions on this situation. One Blind Brook student Abby Schlactus said, "I think that it was very dramatic and was overpublicized. They should have done it more privately and made sure that everything was the truth with evidence." Abby, like others, thinks the scandal was blown up out of proportion. Overall, there are a lot of different viewpoints. It has definitely been a rough month for James and it will be for a while before he is completely back on track. But for now, he is definitely not going anywhere.

The Passing of the Housing Equality Law

By Jack Kohn '22

As the world develops, its social stigmas evolve as well. As an example, a couple years ago, being a member of the LGBTQ community was illegal. Now, thankfully, that is not the case, and sexual preference does not affect equality in America. Just recently, The United States House of Representatives passed the Housing Equality Act, a bill that would protect LGBTQ people from discrimination in housing, the workplace, public accommodations, and other settings. This bill was first introduced in 2015, but this year, it was added to and revised. The Housing Equality Act will not only make members of the LGBTQ community feel safer within their own communities, but it will also help to further unify America as a whole. Unfortunately, in some states, members of the LGBTQ community aren't explicitly protected from discrimination in the workplace, housing, or public accommodations. Hopefully, this law will incite change and enforce morality in daily life.

The popularity of the Housing Equality Act foreshadows the immense social changes to occur in the future. For instance, in every single state - even the most conservative ones - the majority of people support the act. Moreover, the popularity of the act shows the internal improvements of America stemming from the racism and conservative attitudes from the 1900s. The Public Religion Research Institute found that about 79% of Democrats, 70% of independents, and 56% of Republicans are in favor of laws supporting the LGBTQ community. In correlation with these findings, a large amount of people are still not against ending further discriminations based on differences. For example, some politicians state that the Housing Equality Bill is against their religion. As a result, these lawmakers have proposed a compromise with another bill that would build in exemptions for religious individuals and religious institutions. LGBTQ activists display their issues with this compromise and exhibit their support of the Housing Equality Act. After all, the act passed 236 votes to 173 votes.

The individualism and freedoms exemplified in the United States of America show the country's power to end worldwide social issues. Thankfully, the natural rights granted to American citizens by the U.S. Constitution allow Americans to do whatever, whenever, however. In conclusion, the Equality Act is just the beginning of a larger unification of all Americans and an end to discrimination once and for all. The LGBTQ rights movement is becoming a part of our nation's history, and will stand with other past movements that were also led by the American people themselves.

Enes Kanter vs. Turkish Government

By Bryan Moroch '20

To any NBA fan, the Portland Trail Blazers' center Enes Kanter appears to be an ordinary player in the league. In the eyes of the Turkish government, however, Kanter is a ruthless terrorist determined to destroy their plans for prosperity. While he was a member of the New York Knicks, fans grew to love Kanter for his outspoken and comedic personality. However, what few people realized was that Kanter's outspoken personality had thrust him into a geopolitical situation that no professional athlete is accustomed to. For many years, Kanter was a strong advocate against the authoritarian policies of Turkish president, Tayyip Erdogan. Due to the fact that Kanter used various social media platforms to convey his ideas, the Turkish government deemed his actions to be dangerous propaganda against their country. As a result, his Turkish passport was revoked in 2017 and he was marked as a target of Interpol (International Crime Police Organization). Despite being marked as an international felon and prevented from returning home to Turkey, Kanter is currently safe in the United States as a green card holder. As Kanter lives safely under the United States' government, he continues to ridicule the Turkish government, only raising hostilities even more.

