

# Focus

VOL XXXV · ISSUE 3

A BLIND BROOK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATION

MAY 2017



## 3 Blind Brook Students Nominated for Metro Awards

Three students have been nominated for the 2017 Metro Awards for their roles on stage and in production for the spring musical, *Grease*: Lee Price, for his Cameo as Teen Angel; Ryan Vogt, for Best Dance performance as Eugene; Madison Goldberg for Technical Merit. The award ceremony will be held at SUNY Purchase on June 12.

## BrainSTEM App Wins Westchester App Bowl Computer Club Garner's Ca\$h Prize and Google Tour

By Abe Baker-Butler

On April 28, the Blind Brook Computer Club won its first-ever victory in the annual Westchester County Mobile App Bowl, taking home two awards. The contest was organized by the Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems at Pace University and attracted over 400 participants from high schools and colleges across the tri-state area.

The task for the contest was to design an app that solves a challenge facing people 65 and older in various aspects of their lives including shopping, healthcare, transportation, finance, recreation, exercise, communication, and other areas. To meet these criteria, the club created an app called BrainStem, which plays on both mental health and the acronym STEM for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The app is meant to target the elderly

and prevent the onset of diseases including Alzheimer's, dementia, and arthritis. Although humans cannot stop the brain from aging over time, various activities build up brain cells and improve cognitive connection. Accordingly, the app includes four mini-games meant to improve four focus areas: memory, logic, reasoning, and reflexes.

One game, Stack, is a block stacking game that helps to improve rule memorization, as it gets progressively more difficult and makes the brain work harder over time. Another, Tile, involves flipping images and then recalling which you flipped to strengthen memory. Summation brings together all the skills previously mentioned in a quiz format and helps users develop their critical thinking skills, reasoning, and reaction time. Finally, the Music game includes three songs and uses rhythm to improve reflexes, which

is beneficial for those with arthritis. To keep users interested, the app provides statistics on their performance, as well as a leaderboard and feedback on their performance.

The members of this year's app design team are Ethan Tillison, Adam Weiss, Adam Fleishaker, Owen Xie, Orsen Way, Claire Wieser, and Agustin Otero. Russell Scharf, Justin John, and Arnav Mohapatra also helped to create the app. In order to most efficiently solve the challenge, the club divided up the work, with one or two members working on each game. Once the games were programmed, Ethan Tillison rewrote the code for iOS. Finally, the club used GitHub to collaborate and combine the games into a cohesive app.

The club received the Usability Award, which included a \$500 cash prize, for their app's navigation intuitiveness, flow, organization, rel-

evance to the target audience, and readiness for the app store. In addition, the club took home the YouTube Social Award for making a video about their app that received the most likes/comments on YouTube.

"We really have to thank the community because everyone cared about it and we're happy that our ideas succeeded," said sophomore Augustin Otero. Thanks to this award, the club will get to take a tour of Google NYC and the YouTube studios there. "The win in the usability category is very impressive, especially when examining the scope of the competition," said Computer Club advisor Charles Von Hollen. "The team was up against other high school students in addition to college undergraduate and graduate students. They made a fully functional app for both iOS and Android and should be tremendously proud of their accomplishments."

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

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## A New Face for the Court

By Mitchell Saunders

On February 13, 2016, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia was found dead at Cibolo Creek Ranch in Shafter, Texas. The nation was rocked as the highly conservative justice often broke a dead-locked Supreme Court.

President Barack Obama then sought to appoint a new Supreme Court Justice, Merrick Garland, the liberal Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, a well-educated choice for the Supreme Court.

Yet, no progress was made towards his confirmation due to the fact that the appointee was liberal, trying to pass by a conservatively dominated Congress.

Congress hoped the new president would bring in a conservative-minded Supreme Court nomination. Congress was indeed delighted when Donald Trump became the 45th President of the United States, and nominated Neil Gorsuch, a strongly conservative judiciary from Denver, Colorado.

Neil Gorsuch was born in Den-

ver, Colorado in 1967. He attended Columbia University, the University of Oxford on a Marshall Scholarship, and Harvard Law School, where he was a classmate of former President Barak Obama.

Throughout his education, Gorsuch was unafraid to voice his conservative opinions on campus. Shortly after graduating, Gorsuch went on to work for a law firm in Washington D.C. and was later appointed as a judge to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, where he would continue to serve for over a decade until his Supreme Court nomination.

The process of confirming a new Supreme Court nominee is long and arduous and requires intervention from numerous branches of the federal government. President Trump first nominated Gorsuch on January 31. The Senate Judiciary Committee, made up of 11 Republicans and 9 Democrats, proceeded to vet Gorsuch in terms of his opinions and his personal background.

The Committee then held a series of hearings in which Senators

questioned Gorsuch in an attempt to perform a "litmus test" and ascertain Gorsuch's views, determine his qualifications, and predict how he would judge once on the bench.

After investigating the nominee, the Committee held a vote to send Gorsuch to the Senate floor for a full-chamber vote.

Yet, the Democrats filibustered, or refused to give up the Senate floor to yield the vote. To stop the filibuster, there had to be a motion for cloture, which requires 60 Senatorial votes.

If this was successful, the majority leader can choose to use the nuclear option. This is because to appoint a Supreme Court Justice, 60 votes are needed, but if those votes are not met, the Senate Majority Leader, in this case Mitch McConnell, can decide to "go nuclear" or, in other words, change the number of votes needed to a simple majority.

At that point the vote will either pass or fail, and Gorsuch was confirmed on the Supreme Court by a vote of 54 to 46 on April 7. He

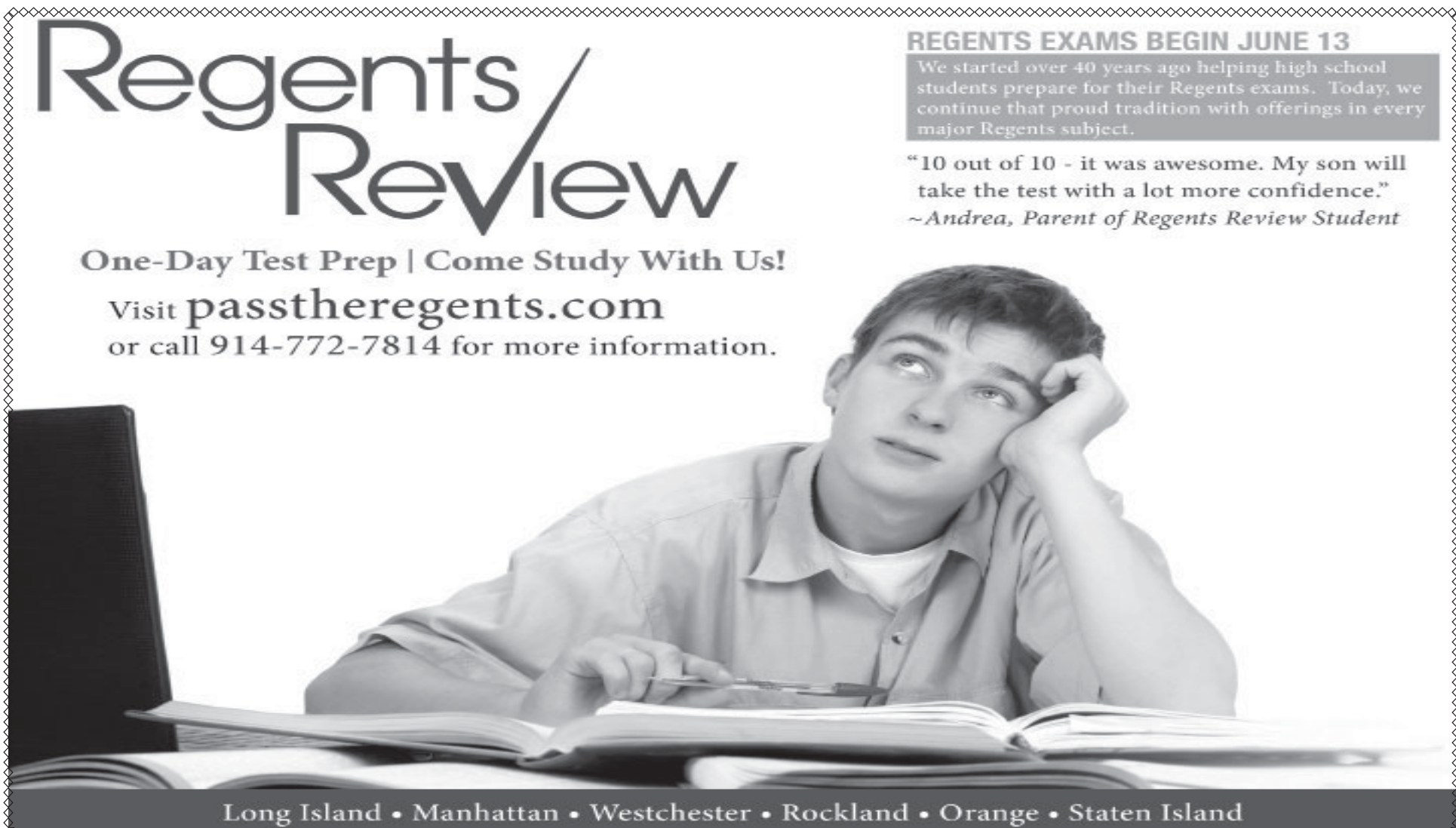
then assumed office on April 8.

