

FOCUS

Blind Brook High School Budget

By Nick Laterza '22

With approximately 1,415 students in the entire district, the Blind Brook School District may be small, but the quality of its schools, students, and faculty always remains high. Blind Brook is fiscally independent, meaning that residents vote to approve the district's proposed budgets and are charged taxes in order for the school to suit their needs. District residents have shown exceptional support, as they have passed almost every budget proposal in the past 70 years.

The development of the school budget is a year-long process, with the superintendent having the primary role in its making. The uncertainty in the enrollment of students for each year is a challenge of preparing the budget because it determines the amount of staff needed. Personnel takes up almost 80% of the budget, so predicting these factors is a very important aspect. The projected costs of changes in economic areas also have to be taken into account and estimated. In the end, the estimated revenues should be almost equal to the estimated spendings.

This year, 2019-2020, Blind Brook's budget was \$46,289,618, a 2.43% increase from last years total of \$45,190,924. Now you may be wondering: Where does all this money come from? \$40,021,651 comes from resident taxes, and this number is at the maximum allowable tax levy limit. The rest comes from state funding, as well as local non-property revenue, which includes factors like non-resident tuition and miscellaneous revenues.

There are many aspects that contributed to the increase in this year's budget, but one example of a notable increase in a certain area would be the central office. The budget in this area was \$1,044,419, an increase of 31.3% from the previous year. This tremendous increase is partially due to the establishment of the School Business Official position this year, and salary

increases as well.

Another large change was in the Library and Technology area. The district had to purchase new computers that we're able to run the Windows 10 software and wiring installations related to construction projects where needed. This budget rose from \$1,255,361 to \$1,596,237, a 27.2% increase from last year.

One area Blind Brook particularly emphasizes is the co-curricular activities budget or club budget. Students are encouraged to take part in clubs in order to fully experience the overall education program. It gives the students something to do in their free time and boosts their cooperative skills and school spirit. Here at Blind Brook, the co-curricular activities budget is \$277,466, as there are over 70 total clubs throughout all the schools.

Also related to the co-curricular activities area is the athletic budget. This area takes up \$599,971, and 80% of it is fixed, so it does not change based on levels of activity within the budget period. In order to have athletics programs, the district must hire coaches and officials, purchase uniforms and equipment, and provide supervision. This amount is accounting for the estimation of 750 student-athletes in the 2019-2020 school year.

After the budget is made each year, its impact on the district residents is simple. If the budget goes up, school taxes go up. However, school spending is the only factor of the taxes that Blind Brook can control. Their ability to create new programs and institute changes is limited by unfunded mandates, or necessary actions in which the school is not provided money for.

With 86% of the revenue coming from school taxes, Blind Brook has been put into recent stress. With not enough education aid from the state or federal government, and the need to achieve learning standards, the pressure to control spending rates are rising.

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How to Exploit High School Opportunities

School is hard. It requires a lot of work both inside and outside of school. It requires sacrifices, possibly quitting a sport, breaking off a relationship, or staying home on weekends. Blind Brook schools, specifically, are extremely rigorous, but many students are failing to apply themselves to the proper extent. Not turning in homework on time, not studying for tests, or coming unprepared for presentations can initiate a stigma as a poor student. Such actions can dig a hole that is quite difficult for a student to get out of. Of course, forgetting homework, not finding time to complete assignments or study for tests can happen from time to time, but teachers understand that as high school students, we have a lot of different time consuming commitments. Staying on top of your workload and applying yourself to the fullest in school is only the first step to becoming a complete student.

School doesn't end when you leave those front doors at 2:20 to go home or when you finish your homework. Generally, extracurricular activities best define how well-rounded of a student you are. It shows what your interests are, what you choose to allocate your time with after school. Whether you like sports, taking care of children, or politics, employers and colleges want to know what you are like outside the classroom and your resume closest resembles that. Joining school clubs, trying out for a varsity sports team is not only a bullet point on your resume, but can also help you create new friendships, build relationships with teachers, and embrace participating in activities that you are actually interested in.

Although participating in organizations outside of school is very important and integral to putting together a successful resume, serving in leadership positions reign most imperative. Learning how to organize people to produce a product is a very difficult task, one that almost everyone will be presented with sooner or later. Putting people in positions that highlight their strengths, assigning deadlines, and delegating work are all skills that will be needed in college and later on in your choice of work. You can't just receive a leadership role without proper merit, one needs to put in the work in the club/organization - participate in meetings, put in work after meetings, and demonstrate an interest in making the club better. Earning the spot as a leader as well as serving

as a leader is not painless, but the feeling when your product is a success is in a class by itself.

Making good relationships with your superiors is a lesson that will carry throughout college and your career. They decide whether you get that promotion, pay raise, or good grade on a test. They write recommendations for future jobs, college applications, and other potential future plans. If you are respectful, show integrity, and put forth your highest quality of work, they will do whatever they can do to ensure your success in high school and in future endeavors. Having a good relationship with your teachers and other school faculty can come in handy when seeking extra help on not only schoolwork but anything you're doing for an activity outside of school as well.

In conclusion, school provides students with a plethora of options for how to spend their time, and it is up to each individual to decide what they want to do with these options. Whether its playing a sport, applying yourself in class, joining or leading a club, or making new relationships with peers or faculty, it is important to make the most of the opportunities in front of us.

Michael Sunshine

Michael Sunshine
Editor-in-Chief



Photo courtesy of Michael Sunshine

Blind Brook's Holiday Season Columnist Abby Ochs '21

The holiday season is lit by tradition. The ideas of light and purity uphold the spirit of the holidays. Diwali and Hanukkah are both Festivals of Light, Christmas is adorned by candles in windows and lights on trees; Candles are lit on the Mishumaa Saba for Kwanza, Lunar New Year calls for illuminated lanterns in the sky like stars in the night, and on New Year's Eve a ball of will always be dropped. The light of the holidays reminds us to start the next year with purity and content. The light represents the quality of our traditions: it is what ties all religions, cultures, and holidays together.

The holiday's light is unearthed by all of our varying traditions.

For many, the holidays mean a time of family. Every Thanksgiving, I fly down to visit my family in Georgia. It is there, while I am surrounded by 50 plus relatives, that I can truly be grateful for the family that I have. Family holds a big spot in my heart and getting to spend even just a few days with the people I love really makes a difference in my life.

For others, traditions are kept by friends. Friendsgiving and Secret Santa are staples for many high schooler's holiday season, as they allow for independence to shine through and to demonstrate what the people in your life mean to you. Friends are the people you choose to have in your life, and what better way to show them you care by designating a mini holiday to celebrate them. Friends illuminate the holidays.

Let's not forget about food during the holidays. Each holiday has its own delicious take on meals, and all holiday foods tend to have significance to different cultures. To start off, there are plenty of Jewish food traditions. Eating chocolate gelt and jelly donuts and making latkes (potato pancakes) on Hanukkah, and even eating Chinese food on Christmas Day are the most popular ones. In regard to Hispanic culture, it is common to eat twelve green grapes on New Year's Eve, one as each last second of the year passes by. The belief is that if you are able to eat them within the time of the past year, your next 365 days will be filled with good luck and fortune. For those of the Christian decent, food traditions include leaving cookies for Santa (even as high schoolers when we know he isn't real), eating the Christmas Ham, and consuming peppermint-flavored everything. What's nice about

Thanksgiving though, is that most students at Blind Brook eat the same basic foods. Bonding over how high we can pile our plates is one of my most favorite traditions with my friends. Food illuminates the holidays

Then, there are those who keep their traditions surrounded by religion and culture. Many Christians and Catholics celebrate Christmas by acknowledging their beliefs at church. But, Chloe Ng, a junior, spends her holiday around a fully lit tree exchanging homemade gifts, lighting up her family's life. For Hindus, Diwali celebrates the beauty and light of life and

taking in positive energy. Lighting the dias is the way that junior

Komal Samrow and her family celebrate Diwali. These homemade candle's lights symbolize the defeat of darkness and evil. Jews light the menorah, demonstrating the storyline of Hanukkah revolving around the blessing of light. The oil burned for 8 days, while it was only supposed to shed light for one; and I for one, cannot remember a time when my family did not celebrate by lighting one of our homemade menorahs. Many people of the Hispanic descent celebrate Three Kings Day by leaving boxes with hay under

their beds in return for presents from the kings. Kwanza celebrates religion through ideals of family life and unity. Welcoming the New Year is its own separate entity. In Ecuador, families dress a straw man in old clothes representing the past year and its faults and then burn it at midnight to symbolize the new year. In Japan, a cast bell is struck 108 times, symbolizing the desires that are believed to have caused human suffering. Chinese New Year is celebrated with lanterns and parades led by silk dragons — the symbol of strength. And naturally, back to the New Year's Resolutions that are never kept. Culture illuminates the holidays.

Like most other high schoolers, I love the holiday season. I enjoy the traditions, but of course the time off from school is pretty great too. These next few weeks symbolize a time of togetherness and new beginnings, but they also symbolize the uniqueness of our culture. The season highlights our differences and our similarities, while also shedding light on becoming aware of others. It is the time to reflect and forgive, to learn and love, and most importantly, to let in the light.



Photo Courtesy of Abby Ochs

College Admissions

By Shivani Thanneer '20

Confetti. A simple form of computer-generated celebration granted after clicking submit on the Common Application for the college of your dreams. It seems too easy that four years of hard work and long nights, filled countless cups of coffee, culminate in a click of a button. For me, it did not come with the relief that is expected when applying to college. But with dread, I had not expected. The moment November 1st past, a new date sprung up, the day I would hear back from my Early Decision school. This cycle of stress and wishes unfulfilled begs us to ask the question, why is college such a fantasy in high school? And is there anything seniors can do to mentally prepare themselves for this journey?

When wide-eyed kids take the turn right instead of left when they enter the school building in freshman year the college admissions journey begins. It becomes so important that every kid's self-esteem is built from this year moving forward. An epidemic widely seen in the halls of BBHS is an obsession with grades. I can candidly say that everyone's personal experience in high school would be benefited if the plague of comparison was not so ingrained into the teenage culture; a circumstance that is especially pertinent to high-performing schools such as ours. When we all take a step back from the numbers that we allow to serve as determinants from our self-esteem, we can realize that the difference between an A+ and a B+ could have been a single test, and such trivial matters should not have such a drastic effect on our psyche. I hope that anyone starting the college application process realizes that a bad grade on a test or in a class will not make it impossible for you to gain acceptance into highly-ranked universities. The whole purpose of the "holistic review" advertised by America's top universities is to mitigate the effects of grade-centric thinking and to allow students to be viewed as more than just a list of numbers.