Kanter's open opposition to Erdogan's regime began in 2016 when Fethullah Gulen failed a coup. Gulen is a Turkish cleric whom Kanter is a devout follower of. Kanter and Gulen shared concerns about the authoritative nature of Erdogan, leading to Kanter's support of the attempted coup. After the coup failed, Erdogan launched a purge against anyone suspected of supporting Gulen, a list that Kanter was most certainly a part of. In the three years since then, Erdogan's control over Turkey has only grown stronger, causing significant backlash from Kanter. He took to social media in 2017, referring to the president as the "modern day Hitler". As time went on, he would continue to criticize Erdogan. When news of Kanter's alleged terrorism became more public, he decided to mock the situation, claiming the only thing he terrorized was the basketball rim. As it stands, Kanter's chances of returning to Turkey or even leaving the United States are extremely bleak. In fact, when the Trailblazers played an away game against the Toronto Raptors in March, Kanter opted not to travel to Canada with the team. Despite the inconvenience the situation has made on his basketball career, Kanter continues to criticize Erdogan, who banned Trail Blazers' games from being televised in his country. Although Kanter's opposition may be justified, he has only escalated the conflict in recent months and decreased his chances of returning home.

Liberty and Justice for Who

Columnist Carly Kabot '19

Over the course of the last few years, our nation has undergone an ideological revolution on both ends of the political spectrum, the voices of the radical minority silencing the moderate majority. As one side pushes, the other pulls—progress is stifled, and partisanship endures only for this vicious cycle of going tit for tat to exacerbate itself once again. Both parties vye for more than votes, but for the last word in endless battles from the floor to social media, catalyzing a new age of government that creates more problems for itself than it solves. As someone who despises what party politics have become, I have dedicated many of my columns to this subject, my stance more often than not bipartisan—but recent events have catalyzed a deep fear in my gut for the future of our fragile democracy, and left me too disturbed to not comment. Alabama's near-total abortion ban is about so much more than abortion itself, and so much more than women's rights; the extremity of Alabama's new law embodies the decay of a nation that prides itself on being the bearer of liberty and justice for all. When twenty-five men vote to advance a bill that criminalizes abortion for an eleven year old who was a victim of rape or incest, our question should be liberty and justice for who?

Forget a nation of laws—these individuals and those who have followed suit are attempting to prove that America is indeed a nation of men. More than anything, these new developments are a demonstration of control. Yet we must remember that it is also a sign of fear for the progress we have made as a nation in the fight for the fundamental rights of minorities. If we were to never test the limits that others set, they would feel no need to set them at all. History has exhibited that nothing happens in a vacuum; just as the New Right was borne from a tide of liberalism and the landmark ruling in *Roe v. Wade* in the 1970s and 1980s, it is no coincidence that certain conservatives feel the necessity to shift to the extreme following the global Me Too movement. Americans who agree with the sentiments within the proposed egregious legislation are cow-



Photo Courtesy of Carly Kabot

ards, for going to the extreme is far easier than finding compromise through establishing common grounds.

One common ground that legislatures have recklessly neglected is the Constitution and the importance of precedent set by the Supreme Court. These lawmakers are ridden with hypocrisy, and quite frankly, the media—and especially our generation—have done a tremendous job in making them look like utter buffoons. Not only have they allowed their own beliefs to inhibit rational thinking, they have violated the principle of the separation of church and state, often citing religious reasons for their drastic measures. What they fail to accept is that their inability to understand the implications of their actions will inflict both mental and physical harm on countless women, families, and children, despite their justification of trying to protect them. A woman should not have to die attempting to give herself an abortion because male lawmakers decided that she should have no control over her own body; this deprivation of dignity is exactly what those who fear a loss of power aim to create. The only life that is being protected is their life in office.

Care not because you are a woman, or because you have a mother, a sister, a girlfriend—care because you are human, care because you believe in the values our nation was founded upon, care because it is your civic duty as an American citizen. We live in a nation conceived by those who aimed to give us the very thing today's legislators are trying to take away: the freedom to choose. That was why this great nation was first created: so that all could live without the burden of oppression, of tyranny, so that they may have a say in what happens to them and those who come next. Let us not forget all those who have fought before us so that our tomorrow may be better than their today, and call upon ourselves to carry forth their power, their humility, and their voice for change. Democracy only works when we respect the diversity of opinion—no matter what you believe, no matter what choice you make, nobody has the authority to decide for you.

How Does Social Media Affect Politics?

By Zachary Schutzer '22

Over the past hundred years, technology has developed tremendously. A result of this advanced technology was social media. Social media has had some controversy as many positives have come from it, but also many negatives too. A discussion that cannot be ignored is the impact social media has had on politics.