Gorsuch was a prime candidate for the Republicans, and although his stance on gun rights and abortion are fluid and not stated, all other views are very conservative.

Gorsuch believes in extending power to the states, or becoming more federalistic. He defends freedom of speech and religion, as well as supports business for the people. He supported the idea of liberty, in which governmental agencies have too much power, enforcing labor and employment laws.

On gay marriage, he has stated he is fairly opposed to it, which could tip the scale for many major cases to be decided.

Lastly, on immigration, Gorsuch is a moderate, swinging back and forth between views, depending on the case. Based on some of these moderate or non-stated views, Gorsuch is not as predictable as he may seem. Although he does have a conservative mind-set, there is a strong possibility that on multiple cases, Gorsuch may "go rogue" or differ his view from what may be expected.



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## Don't Let Fear Define You

On the evening of May 22, over 20,000 people filled the Manchester Arena in England to see Ariana Grande perform. Twenty-two of those people would never make it home, would never see their loved ones again. One-hundred sixteen of them were left injured, lying in hospital beds, thankful to have even survived. The rest made it out unscathed-physically, but not emotionally. For many, what they expected to be the best day of their lives turned out to be the absolute worst. It was a miracle that they made it out alive. It shouldn't have been.

When I first heard about about the Manchester terror attack, the deadliest of its kind in the UK in almost 12 years, a range of emotions went through me. Anger, disgust, sympathy, but mostly fear. This attack was different than the

others I had been aware of in my lifetime. Different than 9/11, different than the Boston Bombing, different than the San Bernardino attack. Different because it could have been me at that concert. It could have been my family.

Just over a year ago, my mom and sister went to an Ariana Grande concert. Not once did the thought cross my mind that they were in any sort of danger. I can't imagine what I would have done if they didn't come home that night.

Of the people killed in Manchester, many were children and teenagers. Others were parents waiting to pick up their kids. The fact that a terrorist organization chose to target a pop concert filled with young girls is sickening.

Growing up in America post 9/11, I've always been aware of terrorism.

Conscious of it, but never on high alert. At concerts, movie theaters, and baseball games, I don't fear being the target of a terrorist attack. When I see someone wearing a backpack, I don't question whether there's a bomb inside. No matter who I pass by- regardless of race, gender, or religion- I never think, this person is going to go to any length to kill as many of us as possible.

When any of us go to an airport, we're all willing go through security, no matter how long the lines are and how frustrating the rules can be. We know that without it, the consequences are too dangerous. But what about the security in other public spaces? When you get on Metro North or go on the subway, there are no bag checks or metal detectors. Stadiums and concert venues usually have these safeguards, but not always. Just walking through Times Square, the person next to you could be a terrorist and you wouldn't know it until it was too late.

Thinking about all of the different ways and places there could be a terrorist attack is absolutely terrifying, because the truth is, terrorism can happen anywhere.

But what does that mean? Are we supposed to constantly live in fear? Should we stop doing things that we enjoy because there's a chance we might get hurt? Where is the line drawn between being careful and being overly cautious? How are we ever supposed to know when the benefits outweighs the risk?

This April, I went on the Shapers trip to Italy. I had fought with my mom for months before she finally said that I could go. Nearly every day leading up to the payment deadline, I would beg her incessantly, citing the benefits of world travel and assuring her that I would get a job to pay her and my dad back every penny.

Her answer was still "no" every time. She was scared that the trip was too dan-

gerous. I was going on two eight-hour flights and was going to be visiting some of the greatest cities in the world. All prime spots for terrorist activity. I dismissed her concerns whenever she broached the subject. I told her that I would rather live my life to the fullest than live in fear. And so eventually, with some convincing by my dad, she let me go, and everything turned out fine. I came back with great stories, unforgettable memories, and a desire to travel to places I had only ever dreamed of visiting.

But in the back of my mind, I can't stop thinking- what if something bad had happened? Would the trip have been worth it then? I honestly can't say. Terrorists want us to feel this sort of overwhelming doubt. They want us to be afraid. They want to make us ashamed to be ourselves, ashamed to live our lives the way that we want to. The only way to take a stand is to show that the adversity we have faced has only made us stronger, more united than ever before.

On Sunday, June 4, Ariana Grande is returning to Manchester to perform a benefit concert with celebrities such as Katy Perry, Justin Bieber, and Miley Cyrus. They aren't afraid of the unknown, so we shouldn't be either.

It will take time, but Manchester will recover. Life will go on, and the attacks will eventually be in the back of our minds. Though, unfortunately, it's impossible to completely prevent terrorist attacks in the future, we will try our best. And for the ones that we can't avoid, we will recover from them as well.

I can't promise you that you'll never witness a terrorist attack. I can't promise you that you'll never be a victim. Life is nothing but unpredictable and often unfair. But trust me when I say that you'll regret it if you choose to miss out on all of the amazing things that this world has to offer.

*Stacy Gerchick*  
Stacy Gerchick  
Editor-in-Chief

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## The Unlikely Story of a Liberal Upset with CNN

### Senior Hannah Brady

I come from a liberal family of doctors and engineers that like to spend their dinners discussing politics and their mornings reading The New York Times. Our group chats are where we share our best Joe Biden memes, and commiserate over every new, terrifying notification from our various news-related apps. When political commentators discuss the “liberal bubble”, and the obliviousness of the educated elite in terms of what the rest of the country believes, I am painfully aware of just how much this applies to my family. With each passing day, the results of the election remain as a fresh and open wound, and we are constantly seeking to understand-how?

With this question in mind, we have gradually turned more and more to CNN and its evening marathons of talking heads, patient hosts and indulgent bias. For a family of frustrated liberals, it is just the kind of catharsis we need, and CNN knows this. In fact, CNN has profited so dramatically from liberals, such as those in my family, it has` been reaping unprecedented profits between 2016 and 2017, approaching one billion dollars for the first time ever (Washington Post). This 24 hour news cycle, where every story is stretched into a global crisis

of dramatic consequence, keeps the audience hooked and in suspense, even though the subject may be something as simple as a tweet.