My AP Calculus teacher, Mr. Bianculli said it best when coaching me through my millionth breakdown in my senior

year, "Why aren't you being logical? Start defining success by the relationships you build and all the things you accomplish outside of assessments and grades." He perfectly described how, at the end of the day, you will never be successful if you define success as something that's not attainable, like perfection. This sage statement resonates deeply in the hearts of anyone going through the college admissions process. The entire journey is a challenge to one's natural want for control. By exposing a part of your soul through your college essay, activities and supplemental writing you allow the admissions officer to view your spirit. But the determination of whether or not you get into the institution of your dreams could land in the hands of someone who had a bad day or woke up on the wrong side of the bed. So I say to my fellow seniors, keep your heads up because the decision is rarely solely about your character, and it will work out in the end.

An underrated aspect of the college application process is understanding how you can "fit" into a college environment. When, inevitably, not everyone gets into their dream school those decision letters will feel like the end of the world. But that is all just nonsense. Many colleges take into account how your cumulative application would fit into the major or program you are applying to as well as the clubs, organizations and research opportunities on campus. So, if a college rejects you it might just be because you do not fit into their vision for their class as a whole; which is why it becomes very important to research the school and see if your application will truly stand out to the admissions board.

Going through this journey has taught me about my own personal issues with giving up control to the college admissions process. At the end of the day, we must all believe that where we end up is where we were always meant to be. This is just the first step amongst many to reach our long-term goals, but I, for one, am truly grateful that this process has given me the time to reflect on my interests and how to pursue them in the world beyond highschool.

Project Based Learning Makes its Way into Blind Brook Classrooms

By Jennifer McKay '22

Project based learning is a teaching method in which students are instructed to work independently in order to successfully find the answers to their own questions. This technique is multifaceted and the component it is most well known for is students working in groups. Rather than a teacher lecturing the class while the students take notes, the teacher is responsible for guiding them to ultimately reaching a goal: Fully comprehending a given topic.

Although this approach is meant to assist students when being integrated into schools, I have found that it is rather difficult for some to adapt to this procedure. In 9th grade English, we analyzed a quote by Albert Einstein, "Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live it's whole life believing it is stupid." A brief synopsis of this is that learning can not be generalized as people all learn in different ways. Just as a fish would excel at swimming but struggle at climbing, a student might excel in Italian but struggle in science. I have found that this concept is especially hard to grasp in certain subjects that I am not as good at. In other words, to me, a lecture is more straightforward than figuring out a concept on one's own.

Nevertheless, if one truly understands the building blocks of a concept, that notion will be far easier.



Photo Courtesy of Stamford Public Schools

This year, in Algebra 2, we worked to find formulas through breaking an equation up and recreating it step by step. Throughout the process, I struggled to figure out what variables and constants made up a certain formula; I had thought that it was merely unachievable. However, in the end, with guidance from my peers and teacher, I had figured out the formula. Although I thought attaining of answer was extremely difficult, I felt a sense of achievement after doing so. This method, whilst being complicated, has proven to assist many with the comprehension of material. It is one thing to simply listen to an oration of the given material, but it is a total other thing to be able to attain that knowledge through experience. All things considered, I believe that education is truly attained by the engagement in enriching activities and project based learning encompasses just that.

Block Scheduling is Here and Blind Brook can Feel its Wrath

By Bryan Moroch '20

The hottest topic throughout the 2018-19 school year: Block scheduling. Students and teachers alike wondered if the new schedule would be implemented in 2019-20 and what it would mean for the future of education at Blind Brook. After countless Board of Ed. meetings where many noble representatives voiced their dissent, the administration still elected to move forward with the schedule change. And here we are, nearly three months in, and the concerns that students and faculty expressed are clear as day.

The most obvious change are the lengthened periods. Many may think of thirteen minutes as miniscule, but in practice, it makes a significant difference. Far too often do I think I have sat through a complete lecture only to look up at the clock and see that there are twenty minutes remaining in the period. This change has had an impact on teachers as well, many of whom don't enjoy speaking in front of a class for nearly an hour. Finally, extended periods have made double-science classes virtually interminable. Imagine beginning the day with two periods of biology; by the time it ends, it's

already 10 o'clock. You've been in school for two hours, but have attended a singular class. Although I find biology to be fascinating, being able to experience a diverse group of classes throughout the day is part of what makes high school so great.

Block scheduling has created the class rotation, a system which I will admit to loving. It keeps everyday unique and fresh, allowing students to experience classes at different points in the day. However, I do take issue with the drop day. It is extraordinarily difficult to maintain continuity when a class designed to meet everyday does not do so. It is harder to stay on top of assignments and keep a firm grasp on concepts covered in class. In the case of half credit courses, such as Constitutional Law, this system has had an even stronger impact. There can be seven or eight days in between, making it nearly impossible to piece together meaningful lessons.

Block scheduling is still very young at our school, so maybe I am being too quick to judge it. However, I firmly believe that the new schedule has permanently taken much away from our educational experience.

Maybe it's Not So Bad After All

By Carly Mallah '22

The potential implementation of block scheduling this year has provoked many concerns. However, things seem to be going well regarding the new schedule. There are many benefits to the new schedule that have become quite evident as the year has progressed.

Although we have all struggled with memorizing our schedules, the change from day to day has been amazing. It keeps everyone attentive and the variation makes everyday feel different. Furthermore, there is more work that is meant to be done over extended periods of time, which is less stressful if a student has an extremely busy day. Additionally, this has helped teach better time management skills to students by showing benefits to spreading out homework rather than waiting until the night before a class to do an assignment.

When initially hearing about the proposed schedule last year one major concern of mine was the extended class periods. However, the class periods do not actually feel much longer and having fewer classes per day actually makes the day feel even shorter. I have been able to get a lot more work done in a number of classes due to the thirteen extra minutes. The extended class periods have begun to change the way classes are running and this certainly seems to be for the better.

In the past, receiving help from teachers throughout the day had been a bit of a challenge. If a student did not have free periods during the

day and the teacher they wanted to see was busy during lunch, then they would need to go for activity period and this only provides one opportunity for extra help. It seems as though the new schedule has more or less solved this issue. The vast majority of teachers are available during help during the same block of time as all of the students regardless of the day or upon request. This is because of all the high school students having lunch at the same time and therefore have somewhat of a free period at this time.

The new schedule has been a relatively extreme change and has without a doubt taken some getting used to. However, it seems as though this schedule, or some variation of it, will remain in the high school for a significant period of time. Therefore, once adjusted, this schedule will offer a great amount of benefits and it will eventually seem normal. Doing the exact same things day after day is not entertaining, it does not take much engagement, but with the block scheduling students are alert, aware of what is happening, and overwhelmingly seem to enjoy some level of variation. Although this schedule seems to take some getting used to for teachers and students alike, it seems as though it will only continue to improve. The schedule seems to be an extremely logical solution to a myriad of issues and will hopefully benefit students greatly. Despite prior concerns regarding the schedule, many students seem to be in favor of many changes that have been made to the schedule.

Rhythm and Flow: Your Favorite Rappers Take Netflix

By Josh Dweck '23

Do you like Chance the Rapper or Cardi B? If so, you would probably like Rhythm and Flow. A new Netflix original singing competition show starring Chance the Rapper, Cardi B, and T.I. as judges of unsigned rappers was recently released. Guest judges are brought in each week. Some guest judges are DJ Khaled, Ty Dolla \$ign, Tovey Lanez, and Quavo. The winner of the show wins a whopping \$250,000. This show differs from other musical competition shows because artists are given more freedom to do what they want, such as shoot more music videos, rather than following a strict contract.

The show releases three episodes every week as opposed to how Netflix drops a whole season at once. This is done to build up hype and anticipation for the outcome of the show, and replicates how most other competition shows work. While the first season has already ended, the audience and critics seem to really like the show, and a second season seems likely. Rhythm and Flow was given a 92% on Rotten Tomatoes and a 7.5/10 on IMDb, which are pretty good scores. Freshman John D'Inverno says "I am a fan of the show because I like the concept of a rap battle but I don't like Cardi B." However, other Blind Brook students didn't mind the judge.

One good thing about Rhythm and Flow is that they have contestants that you can connect with. Ali Tomineek has always been into magic as a side hobby. He did a Rubix cube every time before going onstage. Ali's mom left his family when he was only three months old, and left his father to raise him and his two siblings. His father was a huge inspiration to him. Ali got into rap at a young age, and one thing that really helped kick off his career, and what made his dad give him the approval to keep going with his musical career, was that he reached 1,000,000 views on a YouTube video he posted of himself rapping. What a huge accomplishment that was!

The second contestant,

Rae Khalil, dreamed of becoming as accomplished as some of her family members. Her grandfather was one of the first black music writers for the New York Times and her great uncle started one of the first black newspapers in the country. They had worked with Martin Luther King Jr. multiple times. Rae hoped not only to be as successful as her grandfather and uncle, but wished to make them proud as well by competing.

The last musical contestant is Inglewood IV. Inglewood lives in a full house with his wife and daughter, his mother-in-law, his wife's grandmother, and uncle. Inglewood shares his room with his wife, and their daughter. Inglewood feels destroyed that he can live with his family in their own home, so he works two jobs in hopes of being able to properly provide for his family and move to a nicer neighborhood. While music is really the only thing he wants to do in life, it has been a struggle considering his circumstances. That said, he will continue to pursue his passion.

To sum it all up, I recommend watching Rhythm and Flow. One thing I like about the show is how easy it is to connect to the contestants. It's easy to get hooked on while watching competition shows—you always end up rooting for a particular contestant. Also, if you like rap, this is definitely for you. This show includes the culture and music of rap and brings it all together into an exciting competition.



Photo Courtesy of Bustle

Cardi B and T.I. judge competitors on the new Netflix show Rhythm and Flow.

Disney Plus: A Whole New World for TV

By Ryan Campbell '22

On November 12, Disney launched its new streaming service: Disney Plus. This new service includes a vast catalogue of its classic movies and TV shows, along with originals for fans to enjoy. On its first day alone, Disney reported that the service garnered over ten million subscribers, far surpassing forecasts of 8 million by the end of 2019. This service was designed to establish Disney as a competitive force in the streaming world, one that is growing rapidly year by year.