Social media has made it possible for information, news, and more to spread at a lightning-fast rate. This could be a disadvantage for some people or a huge benefit for others. Back before the invention of social media, people would have to wait for the newspaper or radio station to find out information about elections, news, etc. Social media has changed that completely. With one click of a button a person can find out information in seconds. In the political world, information is everything, thus social media has effectively become another flow of information for politics.

The positives of the rapid flow of information that is social media in politics revolves around the increased transparency politicians now have with their followers. Social media has allowed politicians to get their perspective on issues out to the public and their supporters without having to meet face to face. They can express their feelings or their solution to the issue with a single post or tweet. This can be a massive boon for a politician because with this interaction comes feedback. This feedback can help them get more popular if the feedback suggested is an idea liked by the people. Our current President of the United States, Donald Trump, had this to say about social media: "I like it because I can get my point of view out there, and my point of view is very important to a lot of people that are looking at me." This explains President Trump's high usage of Twitter while campaigning during the 2016 United States Presidential Election.

Another huge benefit of social media for politicians is they don't have to spend so much money on advertisements. Advertising on social media is much cheaper and more efficient than buying a TV advertisement or a slot to put their advertisement on a billboard. A third advantage of Social Media is politicians that are less known have a chance to "go viral" and get known. This can be especially convenient for politicians that are just starting their career and need to

get their word out. 2020 Democratic candidate Andrew Yang has propelled his campaign from complete obscurity to one of the few candidates standing out of the 200+ candidates through his use of social media, garnering a massive following online that affectionately refers to itself as the "Yang Gang." With 79% of the American population having social media, it really isn't that difficult to "go viral" if the correct marketing techniques are used. However with all this good, social media also has a fair share of negative impacts for politicians.

The most infamous case of the dangers of social media are the hoax articles that seem reputable online, referred to as fake news. Fake news has a tendency to irreparably damage reputations of not only politicians, but also celebrities and even everyday people. This can especially hurt a person running for an office position. If a bad rumor was started and spread like wildfire all over the Internet, that politician's career would be seriously compromised or even completely decimated. Rumors are hard to stop, so once they have taken over, there really is no solution. The worst thing about it is that the rumor in question could be completely false and have zero substance to it. It doesn't matter, their reputation could be gone in an instant due to something they never even did or said. Every day, politicians must be ready to have their world set on fire by one fake news article and be ready to put it out immediately or suffer drastic consequences.

Another issue with social media is the ability of people to send messages directed to the politician. People can say extremely harsh and rude comments towards politicians and these politicians try to stand up for themselves and respond in a statement that could make them look bad. There is no filter on social media so you can say whatever comes to mind, and these politicians might not realize right away what they could get themselves into by saying something. Although they can delete the comment right away, nothing that you say on social media goes away for good. Additionally, if there is something a politician tweeted years ago that was inappropriate, that Tweet could resurface while they are running for election and their chances of winning drop significantly.

Although social media has many positive aspects in the political world, one negative action done on social media could ruin a politician's entire career. As long as politicians are careful when they tweet or post, they should use social media to its maximum potential to help win the election to run for their position.

Senior Sports Banquet

By Evan Ketchabaw '19

This year's annual Senior Athletic Banquet took place on May 30th, 2019 at Hampshire Country Club. It is a fantastic event every year hosted by the athletic department. The Athletic Director, DJ Goldman and his secretary Lauren Fantone did an amazing job this year putting everything together.

To start the event, Goldman spoke and introduced all the coaches that were attending the event, giving each of them a separate round of applause. Each coach was so special to so many athletes that were at the event and whom were happy to see their coach get recognition. After that, Goldman spoke about this year's teams that made it far into the postseason and had a successful year. The boys' basketball and soccer teams both made it to the section final, but lost both of them in very close games. Regardless, the entire school was behind them the whole time and was proud of all the boys. Many other teams made the postseason too, however Goldman doesn't like to measure success off how many wins and losses a team has, but by how much each individual grew as an athlete and more importantly as a person. This year everyone succeeded in that way.