This tendency to focus mostly on compelling, yet relatively arbitrary stories, causes more complicated, fundamental stories to get buried. When pundits spend valuable time quarrelling over polls and tweets, they leave out other stories that the American people may have more trouble accessing. This arguably helps President Donald Trump to create a smoke screen over real issues- something that CNN has hypocritically accused Trump of doing repeatedly in the past. For example, when Trump accused former President Barack Obama of wiretapping his phones, it seemed obvious to me that he was simply trying to deflect attention away from his own congressional investigations. Trump never provided the evidence that had lead him to the assumption, and the Director of the FBI publicly refuted the claim.

Though a serious accusation like that fully deserved media attention, there was no reasonable evidence to back it up, and so I assumed that it would be nothing but a footnote in the news, something that was addressed and then dismissed until further information was provided.

Instead, I witnessed CNN play a pivotal role in creating Trump’s smoke screen by bringing in pundits to debate this “story” on multiple shows over the course of multiple days. The American people rely on newscasters to act as gatekeepers- a political term for those that decide which stories are important enough to share with the public- and here, CNN failed. Regardless of how many times they refuted Trump’s claim, they still gave the story way more time than it deserved, which gave it the illusion of being the most important thing going on at that time.

Even worse, CNN invited several people on to argue Trump’s case in the wiretapping accusation, which implied that they had a fair argument as well. CNN’s coverage of Trump’s wiretapping claim is just one example of a persistent problem that they have with the logical fallacy of false balance. Though giving the other side a voice is always important, there are times where the evidence speaks for itself, and to present belief as an alternative to fact is simply a distortion of reality.

CNN currently has 24 conservative commentators, and these commentators play a crucial role in representing conservatives from all over the country (CNN). This repre-

sentation is especially important due to the liberal slant of today’s journalism, which results in a gross under representation of conservatives in the media. These commentators serve a positive purpose, and create a mostly positive outcome, but issues arise when belief becomes an acceptable substitute for fact. When CNN invites commentators on to debate against reason, illusion is given a dangerous platform that threatens the judgements of over one million viewers.

Although watching commentators squabble can be wildly entertaining, it can also have a corruptive influence on viewers who cannot distinguish opinion from reality. This, coupled with the attention given to interesting, yet comparatively unimportant stories, makes for a dangerous smoke screen that conceals reality. Though I strongly believe that CNN is not “fake news”, and that they do accurate and thorough reporting, they often fail in their role as gatekeeper and in preventing false balance. It is important that CNN learns how to avoid these issues, not only for journalistic purposes, but to improve their growing audience’s understanding of the world- an audience that includes myself, my family, and many others.

## TV Isn’t Making Us Dumber

### Senior Rachel Goodman

My entire childhood I have been told repeatedly the horrors of watching TV. I’ve seen the stigma and witnessed the vendetta surrounding the culture of it. My parents always warned me not to watch too much TV; they claimed it would rot my brain out, make me obese, or put highly inappropriate thoughts in my mind. Over and over again they threatened to take away my old, vintage, dinosaur TV that I loved so much, and yet they completely failed to realize that without that TV I would not be who I am today.

Since I was little I have had a strong appreciation for storytelling. I have always thought it was such a powerful tool in people’s lives, and loved seeing intricate plot lines being woven. I spent my entire childhood in my own mind—creating, and recreating stories and fantasies. My exposure to TV only made that love stronger. I would sit on my bedroom floor watching *Kim Possible* for hours. The seemingly simple cartoon about a teenage girl combatting crime in her city stimulated so much in my mind; the character, Kim Possible, became my role model. The show taught me the values of being a powerful, strong, independent female.

It instilled principles in my mind to have confidence in who I was and stand up for what I believed in, lessons that my parents could not manually teach me.

My respect and love for TV shows has only grown more in recent years. After doing a summer program last year at New York University Tisch School of the Arts for Dramatic Writing, I came back with a newfound appreciation and love for television and film. On the first day of the program, we were discussing our favorite films and TV shows in my screenwriting class and I felt intimidated by the other students. I had not seen the classics; I had never even heard of the TV shows and films people were mentioning. I realized that I had spent years and years obsessing over homework, tests, and grades- yet barely even knew the foundation of the field I wanted to go into.

So could TV and film really be more intellectually stimulating than I had been told?

I soon found out that it definitely is. Even some of the shows society labels as “dumb”, like *Spongebob*, is considered to be intelligent. My screenwriting professor always raved about how clever the script was. It’s

an adult show in kid form. Also, *Family Guy* is extremely sharp and witty. The entire show is a satire on politics and social values that requires an enormous amount of sophistication to develop. When I watch *Family Guy*, my mind is as stimulated as ever. The show does not rot or numb my brain; it awakens me to detect the allegory, satire, and themes woven into each episode. The creator, Seth Macfarlane, is no idiot. He studied video and animation at Rhode Island School of Design and is an incredibly successful screenwriter, actor, filmmaker, television producer, and singer. He has won several Primetime Emmy awards and also the “Animation Writers Caucus Animation Writing Award” from the Writers Guild of America, the most prestigious organization for film, television, radio, and media writers.

Other TV shows like *Breaking Bad*, which is about a high school chemistry teacher cooking and selling methamphetamine with one of his former students, is considered to be extremely violent and vulgar. *Breaking Bad* has the best script I have ever read and watched in my life. It is my favorite TV show and everything about it is so captivating

and clever. Under pressure from angry parents in 2014, Toys “R” Us banned *Breaking Bad* figures from appearing on the shelves of their stores. Parents said the figures were “a dangerous deviation from [Toys “R” Us’s] family friendly values” (Times Entertainment). Hearing this news enraged me. Although the show is not child friendly and can have very violent, unsettling moments, it is an extremely high-level and sophisticated show that should not be reprimanded for its content, but praised for its brilliance. Actor Aaron Paul, who plays the role of Jesse Pinkman, argued that selling Barbie dolls is way more harmful than selling *Breaking Bad* action figures and I totally agree. *Breaking Bad* does not condone drug use or drug dealing; it is so much more than that. It explores concepts about the importance of family, sin, envy and regret, and power and its corrupting influence. These ideas are far more intellectually stimulating and significant to children than a Barbie doll, which sets unrealistic and troublesome expectations for women. This is exactly why these TV shows and films deserve a better reputation: they can actually make us smarter.



# Going Back to the Roots...

A Celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

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Rohan Dayal

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曹 仁 皓

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Logan Chang

Illustrations/Julia Mendelsohn

family dinners “with chopsticks”, and speaking to family in Cantonese, in Vuong’s case, or “Chenglish”, in Wei’s, as ways they express their Asian culture.

Vuong also goes to Chinese school every Saturday, as I did myself for ten years. At Chinese school, we learn about the language, and also about the culture through what my school called “culture class.” The options for this class period were not exclusively based on Asian culture, with options like traditional dance and origami offered simultaneously with computer coding and debate.

“I think going to a Chinese school where I could learn to read and write Chinese would have greatly benefited me. Now, I can only speak Chinese, but can’t really read anything and I don’t have a strong community, like those at Chinese schools that I can connect to,” said Wei.

Students who have traveled back to Asia, to the “homeland”, describe their experiences as catalysts for their connection with their culture. Kumaran recounts the moment at which she connected the most with Indian culture as “when I was standing on line for a Golden Temple (Tirupati) and I was surrounded by many other people from different parts of India gathered to stand on the three hour line.”

“I felt immersed in my culture when I went back to Hong Kong,” Vuong said. “While my family isn’t from there, we speak Cantonese, so I was pretty proud that I understood everything that was going on, and was able to see a culture that I’m not used to in America.”