This provides a stark contrast to the plummeting ratings of traditional cable TV networks. From 2017 to 2018, Disney Channel's ratings dropped by an ugly 20%. This drop in ratings is, as one could guess, thanks to streaming services like Netflix. The introduction of a new streaming service into the playing field was a necessary move. Disney Plus was designed to compete with Netflix, whose over 158 million subscribers have changed the way people watch TV. Although this subscriber count may seem intimidating, Netflix isn't immune to the effects of its rising competition. The service actually lost about 100,000 US subscribers in Q2 of 2019, indicating that people may allow for other platforms to compete with Netflix even further in the future, and there seem to be benefits in doing so.

To begin, a standard monthly subscription for Disney Plus starts at \$7, compared to \$13 for Netflix's monthly subscription. This \$7 goes a long way when looking at everything that is included. Disney's ownership of many companies means that viewers have access to Marvel, Star Wars, and Pixar movies, along with original movies that have debuted on the service. It also comes with new shows, like *The Mandalorian*, and old favorites, like *Hannah Montana* and *Phineas and Ferb*. To add to this, fans can bundle Disney Plus with Hulu and ESPN+ for \$13, which gives even more of an incentive to embrace streaming.

These new services seem to offer a cheaper and more efficient way to watch TV. The decrease of cable ratings across the board is a clear indication that something is changing, and networks need to continue to introduce streaming services to keep their viewers

interested. However, being subscribed to a dozen streaming services with thousands of different shows can add up. Sophomore Archana Kumaran feels that "if other streaming services simply didn't exist, Disney Plus as a whole is a good idea, however keeping the fact that they do exist and are expensive, I don't want to pay \$30 a month just to watch a few shows."

Many people simply don't need to have 24/7 access to thousands of shows, which leads to the idea that although streaming services are rapidly rising to compete with Netflix, the competition will not be as stiff because different audiences may be looking for different things. Disney Plus is amazing for people who want nostalgic shows, sci-fi movies like *Star Wars*, and animated Disney classics, but that does not mean that every Netflix subscriber is going to abandon it for Disney Plus. Both of these services are projected to grow immensely in the next few years, and although some companies may catch up to Netflix, the world seems interested in streaming nonetheless.

The future for TV streaming looks, at least for right now, very promising. New services are being launched to cater to different audiences, and general viewership is up across the board. Although some people do not feel like paying for access to these services, the ability to choose is what is most enticing. Viewers can decide what they pay for and what they can watch, and the balance of content in each service makes this very appealing. Cable TV is continuing to fizzle out, but again, the future of television is all about choice, and that includes cable for those who still enjoy watching it.

The introduction of Disney Plus is monumental. For a company with such loyal customers as Disney, this is something that many people will want to experience. In the future, it will be interesting to see how Disney Plus competes with services like Netflix, and how much it will rock the boat for streaming. This depends on whether or not people are willing to spend their money on lots of services for entertainment. For now, Disney Plus is poised to be a success and is certainly something to keep an eye out for in the future.

The Year of Movies Turned Musical and Revivals

By Sydney Panzier '20

Broadway hit a dry spell last year. Not many original shows hit the great white way and other timeworn shows landed wrong with audiences. From the headache-inducing *Be More Chill* to the classic *Carousel*, Broadway needs a fresh start. The everlasting genius of *Hamilton* can only go so far.

My favorite Broadway show this year was the invigorating, Rodgers & Hammerstein's, *Oklahoma!* Although a revival, *Daniel Fish* takes a modern turn on this vintage musical. Set in farm country Oklahoma, Laurey Williams (Rebecca Naomi Jones) is pursued by two men, Curly McLain (Damon Daunno) a typical cowboy, and Jud Fry (Patrick Vaill) a daunting farmhand. As well, the side romantic triangle storyline brewing between Will Parker (James Davis), Ado Annie (Tony winner, Allie Stroker), and Ali Hakim (Will Brill) is enthralling.

The original 1943 slow musical does not have a wide fan base. The new production is anything but dull. With experimental theatrical devices, added technology, an intimate sparse set, and prop interaction, audience members find themselves on the edge of their seats feeling like part of the action. Some say this revival disses the original, but I believe it is inventive and astounding that *Daniel Fish* took a humdrum show and kept me wanting more every second, except for the too-long reimagined dance sequence.

The new darker rendition changes 1943's society from then to now. This is done with deep expressions in the songs. For example, in "Many a New Day", which used to have a sweet innocence about Laurey getting over her disappointment in Curley, is now replaced with heated tonality showing her general discontent in men and their lack of noticing the obvious.

Now, this song is sung by the entire female cast, who are forcibly shucking corn as if breaking the necks of men. Ado Annie, originally the bewildered girl who "Cain't Say No" to any man, now embraces that side of her by using her sexuality to get whatever she desires. The show's run at the Circle in the Square Theater ends January 19, 2020. Go see this chaotic, hypnotizing show before it's too late.

Although this next musical is a movie adaptation, I was not disappointed. Unlike the disappointing, *Pretty Woman*, *Tootsie* is filled with witty one-liners that cleverly brings the hilari-

ous 1982 film to the stage. The un-revamped NYC story is about perfectionist actor Michael Dorsey (Santino Fontana) is struggling to land a job. After a female friend's catastrophic soap opera audition, Michael revamps himself as Dorothy Michaels and gets the role himself. Aside from the show's ethical issues, the songs are catchy and NYC comes alive on stage, however many of the 1980's standards are simply out-of-date, causing many audience members frustrated at this storyline's resurfacing. The *American Theatre* article, *The Gender Problem 'Tootsie' Can't Dress Up* discusses this brilliantly. Yes, *Tootsie* is extremely problematic and that should not be overlooked, but despite these faults, go see the eleven Tony award-nominated *Tootsie*, before it closes next year.

Company, the original 1970 Stephen Sondheim musical comedy, is soon hitting Broadway. The revival gender-bends the main character, Robert, now Bobbie (Katrina Lenk), and one of the storylines revolves around now same-sex couple of Jaime and Paul. When I saw the revival last November I had low expectations. Proactively, I listened to the cast recording and admittedly fell asleep several times. With the exception of too many ballads, in person, the musical was profound and wonderfully performed once I let go of trying to figure out who was married to whom. For a neon-filled new spin on a timely musical, see *Company* opening in 2020.

Based on the 2000 movie, *Almost Famous* is anticipated to join the stages of Broadway next year. I saw the production in previews at San Diego's Old Globe theatre. My expectations were extremely high since this is by far my favorite movie. The semi-autobiographical Cameron Crowe's 1973 story revolves around teen-aged William Miller (Casey Likes), a shameless music fanatic. William is hired by *Rolling Stone* magazine to interview the band *Stillwater*. This movie and musical seamlessly pull the audience back to an era where everyone who wasn't alive during that time wishes they were. The fact that Mr. Crowe and composer Tom Kitt were seated behind me at the preview truly helped transport me into William's life. Although some of the acting needs sharpening and the ballads are in abundance, the cast's voices together make me look forward to seeing the show once it hits Times Square next year. If you want to become a 1970's roadie traveling across the USA, go see *Almost Famous*.

All in the Timing

By Sam Knee '21

With an ambitious production of *Les Misérables* coming this spring, Blind Brook's theatre program is breaking away from the traditional drama this fall. This weekend, "All in the Timing", a collection of one-act plays written by David Ives, will be taking the Blind Brook stage. Directed by English/Theatre Arts teacher, Christina Colangelo, there will be two performances, both at 7:30, on Friday, November 22nd and Saturday, November 23rd. The tickets are \$15, but \$12 for seniors and children under 12. All tickets will be available digitally this year at <https://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/35767>.

Similar to 2017's fall production of *Almost Maine*, the comedy-drama does not consist of a single continuous story; rather it incorporates ten separate plays, each with their own unique characters and plots. These plays, with their creative and humorous plots, mock the intangible trends of time and language. Along with Ives' original six: *Sure Thing*, *Words, Words, Words*, *The Universal Language*, *Philip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread*, *The Philadelphia*, and *Variations on the Death of Trotsky*, four of his other short plays: *English Made Simple*, *The Blizzard*, *Arabian Nights*, and *Captive Audience* will also be performed.

Each play is complex in its own realm, with its bizarre characters and obscure plots. Whether three chimpanzees are expected to write *Hamlet* on typewriters in *Words, Words, Words*, or a musical parody of minimalist composer Philip Glass in *Phillip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread*, the only normal thing about this show is its abnormality. According to Colangelo, "I think Ives

wants to challenge the audience." Colangelo has been familiar with Ives' unique writing since her college years, where she recalls working on *Sure Thing* in her directing class. "His messages, thematic ideas and motivations are not as clear as other playwrights, so I think he wants people to interpret for themselves and talk about the work."

Though most scenes are comedies, bringing this show to life was far from a joke. "It was tough," said Abby Ochs, who plays the role of Dawn in *The Universal Language*. Ochs and her counterpart, Zachary Berger (Don), have most of their lines spoken in the made-up language, "Unamunda." Memorizing lines became a challenge for both juniors who, like many actors and actresses, are accustomed to matching their lines with the corresponding cues on stage. "I normally memorize lines by learning the purpose of the lines and then solidifying the words," said Berger. "I had to change that strategy since I had no idea what I was saying at times." Ochs explained, "I wasn't really able to go off of what Zach was saying because it wasn't English."

With a cast of 28 and a crew of 15, "All in the Timing" has a production team full of students from freshmen to seniors. Whether they were newcomers or veterans of the drama program, the show's small-group format allowed Colangelo to get to know the cast members and improve their skills on a whole new level. "I always love directing nonmusicals because I like to expose students to different styles of theater," says Colangelo.

Come out and support your classmates by coming to the show on Friday or Saturday evening!



Photo/Sophia Mullaly

Seniors Wyatt Steinthal and Abby Schlactus act out their scene in the show *All in the Timing*.

Joker: Changing the Future of Cinema

By Guillermo Prieto '20

Igniting controversy across America, becoming the most profitable comic book film of all time, and the first R-rated film to gross a billion dollars worldwide, DC Comics' new film, *Joker* is the film that will change the future of cinema. Written, produced, and directed by Todd Phillips, *Joker* tells the origin story of Batman's great foe, the Joker. Set outside of DC's current cinematic universe, *Joker* is an independent comic book film that tells an original story, reinvents the superhero genre, does not set up any sequels, and is a ... film!