Later on, Goldman introduced the guest speaker at the event. This year's guest speaker was senior Bryan Wei. Wei was the captain of the soccer team for the past two years and was named All-League three times and All-Section twice. He also played tennis in the spring. His speech was very meaningful and was about his athletic experience during his time at Blind Brook High School. Wei will be attending the United States Naval Academy next fall in Annapolis, Maryland.

Next, Goldman went through each and every senior attending the banquet saying their names, each sport they played for how many years, and if they had any sports award recognition (ex. All-League, All-Section Honorable Mention). Some athletes that were recognized with high achieving awards were Chris Bucci who was the quarterback on the football team, the point guard for the basketball team, and the pitcher for the baseball team. Bucci was named All-Conference and All-State Honorable Mention for basketball and was named All-Section in baseball. Another athlete that achieved a lot was Zach Kornblum. Kornblum was the captain of the soccer team this year and was named the Section One Player of The Year. In addition he was awarded All-League, All-Section, and All-State.

Additionally, there were a couple of awards given out to two male and two female athletes. The awards were named Male and Female Outstanding Senior Sports Person and Male and Female Outstanding Senior Athlete. The Outstanding Senior Sports Person award was named to Lisa Brady and Bryan Wei. The criteria for this award was the demonstration of outstanding work both on and off the field, including the classroom and around the community. The Outstanding Senior Athlete awards were given to Zach Kornblum and Alisa Mejia. The criteria for this award was based on the amount of athletic nominations received. At the end of the event, Goldman reviewed the three athletes that will be playing in college. Senior Matt Giuliano will be continuing his football career at Muhlenberg College as a linebacker. Senior Zach Kornblum will be continuing his soccer career at Emory University and Alisa "Lis" Mejia will be continuing her Division I volleyball career at Quinnipiac University.

At the very end of the event, the Blind Brook athletic community thanked and wished good luck to Ms. Sherri Wagner, who was the Blind Brook trainer for the past couple years. She will be continuing her career as a nurse. We wish the best of luck to Sherri and her future accomplishments.

Congratulations

To the

Class 
of 2019 

Wishing you all the best!

From the

Blind Brook-Rye

School Related Professionals

Clericals, Bus Drivers, Custodians, Nurses,

Teacher Aides & Security Monitors

**“What makes us special
makes us strong.”**

Track & Field Season

By Charlie Schloss '20

The Blind Brook varsity track team had an incredible season this year with many stand out performances and several school records being broken. With a plethora of younger talent building off the team's established seniors and upperclassman, the Trojans have made this season one for the books.

The team's success this season was the result of an accomplished and enthusiastic group of players, across all grades. "I think the team as a whole was way more excited about the season this year and it showed at meets. With a very talented group of seniors graduating this year, I hope that excitement continues next year and hopefully younger kids will want to join and find their potential," junior Lily Janjigian said. "This Blind Brook team is easily the most driven and talented group of individuals our school has ever had," senior Nick Espinal added. "We all worked together to help each other accomplish our individual and team goals. I personally believe that the work that was done by the upperclassmen especially has created a completely different culture when it comes to athletics at Blind Brook. I am more than happy to be a part of it and play my role, as I know that the sacrifices made by my teammates and I have helped revolutionize the program." Similarly, Senior captain Ryan Wallace mentioned that "running with a diverse group of people across all grade levels and seeing that common purpose of being on track bring you all together was a truly unique and beautiful experience."

The Trojans excelled throughout the season, breaking numerous school records. Senior Andrew O'Brien delivered record breaking performances in the 100m race and the 200m race with times of 11.3 seconds and 22.74 seconds respectively. Junior Michael Lieberman achieved a new school record in the 400m race with a time of 51.3 seconds, and Sophomore Nicholas Chien also set a new school record for the 1600m race with a time of 4:59. "The goal is to keep breaking records," Lieberman said. "We accomplished so much this year, and everyone basically did what they hoped for at the beginning of the season, even more. The fact that six or seven of the school records were broken this year means we've got what it takes."