“Over the summer, I had the opportunity to teach English in Taiwan to elementary school kids,” Wei said. “They were looking up to us, speaking Chinese to us, and we were trying to speak English to them. It showed how great being bilingual really is, how we are able to connect with people of many cultures. On the days when we weren’t in class, we were running around on the subway, going to different sights, and just being tourists. It was really cool.”

Strong connections to Asian culture can also be fostered closer to home. George recounts his own moment as “when India beat Pakistan in the World Cricket Cup. It was a very nationalistic thing, and a lot of Indians take pride in their cricket team, because we’re not good at any other sports. So, I think that’s a moment [that] we took a lot of pride in.” He adds, “I also felt a lot of pride during Asian American Heritage Month, and I think celebrating and valuing our culture as Asian Americans is something I find really special. The fact that we have this month is extremely important, like how we have Black His-

## By Allison Chien

During spring break, I went to China for a few funerals, including my paternal grandmother’s, which was a very traditional ceremony that took place in our old hometown in the countryside. The ceremony included setting off firecrackers every ten feet as we walked through the entire town, followed by hiking up to the cemetery, which was on a rather large hill, all while carrying large paper flower stands. Completing each seemingly extraordinarily extensive part of this whole process with my entire extended family actually reinvigorated my sense of connection with Chinese culture. As I folded hundreds of silver papers into shapes representing traditional money, I felt an attachment to the millennia of cultural history that culminated in these rituals.

I didn’t always feel a particularly strong association with my Chinese heritage. One of the greatest dilemmas of my early adolescence was whether to root for the American Olympic team or for the Chinese Olympic team. This kind of cultural dichotomy has pervaded not only my life, but the lives of many other Asian-American children.

As May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, it is an appropriate time to explore what it means to be ‘Asian American’, and to celebrate the cultures from which we hail. Yet Asian American culture is as different as the individual Blind Brook students and the way each sees their culture.

Senior Divya Kumaran says “culture would be how I identify with any group. I was born and raised in NY, so I identify much more strongly with American

culture since I usually [only] visit India for two weeks every other year.”

“Culture is everything that is around you,” says sophomore Bryan Wei. “I was brought up in an Asian culture, as my family is Taiwanese, but when I go to school, I am surrounded by a lot of white people, so I’d consider myself Asian American.”

Junior Sam George describes culture as, “the expressed values and ideas that are shared amongst a particular ethnicity. For example, in Indian culture, some expressed values are community, food, and family. I think being Indian in a community that is all-white is really special to me. Having a sort of unity among my other Indian brothers and sisters is something that brings pride to my [personal] Indian heritage. When people take interest in the Indian culture, especially in a community that doesn’t really have a lot of culture besides Jewish culture, allows [for me to] really take pride in being Asian American,” says George.

Freshman Sabrina Vuong has also found that connecting with other Asian Americans at school is important, especially through “similarities in lifestyle and inside jokes.”

Many students find they most strongly connect with their Asian heritage at home. George said that “food is the best way to strengthen one’s culture and to keep one’s culture,” and cites “chicken curry, palak paneer, beef curry, fish molee, and biryani” as his favorite foods, “just to name a few”.

Wei and Vuong have similar experiences, describing

tory Month, and there needs to be an appreciation for Asian Americans.”

When returning to Asia, as I did for my grandma’s funeral, one never truly feels as though they are part of that culture, one is simply just a tad too American, too foreign. Yet, back in America, there are still times when there is a cultural disconnect. One’s friends don’t know how to use chopsticks, they all know prayers and hymns that you’ve never heard of, you’ve been through Chinese school. The uniqueness of a person’s heritage allows for one to have special experiences that other people can learn from and perhaps seek to experience as well. Rather than simply just forgetting one’s heritage in order to fit in, it is important to celebrate those differences.



Should BB Rethink AP?

By Arianna Kohilakis

Taking a step back from AP mania to observe alternatives is a key part of thinking about and exploring our interests as a community in preparation for college. APs have served Blind Brook extremely well in the past and will continue in the future as Blind Brook creates driven and curious students. As a district, learning about the alternatives to a program which greatly influences us can be extremely interesting. These options, specifically International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Topic (AT), and other district-wide programs, possess many overlaps while also displaying extreme differences. Looking into these alternatives reveals that students can acquire rigorous learning experiences which nurture critical thinking, research, writing and presentational skills outside of what AP has to offer.

The purpose of many recent program transitions in other schools has been to better adapt students towards freer thinking and creativity, two attributes which possess the capability to propel them towards success in the volatile twenty-first century education



Photo Courtesy of Arianna Kohilakis

and job markets. These skills, replacing the previous regurgitation of facts to attain a good score on a single test, shows the lengths to which school districts will go in efforts to defend what they believe are the best interests for their students.

Scarsdale High School, validated by a unanimous vote, went about the replacement of offering Advanced Placement courses by creating what they refer to as Advanced Topic, or AT, courses. Yet, this heightened community concerns about placing students at a disadvantage both in the admissions process and in their time adjusting to the difficulty of colleges.

Many parents met the initial calls for this change with resistance. There was increased participation at public town meetings in attempt to fight the transition. According to one parent, Nancy Papandreadis, "it was heavily debated because the parents who supported AT believed that it wasn't right to teach to a test and that our children would be better served by having more thought-provoking and intriguing topics to study whereas the parents who were against the switch believed it would put the students at a disadvantage when applying to colleges. Thankfully, for the majority the latter turned

out not to be true."

An important question raised is whether Scarsdale AT students take the AP tests. In response to this, Papandreadis enthusiastically described the range of choice Scarsdale students are now provided with; "if you want to, you can take the AP and in fact, most AT students do take the AP for their respective courses. For a class like AT psychology we probably won't take the test because our teacher has explained the test is very content based, for example 'what year did so and so...' but we don't focus on studying this because we are doing more experiment-based learning."

IB is another renowned global program which possesses great rigor and emphasizes important skills. Blind Brook's own Dr. Morse acknowledged IB's in comparison to AP's by stating

that they may be a better option to AP's on the grounds that "students really have to go in depth with their knowledge on a particular topic due to the IB program's interest and reliance on writing." These characteristics have been shown to develop critical thinking and a

more global competency. These IBs differ from APs in physical testing and programs. While both AP and IB students can earn college credit, the route varies. In order to earn an IB diploma, students participate in a two-year program during their junior and senior year of high school which includes community service, a standard set of courses and their cumulative assessments and a research paper.

Other local alternatives exist, too. As a supplement to their AP courses, Greenwich High School has created an Innovation Lab (ghsinnovationlab.com) where students update personal reflective blog, give "Presentations of Learning" to showcase their STEM or humanities research and projects completed using Lab resources, and share their knowledge on current events and "hands-on learning" by giving presentations to other classes within the school. Incorporating programs such as the Innovation Lab as a supplement to other rigorous programs creates for a well-rounded learning experience.

Each of these programs have been fine-tuned to create for maximized exposure and education on valuable life skills for high school students to gain and put to use in real world experiences.

Plugged

By Carly Kabot

The bell rings, what's the first thing you do? You reach down and pull your phone out of your bag. Maybe you didn't notice, but the other twenty students around you did the exact same thing. The reaction is seen throughout the halls, the streets, even at a dinner table surrounded by a group of friends. Everyone's head is down and their shoulders are curved, their eyes missing out on what's directly in front of them. We have become slaves to our devices, to the beeps and dings that it emits, to the never ending flow of messages and posts. I know this is true because like you, I am a victim. We can keep avoiding the issue or we can own up to, making the choice to at least be aware of the issue. It's become a natural instinct, a compulsive habit, and is proof that our society is dependent on the little screen in front of us. We are plugged into a world that isn't ours, but one we unintentionally created.