Set in 1981, the film tells the story of Arthur Fleck, portrayed astoundingly by Joaquin Phoenix, a mentally ill stand-up comedian disregarded by society, whose lack of success causes him to become a sadistic criminal causing chaos in Gotham City.

The film deals with several themes of mental illness, and its depiction is being compared to those who commit mass shootings in the U.S., with several critics denouncing the film as being "dangerous", as they believe the film portrays the Joker as some kind of heroic figure. Many casual film-goers, including myself, find these statements to be untrue about the film. The film certainly wants viewers to empathize with Arthur, but the film is never asking us to forgive his cold-hearted actions. Phillips and Warner Bros. definitely intended to create some uncomfortable parallels to real-world tragedies and/or figures, and they know that the Joker is insane and misunderstood, and not an inspiration. Todd Phillips described his film making statements about "lack of love, childhood trauma, lack of compassion in the world... I think people can handle that message." Joaquin Phoenix also stated that audiences are "all aware of these issues... that's why we talk about it."

Joker is a terrifying, insane, and a wonderful film. It completely reinvents the idea of a comic-book film. The film brilliantly takes a few elements of classic Martin Scorsese films such as *Taxi Driver*, and *The King of Comedy*, and uses them in a unique and beautiful way to tell the story of Arthur's ascension into madness. I believe that *Joker* is a film for all kinds of movie-goers. Fans of comic books and other superhero films will love the

film with its clever callbacks to the original comics and the addition of a younger Bruce Wayne before he eventually became the Batman. The film will also appeal to filmgoers who appreciate more character-driven and smaller films. Since the film has grossed over a billion dollars worldwide, *Joker* will lead casual film-goers to watch smaller films in theaters, rather than the usual action-packed and large-scale superhero flick. Blind Brook senior Joshua Chernick praised the depiction of the Joker as audiences get to see "how someone that is insane really takes the step forward being a deranged

mad man." Blind Brook junior Zachary Berger also commended the film as "it filled a much desire niche of R-rated superhero movies, and is something unique in a genre which can feel quite formulaic."

After critical and financial disappointments from their "Ex-

tended Universe" films such as *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, *Suicide Squad*, and *Justice League*, DC and Warner Bros. will learn that maybe making their own cinematic universe à la Marvel is not the way to go. These films had budgets of over \$175 million, with *Justice League* having an insane budget of \$300 million, all of which grossed less than *Joker*, which only had a budget of \$55 million! The DC films that tend to have less of a cinematic universe world-building such as *Wonder Woman*, *Aquaman*, and the surprisingly excellent *Shazam!*, receive a lot more praise and become more profitable for the studios. Blind Brook senior Bradley Rosen believes *Joker* has become such a success because "people have been waiting for that one really good DC Comics movie since Christopher Nolan's *Batman* trilogy ended, and we finally got it."

DC's upcoming films are building up anticipation amongst fans with films such as the *Wonder Woman 2020* sequel, *Wonder Woman 1984*, *The Batman* starring Robert Pattinson, and *Guardians of the Galaxy* director James Gunn's *The Suicide Squad*, both of which are set for release for 2021. DC looks like they have a very bright future, and maybe even brighter than Marvel. In the next few years, DC can quite possibly become a rival to Marvel Studios and have a clear path to critical and financial success.



Photo Courtesy of Vox

The American Music Awards

By Olivia Jaccoma '20

After a long week, a great way to spend time with family before the work and school week starts is by sitting down, and turning on the TV to watch The American Music Awards on Sunday, November 24th at 8pm ET on ABC. The American Music Awards (AMAs) is an annual award show, where artists of all types of music are nominated for different award categories for their particular music genre. The winners are chosen by the public, which makes the show very exciting. The AMAs are a great tradition for the music industry and music fans everywhere. It is the first of the Big Three music award shows held annually. A vast majority of artists that are favored by many are nominated such as Post Malone, Drake, Halsey, the Jonas Brothers, Billie Eilish, and more. Between the categories of Artist of the Year, Favorite Album Pop/Rock, Favorite Song Pop/Rock, and New Artist Of The Year, the AMAs are a classic award show watched by millions.

Some students had some personal opinions on who would win what category and why. Senior Sarah Casuto believes that "Post Malone will win artist of the year because he just released a new album which has become very popular, very quickly. He is my favorite artist so I really hope that he wins!" Additionally, Senior Ryan Thompson thinks that "ASTROWORLD will win album of the year because it had the greatest influence of any of the other albums that have been released this year." Many artists who are nominated have released new albums or new songs this past year that have been on the top charts, making them great candidates for different award categories. Junior Emma

Marshall believes "Post Malone will win favorite rap artist because his new album Hollywood's Bleeding is a big hit. Songs such as Circles, Enemies, and Wow are played on the radio often. Circles has been top 3 nationwide for like 3 weeks already", and Hillary Serota believes "The Jonas Brothers comeback in 2019 was honestly the best thing to happen to any 2000 kid! I believe that they will win the award for Favorite Song Pop/Rock." Overall, Post Malone has been a very popular artist among Blind Brook students. His new album that was released in early September has been holding high standing in the top charts. Many songs from the album have stayed in the top charts up until now, which is very impressive. These new songs, along with the songs from the Beerbongs and Bentleys album released last year, have been the most prominent and listened to throughout Blind Brook last year and this year. Post Malone's popularity throughout Blind Brook is just a portion of his widespread popularity. The American Music Awards are great for people to watch because not only does it allow family and friends to bond with one another, but also because it is a great way to discover new artists and music that someone may not have heard yet. In addition to the nominees, the award show is also popular for having many new and old artists perform. This year, performers such as Billie Eilish, Lizzo, Camila Cabello, Dua Lipa, and Selena Gomez will be taking the stage throughout the night. The American Music Awards are loved by many and are a great celebration of all the different genres of music coming together. Grab your family and friends, get some popcorn and snacks, and tune in to the American Music Awards on Sunday November 24th at 8pm.

The People's Choice Awards

By Joshua Chernick '20

The People's Choice awards was on November 10th in Santa Monica, California and was at 9:00 PM EST. Many people were nominated for numerous awards during the 2019 People's Choice Awards. The winners are chosen entirely by the people instead of critics choosing who is going to win the award. The winners were chosen very fairly. For best movie of 2019, Avengers Endgame won over the likes of Fast and Furious, Us, Captain Marvel and Toy Story 4. Marvel was clearly a hit as Robert Downey Jr won best male actor over very talented actors like the legendary Keanu Reeves, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Samuel L Jackson, Tom Holland, Adam Sandler, Chris Hemsworth, and Will Smith. Robert Downey Jr won for his role as Iron Man in the highest grossing film of all time Avengers Endgame. Additionally, Jennifer Aniston won the Best Icon of 2019 award, and Gwen Stefani won the Fashion Icon award. After won best drama movie over Us, Glass, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood. Blind Brook Junior Amanda Winton was against the movie After winning Best Drama, saying, "After was terrible and Us should have won". Also a lot of people in the music industry were nominated for awards during the People's Choice Awards. Shawn

Mendes won Best Male Artist of 2019 over Travis Scott, Drake, Ed Sheeran, Little Nas X and more male artists. Senior Zach Gibbs was against Shawn Mendes winning the award. He said, "I think Travis Scott should have won the award and that it was rigged". Also what stood out was that Zendaya won two awards for her role in Spider-Man Far From Home and for her role in the HBO show Euphoria. Senior Vanessa Meyer was very impressed with her winning these awards, she said, "I love that Zendaya won two awards. It's very cool to see someone win multiple awards". Also the winners made amazing speeches. The speech that stood out to me the most was from Robert Downey Jr who won for playing Iron Man. In his speech he paid a tribute to the late Stan Lee by dedicating his award to him. Without Lee, there would have been no Iron Man and he is such an inspirational hero to kids. Stan Lee is very inspiring to people and it was right of Downey Jr to pay tribute to him. These awards show that the people choose what is good about entertainment and that the media does not determine who is good and who is bad and it is the people who decide that. The People's Choice Awards is a very influential award show because it shows America what people like and what people think.

GREAT: Uncut Gems - December 13th

Directors Josh and Benny Safdie are back for more New York City thrills in this anxiety-inducing masterpiece starring Adam Sandler, Lakeith Stanfield, Julia Fox, and NBA legend Kevin Garnett. The film takes place in the Spring of 2012 and chronicles Howard Ratner, a jeweler and compulsive gambler, who makes a high stakes bet to pay off his life threatening debt in the heart of the Diamond District in New York City. Hilarious and thrilling, I was luckily able to get tickets to the premiere at the New York Film Festival last October, and I fully believe that this could be the best film of 2019. Adam Sandler gives the best performance of his career, along with great acting skills by Kevin Garnett, making his acting debut. The writing is truly incredible, perfectly showing the stress Howard goes through, and the direction by the Safdie Brothers capture every perfect moment to create a great picture.



NOT GREAT: Jumanji: The Next Level - December 13th

If you thought that Jack Black, Karen Gillan, Dwayne Johnson, and Kevin Hart could star in a sequel to a movie that was a reboot that was based off a children's book about a board game could happen? Well, if you enjoyed the first of the series Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle, you're probably going to enjoy the sequel. From director Jake Kasdan, who brought us the miserable comedy Bad Teacher, the audience will be transported back to the videogame world of Jumanji, where four avatars must escape the harsh environments of the dry deserts and coldest mountains to save one of their own. I was not a fan of Welcome to the Jungle, however it exceeded box office and critical expectations, which I was extremely surprised by. While it might be a success financially, when it comes to critical reception we'll see how this one plays out.