Many players attributed the connections they formed with one another as another major factor that contributed to their triumphs this season. Wallace noted that "track truly was a phenomenal experience. Through the ability to focus on and work towards achieving your individual goals, as well as to bond closely as a team, it was absolutely life changing." Janjigian also reinforced this point, and mentioned "the success of the relay teams showed how we worked really well as a team this year." Nick Espinal remarked, "It's great to leave Blind Brook knowing your team created a foundation for others to build off of and to learn from."

Overall, this season has been a great showing for the Trojans, highlighting their progress and determination to achieve success, with multiple players being honored for their efforts. Andrew O'Brien and Lily Janjigian both qualified for the New York State meet on June 7th. Congratulations to all the record-breakers and the entire team as a whole for an incredible season!



Photo/Vahan Janjigian
Senior captain Nick Espinal runs the 4x400 meter relay at the Glenn D. Loucks Games at White Plains High School

Varsity Baseball Season

By Evan Ketchabaw '19

The Blind Brook boys' varsity baseball team had a very successful season. The team was coached by Adam Massi along with his father, James Massi. Even though the boys came up short in the playoffs, they finished the regular season with a winning record of 12-8. The team's league consisted of Rye Neck, Bronxville, Edgemont and Keio Academy. The boys were able to steamroll through the league, finishing with a record of 7-1. This record of 7-1 allowed the boys to win the league title. This league title was important for the team as it was the first title Coach Massi was able to win in his six years of coaching the team. The team's one loss came against Edgemont, in a series they would end up splitting 1-1. The boys were able to sweep Keio Academy, and Rye Neck.

The 12-8 record earned the boys the four seed in the Class B Section Playoffs. The boys came up against one of their league foes in the Panthers from Rye Neck who they were able to beat twice this season. The game took place on May 20th at Blind Brook and the boys came out ready to play. They swung the bats well and were flawless in the field. The team looked like they prepared well for the playoffs in this game and ended up walking away with an 8-0 win over the Panthers. Senior Chris Bucci pitched a complete seven innings while allowing no earned runs and striking out eight Panthers. Bucci also drove in three RBIs while fellow Senior Chris Hau-ryluck drove in two himself. Senior Matt Giuliano went 3-3 from the plate. The boys would face Westlake in the quarterfinals of the playoffs as Westlake was able to take care of Croton in their opening playoff game.

On May 22nd, the boys played host to the number five seeded Westlake. Unfortunately, the boys were unable to win this game and lost 8-2. The season came to an end and the team finished with a record of 13-9, including games from both the regular and postseason. Even though the season did not end the way the boys wanted it

to, they were able to have a very successful season.

Some of the boys on the team were awarded honors handed out by the section and the league. Seniors Chris Bucci and Zachary Zimmerman won All-Section. Seniors Andrew Winton and Matt Guiliano won All-League and sophomore Frank Savino won Comeback Player of the Year.

Even though the boys exited the playoffs earlier than they would have liked, they viewed this season as very successful and one to be proud of. The boys lost to a very good Westlake team in the quarterfinals of the playoffs. "Obviously it's not the end result we wanted, but we lost to the team who ended up winning the section," Winton said. "Westlake was almost all seniors and a very good baseball team." He was very happy about all the work and effort the boys put into this season, stating, "We worked hard all year and were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to win the league and we battled in all those league games to get those wins. It's the first league title since the 80's for Blind Brook baseball and Coach Massi's first as well. We are ready to see that banner put up in the gym and we are ultimately happy to be a part of Blind Brook sports history." Winton, along with all members on this team, were very happy with all the awards and achievements they earned and accomplished this season.

The team will say goodbye to a very good class of seniors but will have nine returners next season. Junior Bradley Rosen is very excited for next season and looks to build on the success from this past season. "We gained a lot of experience this past season, so now we need to use that experience and be focused and ready to work next season. If we do that I think we'll have another successful year," he added. The team will have a decent amount of underclassmen next season, but if they put in the work and effort throughout the offseason and next season, they will do well when spring rolls around in 2020.

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:
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