Our generation is in a unique place when it comes to technology. While we weren't the masterminds of its creation, we are the one's who use such technology more than any other demographic group. In a study done by the Pew Research Center, 85% of young adults used their phones to go online, which is 10% higher than



Photo Courtesy of Carly Kabot

any other group. Further, a CNN report concluded that many teens spend up to nine hours a day on social media. We may not realize it, but those few minutes we spend on our phones really do add up quickly. We have developed a crippling fear of boredom and unused time, needing a constant distraction from our own lives. We think that if we don't answer right away that we are doing something wrong. Here's the thing, what are we accomplishing by spending hours attached to our devices? Sure, to some extent we have escaped boredom, but we have also escaped productivity. It's something that happens to all of us, we go to click on one thing and then end up mindlessly scrolling for far too long.

Unlike younger generations, this wasn't what it was always like. We may as well be the last group who created our own worlds in our backyards, rather than on our screens. While we had an imagination, they now have an iPad. For them, not only will they grow up without knowing a world beyond their screen, but they will miss out on even more than we have. I'm not saying that children don't ever play pretend any more, but next time you are at a restaurant take a look around. I'd be surprised if you can't find at least a handful of kids playing on some kind of device. In my opinion, I think part of the reason we spend so much time on our phones is because they are rela-

tively new. Even if we have had them for years now, new things are always being added and updated. This is a sad new reality and I think as teenagers and role models we have a responsibility to change it. I don't want little kids to constantly see us on our phones instead of speaking and to be given the message that it is okay and normal, since it's not.

There certainly are many benefits to technology, as it has created instant access to a whole new world of information. Information, not communication, is what it should be used for. While it is great that we can now speak to people hundreds of miles away, it has diminished our ability to speak face to face, especially when there is something tough to say. Calls are virtually a thing of the past, as many find them awkward. Why not send a text? After all, you don't have to respond right away nor see the other person's reaction.

Calls take away the ability to see and texts take away the ability to see and hear. Basically, it deprives us of using the human emotions we have been given. Our screens have become our greatest defense mechanism to uncomfortable situations. Don't have something to say? Look down at your screen. See someone you want to avoid?

Look down at your screen. Don't have anything else to do? Look down at your screen. Don't lie to yourself, we are all guilty of this.

We have a constant stream of photos, information, and texts being thrown at us every second. This pace has contributed to our daily lives, making us a rushed society. We are always looking for what's next or what we are missing, rather than what we have. Each moment we spend staring at a screen is another moment we won't ever get back. Sometimes I feel like our phone chargers are the IV fluids we need to stay alive. The facts and the science all point to reasons why we should cut back on our phone usage, but that's not even what I care about. I care about the moral reasons why we should and the sickening reality of what 'normal' has become.

The next time the bell rings I'm going to resist the urge. We somehow have to rewire our brains to not reach down and check instagram, facebook, or snapchat. It's not going to be easy, but it's imperative that we do so. We somehow have to get used to having a hard conversation face to face, to not be afraid of silence, and to not dread an unfilled moment. It's only when we can achieve this will we be fully able to immerse ourselves in the real world and to understand each other and ourselves. So go on, unplug yourself, and let's see what happens.



## Fighting the Feces Stigma

By Joie Ng

The human gut microbiome plays a major role in our health and is associated with both physical and mental wellbeing. Beyond digestion, these microbes greatly influence our immune system, regulation, and even behavior. Imbalances in the gut microbiome can have dire consequences, resulting in the development of disease. Fortunately, there are methods to counter these imbalances, such as the incorporation of human feces into the body. As strange as it may seem, stool from healthy people actually contain the microbes necessary to combat harmful bacteria in the gut.

The use of feces for medicinal purposes is not a new concept. It was first documented as a medical treatment in fourth century China where a concoction known as “yellow soup” was prescribed as a remedy for severe diarrhea. In Korea, a traditional rice wine, *Ttong-sul*, was said to have potent healing properties and was believed to have the power to cure epilepsy.

Feces are not something that people these days usually correlate with health benefits or cures. The mere thought of it typically incites wrinkled noses and expressions of disgust. Despite such reactions, currently there is an increasing interest in the potential medical applications of fecal matter, pushing unconventional treatment methods into the spotlight.

Fecal Microbiota Transplantation, or FMT, involves the transfer of human stool from a healthy donor into a patient’s stomach, colon, or small intestines to restore the balance of the recipient’s gut microbes. Various experiments have been conducted to test the effectiveness of FMT, and more specifically, its effectiveness against a bacterial infection known as *Clostridium difficile*.

*C. difficile* is a potentially deadly gastrointestinal infection that is treated with expensive antibiotics, such as vancomycin, which can often have painful side effects. Ironically, in targeting the harmful bacteria, these antibiotics destroy a patient’s essential gut microbes along with it, making it easier for *C. difficile* to take over. Existing antibiotics become progressively ineffective as the bacteria become increasingly resistant through mutation and natural selection.

The first randomized controlled experiment with FMT, published by the New England Journal of Medicine, compared fecal transplants to

treatment with vancomycin in patients with *C. difficile*. During this trial, less than a third of the patients who took vancomycin recovered. By comparison, FMT produced positive results for a shocking 94 percent of patients who had undergone the process.

In response to the promise of this simple solution, many people with *C. difficile* began performing their own D.I.Y. fecal transplants in their own homes in order to avoid the hospital screening costs. Although some did it under the instruction of their doctors, there were others who did it simply with knowledge they found online due to lack of accessibility.

To respond to the increasing demand for healthy feces, OpenBiome was the first stool bank in the United States. This nonprofit organization, founded by two MIT students in 2012, served as a base for collecting and distributing fecal samples from healthy donors to hospitals for transplants. Before sending them out, the fecal samples are carefully screened for infections, among other strict safety measures that are carried out to ensure the safety of the recipients.

Recently, OpenBiome has developed capsules containing fecal microbes. These groundbreaking pills look just like any other that a patient might take. Even though it is still in development, fecal treatments in the pill form are a much easier and appealing alternative to colonoscopy, the current most common method of FMT.

Unfortunately, there are still many barriers to overcome in regard to fecal transplants. The Food and Drug Administration has classified fecal matter as an Investigational New Drug, preventing physicians from utilizing it in the treatment of diseases other than recurrent *C. difficile*. This restrictive regulation of FMT challenges the accessibility of properly screened feces, raising the risk of potential transmissions of infectious diseases.

Many oppose idea of using fecal matter as treatment, deeming it to be too unconventional. Nevertheless, the life changing potential of fecal transplants cannot be ignored. Screened feces should be more readily available to those in need of treatment to reduce the risks of spreading additional infections. Additional in depth research and trials must be conducted to further investigate the crucial link between our gut microbes and our health.

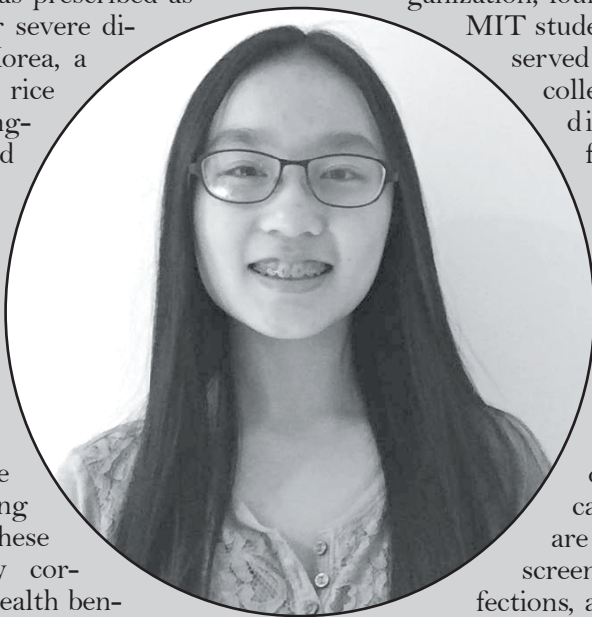


Photo courtesy of Joie Ng

## ACHOOO!

By Isabella Lazar

With a change in season, dreaded allergies and illnesses like the flu seem to victimize dozens of students at a time. Following a few simple guidelines, students can both appropriately avoid germs and boost their immune systems to stay healthy.