It's almost December, goes on for potential coming to the big, across the world. The representing the best give the Academy a ru sidering the nominat and awards ceremoni month later. With the films of the year tenc time, so let's take a loo audie

WHO KNOWS... S of SkyWalker -

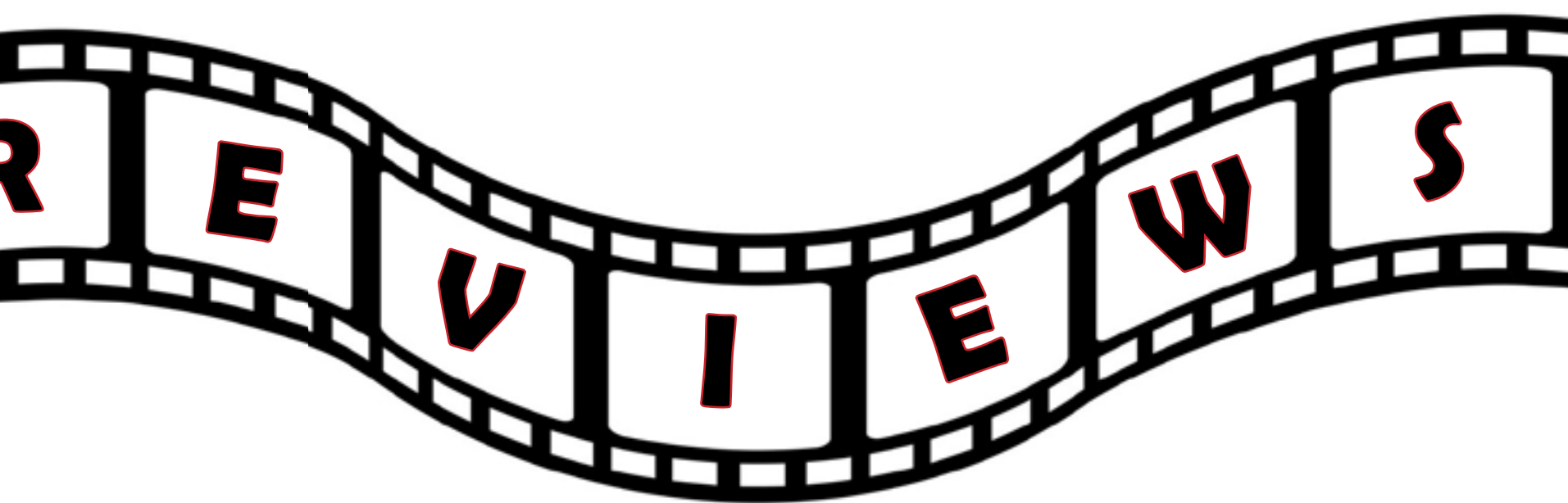
This one is the most diff up and coming Star Wars in the entire series (exclud Abrams is back at the he verse after Rian Johnson's which received the most n so far, either proclaiming Star Wars film ever made master of the science ficti and the 7th episode of the Force Awakens, fans are be he brings everything to a s characters in the script, to p Did Rian Johnson's The L with production? Due to i from the previous films, w out alive, and how the ser one of the best selling fra

By Michael L

and with that the list Oscar nominated films and small, screens all the month is known for slate of movies that in for their money, con- tions, announcements, ies taking place only a at, the best and worst d to be released at this k at what's in store for nces...

GREAT: 1917 - December 25th

From Sam Mendes, the director of *American Beauty* and the Bond film *Skyfall*, comes a brand new take on World War I. Two British soldiers, Schofield and Blake, are sent on a mission to deliver an important message warning troops of a secret ambush taking place on their battlegrounds, with the chance of ending or saving 1,600 lives, one of them being Blake's brother. Time is of the essence in this action packed story that has the audience on the edge of their seats. The most ambitious part of the film: the fact that it was shot entirely in one take. Famed cinematographer Roger Deakins, who's done the camerawork for *The Shawshank Redemption*, *No Country For Old Men*, and *Blade Runner 2049*, achieves something not many in the field can accomplish. Especially being a war movie, every single bit must go right, or, like the story of the film itself, it all goes downhill.



Star Wars: The Rise December 20th

Difficult to assume, since the film is said to be the last (including spin-offs). Director JJ Abrams' film of the Star Wars universe, Episode 8, *The Last Jedi*, has mixed reviews in the series, with some calling it as the "worst" or "best" yet. With Abrams already a master of craft, 2009's *Star Trek Beyond* and the Star Wars franchise *The Force Awakens* beyond excited to see where the franchise will lead. *The Last Jedi* has any problems with its extreme change of plot and the wonder who will make it all come to an end, in the franchises of all time.

Diebnerman '20

NOT GREAT: Cats - December 20th

From Sam Mendes, the director of *American Beauty* and the Bond film *Skyfall*, comes a brand new take on World War I. Two British soldiers, Schofield and Blake, are sent on a mission to deliver an important message warning troops of a secret ambush taking place on their battlegrounds, with the chance of ending or saving 1,600 lives, one of them being Blake's brother. Time is of the essence in this action packed story that has the audience on the edge of their seats. The most ambitious part of the film: the fact that it was shot entirely in one take. Famed cinematographer Roger Deakins, who's done the camerawork for *The Shawshank Redemption*, *No Country For Old Men*, and *Blade Runner 2049*, achieves something not many in the field can accomplish. Especially being a war movie, every single bit must go right, or, like the story of the film itself, it all goes downhill.

The Health Effects of Vaping

By Olivia Zahl '22

Vaping. It's one of the most popular activities among teenagers today. Yet, it's only now that people are starting to discover the significant health risks and negative effects that vaping has on humans. Recently, there have been multiple deaths as a result of vaping. Because of this news, people are truly beginning to understand the risk of addiction and its repercussions. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), has even considered banning vape flavors which target youths.

Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling the aerosol, often referred to as vapor, which is produced by an e-cigarette or similar device. Studies have shown that vaping can lead to increased blood pressure, an elevated heart rate, asthma, coughing, wheezing, lung damage, nose bleeds, and nicotine addiction. These conditions are gaining prominence because of the fact that vaping has become extremely popular among teenagers. Vape companies recognize that teenagers are the next wave of consumers, and that influencing them will be the most beneficial to their businesses. Because of this strategy, companies are producing vape flavors, including strawberry cheesecake, cinnamon roll, skittles, cannoli, and many other unique and tempting flavors. Many teens, tempted by the variety, have begun vaping and are now addicted. Now, recognizing the horrible potential outcomes of these vape flavors, the FDA has considered banning them, in hopes that fewer kids will start vaping.

One of the biggest eye-openers to the dangers of vaping has been the recent vape-related deaths. So far, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there have been thirty nine deaths in the United States as a result of the use of e-cigarettes and vape products. In addition to these deaths, over two thousand people have become sick with lung disease and other illnesses because of vaping. Many of their lungs have collapsed, and they have been hospitalized. The majority of these people are around eighteen years old, which goes to show how greatly the teenage population is being affected. Furthermore, Vitamin E Acetate has been discovered in all of the af-

ected people. This vitamin is used as a thickening agent, and has been deemed safe to consume or apply to the skin, but it may be dangerous to inhale. Studies have shown that the inhalation of this vitamin interferes with the normal function of lungs, which causes many health complications. As long as people continue to vape and use e-cigarettes, the number of similar illnesses and deaths will continue to increase rapidly.

In addition to all of the unhealthy and unsafe additives in vape products, nicotine alone is extremely harmful to the human body. Research has shown that nicotine leads to a decrease in metabolism, increased cancer risks, asthma attacks, and many respiratory problems. Nicotine is also extremely addictive, meaning that using a vape product or e-cigarette just a few times can potentially lead to addiction, and then the continual use of these products.

Here is how addiction works: After nicotine is inhaled, it reaches the brain in about ten seconds, then enters the mesolimbic dopamine system. Within this system, which is not intended for nicotine and other drugs, dopamine is released and these "feel-good" chemicals flood the body. Nicotine then leaves as quickly as it entered, causing the body to crave the feeling again until more nicotine is inhaled. This process repeats itself over and over in a never-ending cycle. When someone continually desires the state of feeling good that is experienced from the use of nicotine, they are addicted. The abuse of this drug leads to many harmful effects on the brain, including physical changes and functioning issues such as problems with focus, memory, and learning. Because of its potential to critically harm the human body, nicotine is extremely and dangerously addictive.

It is upsetting to learn about the huge amount of people affected by vaping. Everyone must understand the serious impact and long term effects that vaping causes before deciding to partake in such a detrimental activity. The research on the health effects and risks of vaping are fairly new, so it is unsure what the future holds regarding humans and the use of potentially fatal vaping products.

Downfall of the Fastest Girl in America: How Nike Training Damaged Mary Cain's Mental and Physical Health Columnist Nicole Rosenzweig '20

Mary Cain grew up close by, in Bronxville, New York. While in high school, Cain was recognized across the nation for her running abilities. As a Bronxville athlete, she won numerous state titles in middle distance running, and she broke the American high school girl's outdoor record in the 1500m race. She beat the previous record by over 3 seconds and qualified for the World Championships.

After an extremely successful high school career, Mary Cain passed up on college running to instead run professionally with the Nike Oregon Project, a prestigious running program led by Alberto Salazar. However, Alberto Salazar was recently banned from the sport for four years due to multiple doping charges. Then, on October 10th, 2019, Nike shut down the Oregon Project.

After these doping code violations have become public and Alberto Salazar was temporarily banned from the sport, Mary Cain was compelled to share her story. In a recent New York Times article, Cain revealed that her training was extremely mentally and physically taxing.

In the Nike Oregon Project, the runners were under constant pressure to lose weight. As a result, Mary Cain broke five bones, lost her period for three years, and had suicidal thoughts.

Mary Cain was not alone in her struggles. Many female runners have spoken out about this toxic culture that jeopardizes athletes' health. Olympic distance runner Kara Goucher trained under Alberto Salazar in the Nike Oregon Project until 2011 and said that she experienced similar pressure, noting that teammates were weighed in front of each other.

This issue has come to the attention of many Blind Brook students who grew up watching Mary Cain break record after record. Senior Lily Janjigian said, "I remember watching Mary Cain when I was just starting middle school. I watched her run at the Armory in New York City, and she lit up the room... It is so upsetting to hear the truth about what she was going through."

Many are now alleging that Mary Cain's health problems are indicative of larger issues in female running culture. In the New York Times article about Cain, the authors claimed that trainers were wrongly forcing women to meet athletic standards that are based upon the development of boys and men. This caused Mary Cain to break down and end her career far earlier than expected.

Athletic amenorrhea, the medical condition that causes an athlete to lose her period, can be extremely harmful, as it was for Mary Cain.

If an athlete loses her period for a long time, her estrogen production could drop to dangerous levels, potentially leading to the early onset of osteoporosis, low bone density, and infertility. Athletic amenorrhea is increasingly common in sports that emphasize thinness.