First and foremost, sleep has been proven to be an extremely effective defense mechanism against pathogens because it gives the body’s immune system the strength to fight off diseases. In a study published in *Arch Intern Med*, of 153 healthy people given a rhinovirus, the virus that causes the common cold, those who slept fewer than seven hours were almost three times more likely to develop a cold than those with eight or more hours of sleep. Even one hour of sleep can make a huge difference in effectively avoiding sickness. In addition, studies show that teenagers need exactly 9.25 hours of sleep and it is equally important to set up a sleep schedule by waking up and going to bed at the same time every night.

Germs are everywhere, and are inevitably on almost everything that people touch. In fact, rhinovirus, when spread on surfaces, can last up to four days, all while people are touching it. A study conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has shown that “about 80 percent of infectious diseases are transmitted by touch.” Most cold and flu viruses are spread by direct contact, such as sneezing into the same hands that will touch doorknobs and further spread the pathogens. The practice of washing hands often for at least twenty seconds and using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer will help to eliminate a vast majority of germs. It is ideal to wash hands before every meal, when returning from anywhere outside of the house, and especially after using the restroom.

In addition, it is absolutely essential to participate in daily exercise. This is crucial for improving health and preventing chronic disease by normalizing essential substances in the body such as glucose and insulin.

Exercise also helps to reduce stress, a common burden to the immune system that can easily lead to sickness. According to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, “Exercising vigorously for at least two and a half hours each week can reduce your chances of catching the flu”. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, every year between five and twenty percent of all Americans contract the flu. A seasonal flu vaccine is one of the most effective ways to protect oneself from the flu virus, however, it not a perfect solution.

Although the most popular season to catch the flu is in January and February, it often continues all the way into May. The influenza virus replicates and spreads most effectively when the air is cold and dry in the winter.

People can get sick at the end of the winter and beginning of spring when the immune system often goes into overdrive reacting to spring allergies, consequently leaving one more vulnerable to viral contagions.

The flu is so difficult to treat because the virus itself changes very rapidly, initiating something of an arms race with the human immune system. There is still no official “cure” for the flu, and most medications simply ease discomfort by suppressing common symptoms.

Many students and staff at Blind Brook have their own methods of fighting illnesses. Junior Olivia Morrisey has said, “I avoid getting sick by wearing a hat and a jacket when I go outside.”

Junior Julia Bucci has taken another approach. “I avoid getting sick by washing my hands often, going to bed early, and eating healthy.”

“The best way to avoid getting sick is to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, frequent hand washing, and avoid sharing drinks or food with others,” suggests school nurse Nancy Garetto.

There is no perfect solution to avoid getting sick, but rather an arsenal of simple tricks that when combined, prove to be incredibly effective in fighting illnesses.

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## Running/Crying Playlist

By Allison Chien

Spring is a beautiful time, with flowers blooming and birds chirping. Personally, I dread spring. Every March marks the beginning of track season, the best and worst time of my life. On one hand, running is freeing and a sort of masochistic fun, while on the other, running is essentially capital punishment. One method I like to use to distract myself from the unadulterated pain is through music. A good soundtrack is key when your legs are too short to keep up with the rest of the pack during a road run and you end up running by yourself up a massive hill while cars possibly transporting your peers speed past. Thus, I share with you the highlight reel of my “Get Fit or Die Trying” playlist.

“8Teen” by Khalid-

Ever since Khalid released his album American Teen, I’ve been listening to it on repeat nonstop. His voice is smoother than melted chocolate. Khalid’s relatable lyrics seem to flow into each other, like a slow river of teenage angst. The words describe a young eighteen year old falling in love for the first time and learning how to enjoy life. I like to listen to this track during an easy run, since it has a pretty relaxed melody but is still an upbeat tune.

“REDMERCEDES” by Aminé- Aminé, the singer/rapper of the song “Caroline”, is quite skilled at his art. This particular song is pretty mundane for the overall genre. It is about picking up girls, entourage, and flashy cars. The beat of the song is unique and interesting; there’s nothing better than running to the sound of a dude bragging about how he gets girls with his fancy Mercedes.

“Get Low” by Dillon Francis & DJ Snake-

This song falls under the category of “stereotypical gym rat”, or my sprinting songs. This song consists purely of pounding bass and loud background noises. It is perfect for when you want to fully concentrate as your feet pound the pavement and your entire body screaming at the top of its lungs for you to stop. There are minimal lyrics, eliminating any extra verbal meaning and allowing you to focus on pushing your

corporeal cardiovascular system to its fullest potential.

“Bird Machine” by DJ Snake & Alesia- This is another wonderful heavily electronic bass song. This is for when you really want to go hard. I especially like this song because rather than having a beat consisting exclusively of pounding bass, it uses bird chirps. While “Get Low” has about six different words, “Bird Machine” only features three: bird, machine, and check. This song is also fun because rather than having a constant repeat of the same bass line, it slows down and speeds up.

“Numbers” by Skepta & Pharrell Williams-

Skepta is a British rapper who’s been on the scene for quite some time, but is only gaining international recognition recently. The verse with Pharrell

is also a personal favorite because it features the line “My accountant counting my cabbage, also counting my carrots”, which is the strangest metaphor for money and jewels I’ve ever heard. This is more of a slow run or jog song rather than a

sprint, since the tempo isn’t especially intense.

“Sow” by Baauer- Now this is a fast run song. It’s electronic and has some weird mumbling words that are remixed to the point I am pretty sure it’s not a human language anymore. With this song, you can really focus on the pavement in front of you and how far away you are from your destination. This song also showcases the variety of ways one can artificially manipulate sounds, with the word “sow” being autotuned both up and down the musical scale; from a whistle tone to a Darth Vader-like drawl.

“Speakerbox (ft. Lafa Taylor)” by Bassnectar-

If you really want to lose all conscious thought and awareness, then blasting “Bassnectar” through your earbuds is perfect for you. This song even has a super dramatic lead up to the bass drop, so you can accelerate with the tempo. Lafa Taylor also basically screams at the top of his lungs, which provides a galvanizing element to the already powerful beat. It’s really quite satisfying to run at full speed as the bass drops and then slow down as the beat mellows out.



Photo Courtesy of Allison Chien

## Prom Fashion

By Danielle Barsky

With prom quickly approaching on June 9, many students have already begun to shop for their outfits. This year, popular trends have risen from a variety of designers.

For the past couple of years, the majority of students who attended prom chose to wear dark colors such as navy or black. These colors are still popular this year but brighter hues are starting to emerge. Many are choosing to wear pink, red, and royal blue that will allow them to stand out.

“A lot of girls are wearing fun colors this year although their dresses are fairly simple,” said senior Carlie Fern.

Typically, senior girls wear long prom dresses. Recently, the “fit and flare” look has become popular. “Fit and flare” dresses are tight up to the waist and then become looser as the gown reaches the floor. Additionally, some dresses are off the shoulder or strapless. High necklines have also gained popularity as well as gowns with intricate backs and/or slits down the side.

Prom dresses have also become much simpler and many lack beading and sequins. Additionally, dresses with sheer material, cutouts and holes allow dresses to remain simple but have distinctive touches. For the past two years, the two-piece dress has also become trendy, as it is a fairly modern style that includes a top with a matching skirt.

Some of the popular designers for this year’s prom are Jovani, Faviana, and Sherri Hill. Jovani’s unique styles make the brand one of the go-to designers for special occasions. This internationally recognized company is available in over two thousand stores, and has become the largest prom retailer worldwide. Faviana’s mission is to help women feel good and to celebrate themselves.

“I have heard many girls getting their prom dresses from the designer Faviana, and it seems to be a very reputable brand with high quality attire,” says senior Alana Applebaum.

Sherri Hill’s exclusive collection epitomizes the fashionable lifestyle of women today and has over one thousand stores in thirty countries.

To purchase their dresses, many students visit popular websites such as LuLu’s or Prom-Girl that have beautiful gowns in trendy styles.

“LuLu’s has dresses that will fulfill the wants of any girl,” said senior Claire Rothmann.

Dress stores in the area are also extremely popular, such as All Dressed Up in Rye Ridge Plaza and A Step Ahead in Stamford, which both feature dresses from top-notch designers.

As for boys, many buy or rent tuxedos at nearby stores such as Ridge Squire in Port Chester. Tuxedos are simple yet elegant, and are the perfect prom outfit because many boys wear ties that match to their date’s dress.

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## Senior Superlative Awards: Best Male Artist Winner

By Olivia Morrissey

To commemorate their high school careers coming to a close, seniors chose some of their fellow classmates to fill superlatives that will be featured in the school yearbook. Blind Brook High School's superlative awards include "Most Likely to Become Your Boss," "Most Likely to Be on Broadway," and "Most Likely to Become a Politician." This year, the senior class chose Jeremy Weingarten as the winner of "Best Male Artist".

"This award consists of being seen as the most artistic and creative guy in the grade," Weingarten said. "I have been doing art since kindergarten and have always loved drawing things from observation."

Weingarten particularly enjoys drawing political cartoons. In the past he has drawn political cartoons that focus on terrorism, school shootings, gender issues, and terrorism.

Jeremy also likes to paint scenes in nature, and is very proud of his painting of a waterfall in a tropical rainforest. In this painting he mixed green and brown hues to accurately depict the flora and fauna in his artwork. Weingarten's aesthetic primarily revolves around wildlife in the environment and ele-

ments of nature.

Jeremy believes that his four years at Blind Brook High School have helped him to develop his artistic skills immensely. He has taken Studio Art I, Studio Art II, and Advanced Art where he worked on 2D and 3D drawings. More recently, he has taken Portfolio Development where he created an art portfolio and photographed his work.

Weingarten plans to continue to pursue his passion for art by taking classes at the college he is attending next year, the University of Connecticut. He is excited to be able to choose from a more diverse array of art classes. Although Weingarten is sad to leave Blind Brook, he is excited for these new opportunities for artistic development. He has worked extremely hard to create some outstanding pieces in his art classes during his time at Blind Brook and is very happy to culminate his high school artistic career by winning the superlative award.

"I was ecstatic to find out that I was chosen to be the winner of this award and would also like to congratulate Heather Melvin for winning the female title," says Weingarten.



## Senior Superlative Awards: Best Female Artist Winner

By Julia Levine

Winner of the Senior Superlative award for Best Female Artist, Heather Melvin has a true dedication to and passion for art.

"Being voted Best Female Artist by the senior class is reassuring to me because my peers see that I am good at what I love to do," said Melvin.

Melvin's interest in art began at a young age.

"My love for art continued to grow as I learned more and more techniques," she said.

Melvin took art all four years at Blind Brook while also taking many specialized art courses outside of school. She took summer courses at Parsons School of Design and also spent her time creating artwork for her college portfolio. This year she is in AP Art and just finished submitting twenty-four pieces to the College Board.

"She's fantastic, I love seeing each new piece she creates; they are all so cap-

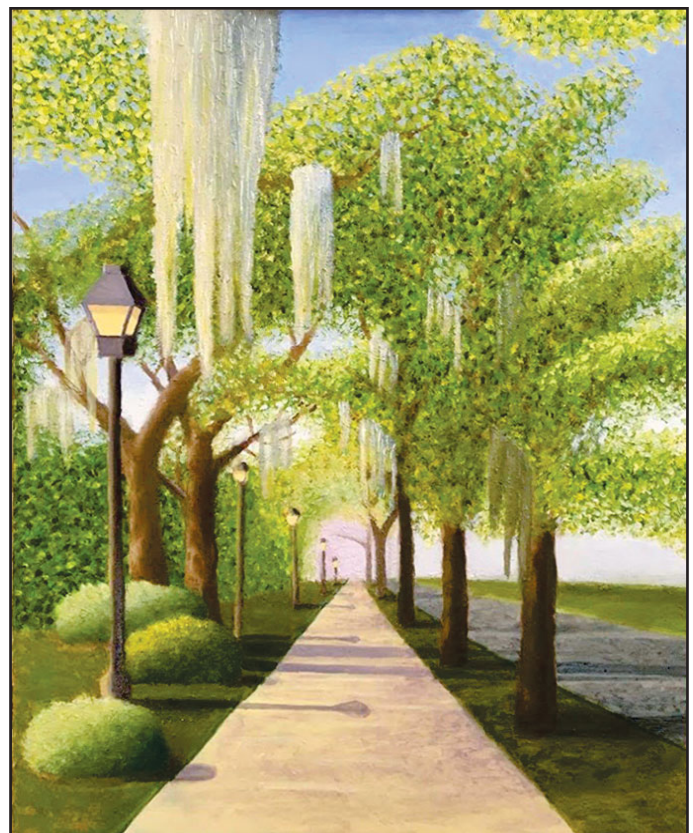
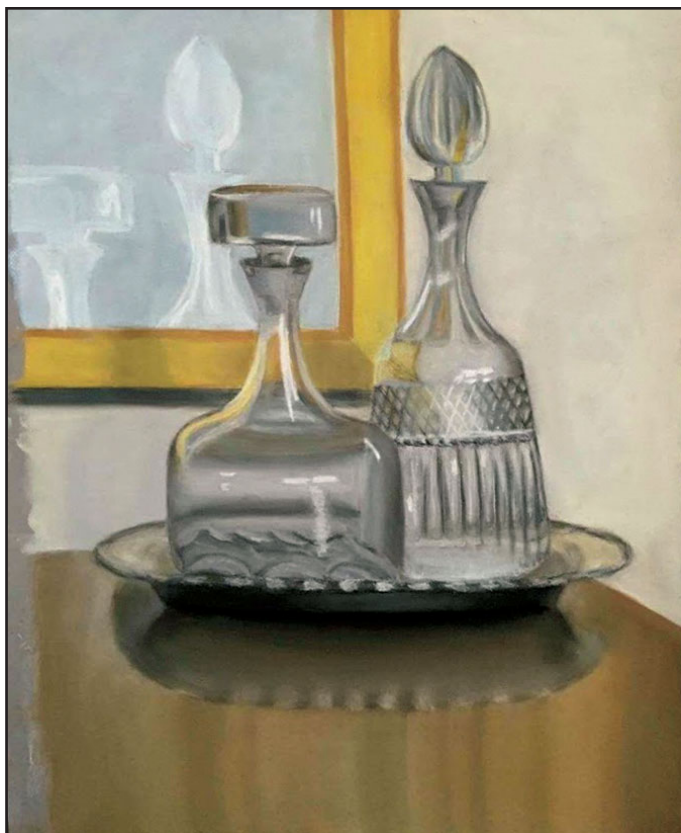
tivating," said senior Fiona Cherry.

In the fall, Melvin will attend Savannah College of Art and Design where she plans to major in illustration with a minor in graphic design. Melvin believes winning the superlative award has made her more confident that she has made the right decision of where to spend the next four years of her life.

"I will continue to do art for the rest of my life, even if most people think it is hard to make a living off of," said Melvin.