Nike released a statement in response to Mary Cain's public criticism of Alberto Salazar, stating that they would immediately launch an investigation into the issue and hear from former athletes of the Nike Oregon Project.

In response, Cain stated, "I was the victim of an abusive system, an abusive man. I was constantly tormented by the conflict of wanting to be free from him and wanting to go back to the way things used to be, when I was his favorite."

Mary Cain's statements have sparked discussion about health issues in the running community, especially among female athletes. Coaches, trainers, and professionals are beginning to recognize that women develop differently than men and cannot be held to the same athletic training standards.

Nike athletes and coaches are continually sharing Mary Cain's story to raise awareness about the toxic nature of female running culture. Given the prevalence of eating disorders, amenorrhea, and mental health issues among female athletes, sharing Mary Cain's story is just the beginning of an ongoing discussion to create meaningful change for female runners.



Photo Courtesy of Nicole Rosenzweig

Plant-Based Diets

By Shirah Mallah '22

The typical human tends to eat a diet composed of meat, animal products, and plant-based foods. In modern society, common misconceptions surrounding our food are that meat is what makes someone strong, protein from animals is what gives us energy, athletes need meat, and a plant-based diet is weak. Recently, however, these ideas have been questioned. Many researchers have been examining the difference in the health of those who consume plant-based diets and those consuming animals and animal products. The results have been surprising, showing that maintaining a plant-based diet helps improve many aspects of a person's health. It has also been proven that simply eating fewer animal based products can significantly improve a person's health, but many are still skeptical about the trade-offs.

By decreasing the amount of meat one eats, it is possible to decrease the risk of a multitude of health problems. Eliminating meat products altogether and switching to a completely plant-based diet has a more significant effect, but both can help tremendously. The problems that can be alleviated include heart disease, stroke, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, and many cancers. The reason why meat can lead to so many complications is because it contains high levels of cholesterol and saturated fat. Eating lean meats may be a slightly better alternative, but they still have a much more negative effect than plant-based protein sources, such as tofu, quinoa, chickpeas, beans, mushrooms, and many others. As evidenced, eating a plant-based diet does not mean not eating protein, because a variety of plant foods contain significant amounts of protein. In fact, all of the nutrients in meat originated in plants, so eating meat is not necessary to survive, or to be an athlete.

The benefits of eating a plant-based diet aren't just limited to the long run. It can provide tangible benefits almost as soon as someone makes the switch. In the documentary "Game Changers", which focuses on plant-based eating, an experiment was conducted on three NFL players. Their blood was tested after an animal-based meal, then tested again and the next day after a vegan meal. After eating the meat, their blood samples were much thicker than after eating the plant-based meal. For athletes, it is vi-

tal for oxygen and nutrients to be delivered to muscles as efficiently as possible. Eating meat is stopped this process from occurring efficiently. Additionally, in "Game Changers", it is shown that following a plant-based diet can increase recovery rate. This is extremely important to many athletes. In sports, whether the participants are kids or professional athletes, injury is always a risk. When athletes get injured, it is important that they are able to get back in the game quickly as possible, and this diet can help.

However, not all plant-based diets are healthy. No health benefits will be gained from replacing animal products with very processed substitutes. For example, french fries, bread, pasta, vegan cookies, and chips are all vegan, but eating these frequently as a substitute for meat would be detrimental to a person's health. Instead, it is important to eat nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables.

In our school, Mr. Beatty has been showing his gym classes the "Game Changers" documentary, which was previously mentioned. A 10th grader in one of Mr. Beatty's gym classes, who does eat meat, was asked how watching the documentary changed how she viewed plant-based diets. In response, she said, "The documentary definitely affected my view on plant-based diets because it showed me that plant-based diets have a good effect on our bodies and have some huge benefits. The documentary also used real athletes that eat plant-based diets as examples and it showed me that there are proven benefits." Although she is not considering switching to a plant-based diet after watching the documentary, she reported that "I am more cautious about eating meat and, when I do eat it, how much I am eating." If every student is encouraged to think more cautiously about their meat intake, watching this documentary can have a positive effect on many here at Blind Brook.

There are numerous health benefits to eating plant-based and cutting out meat products from one's diet. These benefits are both short term, such as faster recovery and being able to perform better athletically, and long term, such as limiting one's chances of getting a disease. Although it is not realistic for everyone reading this article to follow a plant-based diet, it is a smart choice to think about the effects of meat on the human body, and to limit one's animal product intake.

Why Popeyes is Poppin'

By Jacob Moore '23

On August 12, 2019, the fast-food restaurant Popeyes released their new chicken sandwich and set the world ablaze. This sandwich sold out in two weeks, with lines as long as an hour, possibly more. The world had never seen such a trend until now. But why did this happen, and what was so special about this particular chicken sandwich? The answer might lie in a rivalry between fast-food restaurants, and just a bit of clever marketing.

Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen released their chicken sandwich and spicy chicken sandwich on August 12, seven days before another fast food restaurant by the name of Chick-fil-A released their own chicken sandwich on August 19. Chick-fil-A tweeted "Bun + Chicken + Pickles = all the love for the original," to which Popeyes responded "... y'all good?" This sparked an argument between fans of the two fast-food restaurants about which sandwich was superior. As a result, people rushed to the stores to get their own opinions on the chicken sandwich. This was the match that lit the fire that took the fast-food market ablaze.

But was all the hype due to a simple rivalry? There are rivalries all the time, so why did this one become so popular? Social media is at the heart of all trends. There's no real algorithm for starting one; they just spark and grow rapidly, then die off in about a month or two. Twitter, Instagram, and other platforms allow these trends to spread rapidly, at no cost. Trends such as bottle flipping, dabbing, and Fortnite have been able to grow and reach millions of people, so it's no surprise that brands would try to promote themselves without having to pay money for traditional advertising campaigns.

People also love trying out trends to get quick clicks. Those who want to make it big on social media hop onto these trends in the hope of benefiting themselves. It is because of the number of people who do this that ordinary things like the chicken sandwich have blown up. Some people just follow the hype, but when many people do it, another viral trend begins.

Popeyes has many different options for dining, but they draw influence from common foods in Louisiana. Some of their more popular options, before the appearance of the chicken sandwich, were their chicken, apple pie, mashed potatoes, and red beans with rice. Popeyes wasn't a very popular choice among all fast food diners before the chicken sandwich. Though very well-received in the South, Popeyes never really resonated with customers from the North.

Perhaps the ingredients in the sandwich are what made it popular nationwide. The normal chicken sandwich is composed of a crunchy fried chicken breast on brioche with pickles and mayonnaise.



Photo/Olivia Jacomma

In the spicy version, everything is kept the same, but the mayonnaise has some added spice. It is not clear which sandwich is more popular, but while the normal aims to satisfy the common consumer, but the spicy is definitely catered towards more daring food enthusiasts.

When I was assigned this article, I had not yet had a Popeyes chicken sandwich, but I had heard all about the rave reviews. I even had friends who tried it and said it was one of the best sandwiches they'd ever had. So, I was intrigued to get a hands-on taste of this remarkable sandwich. After trying it, I must say...it's fine. Is it the best sandwich ever? No. Is it good? Yeah. I enjoyed eating it, and I would have it again, but I wasn't blown away by it. The chicken is definitely the best part of the sandwich, which makes sense. Note that I only had the normal version, so the spicy version may have been better. In the end, I do recommend it. It's cool to eat such a popular food, and it's nice to be able to form your own opinion on this sandwich. This sandwich is a solid 7/10.

In conclusion, this sandwich was lucky. It was just good enough to be a valid opponent in a rivalry and fortunate that it blew up on social media. I'm not sure that Popeyes will make another sandwich that will be just as popular. It's possible, but I think this sandwich set off just the right set of events to lead to its popularity. The real win of this sandwich is how Popeyes has connected to the majority of the nation, and how their sales have been boosted tremendously. As the hype dies down though, I believe people will forget about this sandwich, and Popeyes will either have to create another groundbreaking food or fall back to their old status as another fast food place. The Popeyes chicken sandwich was a fun trend that allowed people to try good food, but it will be remembered as a short-lived corporate dream for Popeyes.

McConnell Will Not Hold a Senate Impeachment Trial

Columnist Mitchell Saunders '20

As I'm sure you've heard over the past few weeks, impeachment proceedings are truly ramping up. This coming week nine witnesses are to publically testify in front of the House Intelligence Committee. Additionally, about a few weeks ago, Mitch McConnell said that "I would have no choice but to take it up," if the House does end up filing articles of impeachment and passing them to the Senate. This is a lie.

McConnell understands the Senate and its powers very well. Additionally, he knows exactly what is at stake in 2020. Concerning the text of the Constitution, it states, "The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments." By no means does this indicate that the Senate must hold a trial, only that it can. One would think that a vindication would be a positive narrative for Trump and the Republican Party. However, McConnell knows all too well that in addition to the Presidency being in play for 2020, so is the Senate. McConnell and the Republicans know they cannot afford to lose that power.

Republicans must continue to hold the Senate after the 2020 elections. If the Democrats keep the House and take the Presidency, it will be the keystone in putting Washington (and the Democratic agenda) into gridlock. However, McConnell allowing a trial to run fully and forcing Senators to vote on whether or not Trump should be removed would

be detrimental to his majority come 2020. For Senators Thom Tillis (R-NC), Joni Ernst (R-IA), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Susan Collins (R-ME), David Purdue (R-GA), John Cornyn (R-TX), and even Mitch McConnell (R-KY) himself, forcing an impeachment vote in a re-election year with a possible blue wave in 2020 could spell trouble for the Republicans. But why?

If these Republican Senators go on the record as supporting Trump, swing voters and independents in their state may not want to vote for them again, resulting in a referendum against those Republican incumbents. However, if they vote to remove Trump, his base of 25-35% of Republican voters could level out, or, at least, be greatly diminished, resulting in a lower turnout, and likely, a Democratic

win.

The way out of this murky situation for McConnell? Don't hold the vote, it's as simple as that. Am I saying that I do not believe the vote should be held? Of course not. It is the right of the American people to see (on both sides) what the information presented is and how their representatives will vote on all that is brought forth to the chamber. However, from a political standpoint, there is no benefit to McConnell holding this trial. Democrats felt relieved after McConnell said he would hold the trial. That is deceit and trickery from the mastermind of Washington politics. He will not hold the trial.