Melvin calls herself a "traditional artist," meaning she mostly likes to draw and paint. She especially enjoys painting landscapes and glass figures.

"I enjoy creating pieces with glass subjects because I like to play off the light going through the figures," Melvin said. "I like to capture the light, which is hard to do because glass is transparent. Usually light is only visible when it is bouncing off objects, which makes creating pieces involving glass more challenging and exciting."





# The NCAA & NBA Need to Work Together

By Michael Discolo

One of the most prominent and controversial organizations in sports today is the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), a non-profit organization that regulates the actions of student athletes from thousands of universities around the country. Its main purpose is to ensure that athletes will not capitalize financially on their success through endorsements and prizes.

In breaking these rules, athletes and their respective universities often face severe consequences. In 2010 former University of Southern California (USC) running back Reggie Bush was found guilty of receiving gifts of over \$250,000, resulting in the USC football program victories from the 2005 season to all be vacated and Bush to be stripped of his Heisman Award from the 2005 season. This scandal, along with numerous others, has made incoming college student athletes wary of how long they would like to spend under these strict conditions before possibly going pro. However, some professional leagues have forced possible future players to attend a minimum amount of college to be eligible to play at the next level.

Since 2005, college basketball players are only eligible to enter the NBA draft if they have been out of high school for one year, meaning they are either forced to play on the college level for at least one year or skip college and start their professional careers overseas to eventually play in the NBA when eligible.

This rule has created a new look for college basketball over the past decade, as marquee teams are often led by "one and done" players—players of extreme talent and potential who play at their respective colleges for one season in order to achieve the minimum requirement to enter the NBA. Why are there so many of these types of college athletes today?

Well, since the NCAA prohibits student athletes from making virtually any profit, athletes who are "guaranteed" to make millions on the next level want to capitalize on their success as quickly as possible, consequently getting out of college as fast as they can. Many basketball fans see this as detrimental to the sport, as many of these freshman lack the passion and determination for their schools as other upperclassmen on their team. They see college as just an obstacle that holds them back from achieving their ultimate goal.

The NCAA and the NBA must work together to improve the lives of college athletes. There are really only two viable solutions to this issue, the first that the NBA go back to their 2005 ruling, allowing athletes coming out of high school to be eligible for the NBA draft. This will vastly improve the success of the NBA

as many once and a lifetime athletes will not have their NBA debuts postponed a year due to playing a meaningless freshman year at college.

While some may argue that basketball players should have to go to college to both improve their skill set and mature as an adult, fans have seen some of the greatest NBA players come straight out of high school. NBA legends like Lebron James, Kobe Bryant, and Kevin Garnett all skipped college, but each won numerous awards and lead their respective teams to championships. It would be a shame if NBA fans lost a year of their greatness due to a forced year in college. While this solution does seem appealing, it doesn't seem realistic as the NBA has talked about extending their minimum age requirement to 20 years old.

The other solution to improve the success of the NBA would be for the NCAA to loosen their regulations on athletes and allow them to capitalize financially through endorsements and even from contracts in certain cases.

While college basketball teams should not be handing out million dollar contracts, as many of their players receive scholarships that cover their tuition, NCAA athletes should be able to win unlimited prize money and receive at least a "modest" salary for each year they play.

In doing this NCAA athletes would have a far greater incentive to remain in school for a full four years; they would be able to make money, critique their future games and earn a college degree in case a future in professional sports doesn't pan out.

It is also extremely unfair that most college athletes will practice for long hours each day and have to take on the academic burden of a normal college student, while many of their head coaches and even assistant coaches will make over a million dollars per season.

Paying college athletes will lead to more competitive and watchable college basketball teams as fans will witness elite high school players grow into superstars while having the passion most current college seniors have for their schools.

It is extremely important that the NCAA improve Division 1 basketball as the NCAA basketball tournament alone is responsible for nearly 90% of its revenue. Additionally, since more NCAA athletes have the incentive to remain in college, the graduation rate of student athletes will greatly increase.

If the NCAA and NBA choose to work together in this particular way, it would greatly improve the watchability and competitiveness of basketball at both the college and professional level while also improving the lives of all student athletes.



Photo courtesy of Michael Discolo



Photo/Emma Seguljic

Junior Lucca Colangelo throws a pitch at one of his opponents.

## The Mound, Mitts & Mindset: Varsity Baseball Hits Season Strong

By Scott Rosson

The Trojans Varsity Baseball team is back in action, aiming for success.

"Expectations are pretty high. We have talent to compete, because we have so many guys capable of stepping in and playing so many different positions, which is a major key in any deep run," said junior Lucca Colangelo.

The Trojans' biggest challenge will come on the pitcher's mound. The team only has three starters with varsity experience: senior Jordan Forrester and juniors Jacob Zarkower and Colangelo. The team has added some untested arms in sophomores Harris Blumenthal, Max Aronwald, and Chris Bucci, and junior Austin Zuckerman for support on the hill.

"The effects of losing our seniors has already been felt in a big way. At the same time, we feel like we have the depth and talent to counteract those losses, but it all rides on different guys' ability to step in and produce," said Colangelo.

Key returning players include senior catcher Jake Wynn, senior shortstop Brendan Cummins, senior first baseman Gene Branca, senior outfielder Rob Giuliano, and junior outfielders Sean Wynn and Jonathan Egol.

In their first game on April 4, the Trojans defeated Dobbs Ferry 7-6. Colangelo was

credited with the win and Harris Blumenthal got the save. Forrester led the offense with 2 singles and 2 RBI's. In the game on April 5, Blind Brook dominated West Lake 9-2. Jacob Zarkower went 6.1 innings on the rubber for the win.

The defense played very strong and was supported offensively by Colangelo and Patric Vaccariello. The Trojans lost to Croton 7-2 in its 3rd game on April 7. The Trojans couldn't get the bats going, and made a few errors in the field. In their last game out of the four, the Trojans fell to Briarcliff 13-7 on April 8. Blind Brook did show some offensive life, but it was not enough to match Briarcliff's stellar performance.

"We have done a great job at picking our teammates up after physical or mental errors. Everyone has been supportive of each other which is a big part of winning games. That being said, limiting those physical and mental errors is something we must work on if we want to advance deep into sectionals," said junior Austin Zuckerman. "I feel that we are playing well, but consistency will be a key for us this year. As long as we go out every game with the mindset that we are going to win games, we are going to win games. We have a very talented team that can compete with anyone and everyone," said Zuckerman.

## Girls' LAX Swings into Spring

By Hannah Schaeenman

Led by Head Coach Mike Martino and Assistant Coach Victoria Maksym, the Girls Varsity Lacrosse team has a current record of 0-4. Losing six seniors last season, most of whom were starters, forced the four seniors to step up and fill the cleats.

Having a team consisting mostly of sophomores, the team will take this season to develop and grow. Junior Lauren Comstock said, "we are focusing on improving some aspects defensively and creating new strategies in order to succeed."

Fellow junior teammate, Melanie Stiler includes, "Although we lost a lot of seniors from last season, we are continuing to work hard and build our new team." Despite facing a chal-

lenging beginning to the season, the girls have the same goal in mind, to make sectionals. The girls work on improving each practice while enhancing their ability to work together as a team: to be comfortable and trust one another, no matter the outcome of the rest of their season.

Freshman Katelyn Shaw and Gwen Sabato are key players, providing speed and scoring abilities, as freshman Kayla Ketchabaw provides additional athleticism. Youngest on the team, eighth grader Brynn Korpi is also a valuable player after proving her worth during her time on the field. Korpi is able to create opportunity for herself and her fellow teammates to shine. These student athletes promise a bright future for the Girls Varsity Lacrosse team.



Photo/Lilli Trevino

Girls Varsity Lacrosse team gets psyched for a game.