Photo Courtesy of Mitchell Saunders

More Student Thoughts on Impeachment

By Shivani Thanneer '20

Recent news concerning the Trump administration has been centered around the potential for impeachment articles being brought against President Trump. The heart of the impeachment inquiry stems from the testimony of a whistleblower who claimed that Trump used the powers of his office to pressure the government of Ukraine to help his reelection campaign by announcing investigations into Trump's opponents, namely Joe Biden. As per the US Constitution, the House of Representatives reserves the right to impeach a sitting President on the grounds of, "... Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors." So the question stands as... Is there enough concrete evidence to impeach President Trump?

The case for impeachment currently has three main arguments. The first defense surrounds the infamous phone call made by President Trump to the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on July 25th, 2019. In the rough transcript of this call, which was provided by the White House, Trump asked for a "favor" from Zelensky with the terms that in return for the military aid that the US was providing Ukraine, the Ukrainian government would need to support Trump through his reelection; specifically by investigating former Vice-President Joe Biden. The suggestion that Trump's plan was designed to cause political damage to Biden was further exacerbated by US diplomats in Ukraine urging the government to make their investigation into Trump's opponents public.

The second defense for impeachment deals with the quid pro quo, or status quo, around US military aid. The Trump administration froze \$391 million in military aid to Ukraine with the condition that support would be returned if the public investigations into Trump's opponents were announced. This assertion was supported by two officials on the White House's National Security Council as well as the US Ambassador to the European Union. Certain Democratic lawmakers feel that a key impeachment strategy will be using this transaction-like foreign policy between Trump-Zelensky to charge Trump undercounts of "Bribery", which is an impeachable offense.

The third defense is centered around the inappropriate removal of Marie Yovanovitch, who served as the US Ambassador to Ukraine

from the beginning of Trump's term until May 2019. When Yovanovitch was removed, evidence came out to suggest that Trump's action was with bad faith, meaning that she was removed so that the Trump administration could implement policy without oversight. The idea of demonstrating "bad faith" is part of the defense needed to prove that impeachable action has been taken, so with powerful figures, such as the Secretary of State John Sullivan, supporting Yovanovitch's claim that her removal was improper, lawmakers fighting for impeachment articles to be presented must be happy.

Conversely, some lawmakers have taken the position that impeachment should not be pursued in relation to Trump's actions in Ukraine. For this argument, there are also three main defenses. The first defense is that the process of an impeachment hearing is inherently set with such high standards in terms of the burden of proof for the prosecution. Thus, the costs to the country are greater if this impeachment inquiry takes place and fails, as partisanship and a lack of faith in the Presidency would only increase. The second defense is that President Trump was within his Constitutional purview to enact foreign policy and converse with President Zelensky of Ukraine. Trump's lawyers will use the argument that under Article II of the US Constitution the President was afforded an all but unanimous ability to set foreign policy and that any undersecretaries at the State Department were required to shape decisions based on the President's framing of US relations worldwide. The last defense is that there is such limited insight into the mind of Trump that the "bad faith" foundation will not be met when filing impeachment articles. So, representatives are arguing that it is not worth pursuing impeachment when the case for it is missing foundational elements that cannot be proven by physical evidence.

This impeachment inquiry has the capability of shaping Trump's term in office. Nevertheless, President Trump has been vigilant in denying the credibility of articles of impeachment being drawn on any counts that are explicitly written in the US Constitution. I, for one, believe that an impeachment inquiry is inevitable, but with the loyalty, Trump has shown to his base in the past four years it is extremely unlikely that he will be the first President in the US's history to be removed from office.

The Legalization of Marijuana

By Josh Rosenblut '22

The Legalization of Marijuana has become a national topic in the United States, which has many politicians distraught as to which side they should take. There are also many politicians who have spoken out, either: for or against the legalization of marijuana.

First, there are the arguments for the legalization of Marijuana. The majority of the public agrees with Legalizing Marijuana. In a CBS poll in 2017, 60% of people supported the legalization of marijuana. This was a prevalent example of how the majority of people in the United States are pro legalization of marijuana. For this reason, lawmakers in the United States government should work on legalizing marijuana. Another reason marijuana should be legalized is because it has the potential to be a new source of jobs. The New Frontier Data said the cannabis industry would have created 280,000 new jobs by the year of 2020. This is more jobs than the manufacturing, utility, and government sector. Since the United States economy is driven by the consumption of a product, more jobs would be created when marijuana is legalized. Lastly, if marijuana were to be legalized, it will potentially become a new source of revenue for the government. For example, in Colorado nearly 200 million dollars in tax revenue was collected in 2016 from marijuana sales. Another way that the government could obtain revenue from marijuana is in California, where tax revenue may reach up to 1 billion dollars in marijuana sales.

The non-legalization of marijuana has been brought up extensively. Firstly, marijuana could potentially damage your health. Smoking any substance will have a negative, and

potentially life threatening effect on your respiratory system. Marijuana specifically can also affect a person's memory, IQ, judgment, and problem solving skills. Many studies have also led marijuana to mental illness. For example some people who have smoked marijuana have later been diagnosed with psychosis or schizophrenia. Another important point is that in recent years marijuana strains have become much stronger than they once were. Another point that contributes to the non legalization of marijuana is that marijuana can lead to an increased danger in the safety of all other people. Furthermore, marijuana, like alcohol and other drugs, can lead to impairment of the user. This means that the user is more prone to have a collision, or harm a pedestrian if they are driving under the influence of marijuana. Also, if marijuana is used during work, it can reduce your ability to perform your job accurately and effectively. This can be especially dangerous if you are a pilot or a doctor. Ultimately, the last reason behind not legalizing marijuana is shown in the experiences since legalization occurred in Colorado in 2014. In Colorado, the marijuana usage rate among teens is 50% above the National average because it is so easily accessible. Also, since 2009, drug-related referrals for high school students testing positive for marijuana increased in the state. Moreover, while the total number of car crashes in Colorado decreased, the amount of fatal car crashes with drivers testing positive for marijuana spiked greatly. In Conclusion, there are many different viewpoints to legalizing marijuana, some may be for and some may be against the legalization of marijuana.

Ranked-Choice Voting Approved in NYC

By Nicole Rosenzweig '20

On Tuesday, November 5th, 2019, voters in New York City approved ranked-choice voting for primaries and special elections moving forward. This policy was approved by almost a 3-1 margin in the recent ballot referendum.

Ranked-choice voting allows voters to rank up to five candidates in order of preference. Then, a computerized process eliminates the last-place candidates and redistributes their votes until a candidate gains the majority. This policy has been approved or is in use in 18 other American cities, including San Francisco, Cambridge, Minneapolis, and others.

This policy is designed to enable the successes of third-party candidates while providing the people with a voice regardless of who they pick as their first choice. According to a recent article from *The Atlantic*, ranked-choice voting promotes “guilt-free voting,” which may lead voters to support third-party candidates instead of disregarding candidates whom they do not view as electable.

This policy will also eliminate New York’s traditional runoff election, which could save approximately \$20 million for each election cycle that would require a runoff. By digitally eliminating candidates and redistributing votes, this process is cheaper and more efficient than the previous runoff procedure.

However, some have argued against ranked-choice voting, claiming that it could delay election results. In addition, an article published by *Politico* stated, “In cities where ranked choice has been tried, it has sometimes resulted in unorthodox campaign tactics like multiple candidates banding together into alliances with competitors to jockey for second and third place votes.” Even proponents of ranked-choice voting recognize that the policy might be complicated and confusing for voters. Therefore, many have called for extensive voter education efforts to inform the American public on this policy.

The November 5th referendum also resulted in other changes in New York City. Voters approved the creation of a rainy day fund for the city budget, strengthened prohibitions on former city officials lobbying their former agencies, changed the

composition of the Conflicts of Interest Board, and modified the timeline for the city’s land use review process.

As a result of this recent ballot referendum and other instances, proponents of ranked-choice voting are looking to expand the implementation of this policy. Maine will be the first state to adopt ranked-choice voting in a presidential election. They passed a law approving it, which will take effect in 2020.

Others have called for the use of ranked-choice voting in presidential primaries. States such as Kansas, Alaska, and Hawaii are planning to use ranked-choice voting in the upcoming Democratic primaries. Wyoming Democrats are also considering this policy. According to spokesman David Farmer, “Given the unprecedentedly large field on the Democratic side, the primary was a perfect example of the type of election where ranked-choice voting would be useful and where voters have told us they want it.”

The election data from *Ballotpedia* shows that 73.54% of New York City voters indicated their support for ranked-choice voting on November 5th. With a large majority in favor of this change, New York City will be moving away from their prior plurality voting system. Previously, New York City used a combination of plurality and runoff voting systems to elect the mayor, comptroller, and public advocate. If one candidate did not receive more than 40% of the votes, then a runoff would occur between the top two candidates. Now, the “runoffs” will take place digitally without any additional costs or expenses.

With this new voting system, voters can still opt to select only one candidate. However, they also have the option of ranking up to five candidates. Supporters of ranked-choice voting hope to promote voter empowerment by providing more choices on Election Day. Rather than limiting voters to one candidate, ranked-choice voting allows people to play a role in selecting elected officials, even if their first-choice candidate does not win the election. This change could have profound impacts on the 2020 elections, but it is currently unclear how this policy will influence the political landscape in the near future.

CBD: How It Affects the Sports World

By Ben Messafi '21

Especially in the sport of Football, the drug CBD, mostly found in marijuana, is used by athletes to reduce pain and stress during their careers. CBD was just removed from the WADA or World Anti-Doping Agency's list of banned substances, meaning players can now use it before games but that doesn't include another substance, THC, which is still banned. Leagues like the PGA, NBA, MLB, and NFL still keep Cannabis on the banned list.

Research by WADA states that CBD has effects relating to: "analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antipsychotic, sedative, appetite/sleep-regulating and anti-nausea effect." This drug also speeds up recovery after a workout or game.

This issue in football started around 2006 when many Denver Broncos' players used CBD to alleviate the pain from the game and to have a speedy recovery for the next game. The players want this recovery time to shorten and the use of CBD products can do this. By banning the use of cannabis in the NFL, players begin to get more stressed out due to their elongated recovery times. When NFL players can't recover fast enough, they won't be ready for the next game, making them more prone to injury.

The actual plant CBD is in, Cannabis, helps athletes heal faster but way more effective than CBD. This is true due to all of the cannabinoids (ex: THC) working together to create the "entourage effect" which makes it more effective. CBD is a problem in the NFL due to players smoking Cannabis that includes harmful substances like THC. Cannabis as a whole is vaped, smoked, or eaten in an edible by professional

athletes. If you just use CBD, then it can be in an oil or a gel, which is healthier than smoking or vaping it.

Is CBD considered a PED? This is another concern brought up with the legalization of the substance. A PED or performance-enhancing drug creates an unfair advantage when it comes to sports, giving others more strength, power or simply an advantage over the others. Research shows that it will not become a PED because it only helps with recovery. Many players across the sports world use different drugs/techniques to help relieve pain. Like CBD, these methods like ice baths, massages, and countless other drugs help athletes recover, but aren't considered an "unfair advantage."

Research for this substance is very limited and this method of recovery has not been out for that long for doctors to see the extended or long term effects of the drug. Most doctors know is that it isn't addictive, but are not sure of its purity.

But even though CBD is safe, methods like using THC is not safe and illegal. THC is the main reason NFL players become depressed and suicidal after retirement. Side effects of THC like anxiety and paranoia often occur later in life which causes many NFL players suicides. This also causes increased chances of domestic violence and rape actions to occur in the future. Over the history of the NFL, over 45 suicide deaths have occurred and over 950 felonies have been committed.

In conclusion, taking CBD as a young high school athlete is a risk due to the lack of research. It is not known what the long term effects are or what it could do you in the future.

Travel Violation Columnist Charlie Schloss '20

One of America's most promising exports to the world is sports, which showcase the amazing skills of American athletes, as well as the American way of life. This combination has proven to be a major draw in international markets, and over the years, the number of appearances by domestic sports teams outside the United States has expanded dramatically, bringing American sports and culture to new places on an increasingly large scale. The National Basketball Association has been particularly successful in developing its international presence, and the league has been building its audience across the globe over the last 20 years. Unfortunately for the NBA, this year, American values found themselves at odds with local customs in its biggest global market and challenged American basketball prospects for the immediate future.

In early October, the NBA hosted its annual Global Games in Beijing, China, as part of its runup to the start of the season. The Global Games are an NBA tradition where teams play exhibition games in big markets around the world; this year, the Houston Rockets, China's favorite NBA team, faced off against the reigning NBA champion Toronto Raptors. The NBA was looking to use this event to expand its business relationship with China, seeing an incredible opportunity with over 800 million viewers tuning in to watch basketball during the 2018-2019 season. The NBA and Chinese businesses seemed poised to sign agreements worth many billions of dollars, however, these plans were jeopardized after the Rockets General Manager Daryl Morey tweeted a picture expressing his support for protesters in Hong Kong, resisting main-

land China's control. Although Morey quickly removed the tweet, the damage had already been done.

The Chinese government was incensed over the seemingly harmless tweet and quickly pressed NBA Commissioner Adam Silver to fire Morey. Although the NBA recognized that its response would impact the overall relationship with China, the league supported Morey and defended his right to speak freely.

Silver commented as follows: "these

American values... travel with us wherever we go... and one of those values is free expression." China took great offense to the perceived challenge to its authority and put on hold practically all business deals with the league.

This issue highlights the problem businesses have as they seek to be successful in foreign markets and simultaneously respectful of other cultures.

Many basketball players have shared their thoughts on the topic, including former NBA MVP Charles Barkley

who said "I thought Daryl Morey has the right of freedom of speech. But he also has to understand that he works for the Houston Rockets, which is the No. 1 brand in China for the NBA because of their affiliation with Yao Ming." Barkley followed this up by clarifying "you can't insult a foreign country and go make money there. (Morey) should've looked at the big picture. If he believes that so much, he should not work for the Houston Rockets." Overall, the general consensus has been that while Morey had the right to express his opinion, he needed to be more conscious of the potential consequences. It remains to be seen how the NBA will salvage its relationship with China over the next few years.



Photo Courtesy of Charlie Schloss

The Fair Pay to Play Act

By Zachary Chernick '20

Should college athletes be paid? Should they be able to profit off their likeness? This question has been asked nonstop over the past few months and this debate is showing no signs of stopping. The decision to pay college athletes reached a fever pitch just recently when California passed the Fair Pay to Play Act. This law, which won't go into effect until 2023, will allow for California Student-Athletes to have rights to their own name, image, and likeness, and it will also forbid universities from making rules that punish athletes for trying to market themselves. However, even with this bill being passed, we are still a long ways away from ever solving this issue. The NCAA is still set and stone on not giving into this act but they plan to keep fighting it. But is that fair to these student athletes?

The short answer is no, but it is much more complicated than that. The various universities receive more than \$14 billion while the NCAA receives \$1 billion each year. Even though there is plenty of money to go around, the college athletes see none of it, even though they are the primary reason why these schools are making so much money in the first place. However, many consider that college athletes are already paid through scholarships. For many, this is a blessing for them as they do not have to worry about student loans when they graduate and don't have to worry about the expensive tuitions. For all of the non-athletes that go to college, student loans can cripple their development for years after graduating and it could take a long time until they are back on their feet and able to support themselves.

Most people can agree, though, that the system between the NCAA and its athletes is broken and needs to be fixed. The big and most marketable college athletes are still going to find ways to be paid, albeit illegally. It is common knowledge that all of the big universities pay the big-time recruits to go and play for their school. People

have gone to jail for this such as the various Adidas executives who lured a highly-ranked recruits to play for the University of Louisville. The only way to stop this is by allowing athletes to market themselves so this type of scenario gets avoided, which the state of California has already started doing. However, this type of bill is not fair to college athletes who play in lesser-known sports, yet put in the same time of effort as the athletes who play football or basketball.

One possible solution which has been discussed is having a fixed salary for each college athlete, but of course this becomes extremely complicated and it is extremely unfair to the smaller schools who have less money and resources. The NCAA would become a monopoly of sorts where the biggest schools like the University of Duke (for basketball), and the University of Alabama (for football) would get all of the top recruits each year. Another solution is to simply have the Fair Pay to Play Act be enacted throughout all 50 states. Although many athletes would not get marketing opportunities from huge companies, people do not realize how many opportunities are out there. Local college athletes who are not necessarily popular nationally, but they are popular locally, can be sponsored by a mom-and-pop shop in their neighborhood and make a few bucks off that. Also, college athletes can run clinics just like many pro athletes do, and help young kids get better at whatever sport they are trying to teach.

Unfortunately, this issue does not seem to be resolved anytime soon. There are too many logistical problems to deal with if college athletes are eventually allowed to market themselves. Additionally, that proposition would entirely change how the NCAA operates and the college sports landscape. I am curious to see what happens in the next few years, but I know one thing for sure. This discussion will not end for a while and I am excited to see how it goes and whether this will better college sports as a whole.

Varsity Soccer Season Summary

By Zachary Schutzer '22

This past fall, the Blind Brook High School Varsity Boys and Girls soccer teams had different season endings. Both teams came in as underdogs in the playoffs as the girls had a deep run in the playoffs, while the boys were eliminated first round.

The Blind Brook Varsity girls soccer team finished with 7 wins, 7 losses and 2 ties. The team was coached by Shawn Simone while being led by Senior captains Kaitlyn Shaw and Rachel Sosin. The girls played tough every single game and earned the 13th seed when Sectionals began. Since they were a low seed, the girls had to travel almost an hour for their first round game against the 4th seed, Pawling. The final score of the game was 3-2, with the underdogs Trojans, allowing the girls to advance to the second round. Hoping to keep their playoff dreams alive, the girls visited Ardsley who earned the 5th seed. Both teams fought extremely hard and by the end of regulation, the score was 2-2. The game had to be decided by penalties. At the end of the shootout, the Lady Trojans came out with a 4-3 win. After their second playoff win, the girls knew they had a tough opponent coming up. They faced the best team in their class, Pleasantville. The girls visited Pleasantville hoping to keep their season alive and advance to the finals. Unfortunately, the game was a tough one and Pleasantville came out with a 6-1 victory. The girls played a great, hard fought season. Senior captain Rachel Sosin spoke highly of the team for the run they had in the playoffs: "I think the season went really well. Even though we had some rough patches in the middle of the season we finished strong and made it further in the playoffs than expected. I'm really proud of the whole team!" Senior Kaitlyn Shaw won All Section Honorable Mention. Seniors Sosin and Shaw won All League along with Juniors Brynn Korpi and Jordyn Erenfryd. Juniors Carly Wagner and Sydney Savage won All League Honorable Mention. Senior Captains Sosin and



Photo Courtesy of Anna Campbell
The Varsity Girls' Soccer Team poses for a picture.

Shaw got the opportunity to play in the Section 1 All Star game where the best girls met at Albertus Magnus High School to play High School Soccer for the last time.

The Blind Brook Varsity boys soccer team finished with 7 wins, 5 losses and 3 ties under Coach Ricardo Maxwell Ordain who was given the Head Coaching job after Marcos Monteagudo, last years coach, got the opportunity to coach at Scarsdale. Seniors Martin Gonzalez, Drew Kaye and Isaac Mintz were appointed captains of the team. The team earned the 10th seed in the playoffs. The Trojans visited Pleasantville, who earned the 9th seed. The two teams met earlier in the year where Pleasantville came onto beating the Trojans 4-2 in a very physical game. The boys were very ready and excited for the game, hoping to get revenge from earlier in the season. The game went back and forth with Pleasantville going up 2-0 quickly, but the Trojans brought it back to 2-2 and the game went into Overtime. Overtime did not separate the two teams and the game went into a shootout. Pleasantville beat the Trojans 5-4 on penalties ending the boys season earlier than expected. The season ended with a heart-breaking loss but Senior Captain Isaac Mintz had high words for how the season went: "The season definitely ended on a disappointing note, and we expected to go much farther. But I am very proud of my team, especially those who had the courage to step up to the penalty spot when the game was on the line. We worked extremely hard this season and the team and I are very proud of that." Senior Captains Kaye and Mintz both won All Section and All League. Senior Captain Gonzalez and Senior John Saghir joined Mintz and Kaye by earning All League as well. Similar to the girls, Kaye and Mintz got the opportunity to play in the Section 1 All Star game at Pearl River High School.

Both the boys and girls' teams will spend time in the offseason getting better with the hope to improve on this past season.



Photo/Rachel Sosin
The Varsity Boys' Soccer Team poses for a picture.