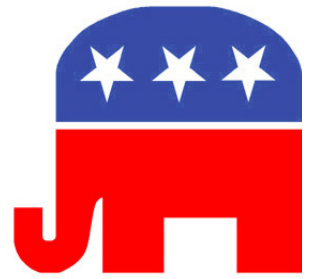




FOCUS



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A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

New Year, New Teachers and Familiar Faces

By Isabella Lazar

For the 2016-17 school year, three new teachers have joined the Blind Brook High School faculty, while four have transitioned from the middle school next door.

Mark Greenwald, Cathy Schaefer, Christine Keegan and Matthew Beatty are the middle school staff members that are now teaching classes in the high school.

Greenwald, the High School Social Studies Department Coordinator, is now teaching a Regents United States History class after not teaching in the high school for sixteen years.

"I am excited to teach 11th grade again. I enjoy the academic rigor and level of instruction at the high school, but enjoy the flexibility of teaching middle school students who are not constrained by a state exam like the Regents. In the end, there are aspects of both levels that I enjoy," said Greenwald.

In addition, Schaefer, a middle school science teacher, now teaches a freshman Living Environment class.

Keegan and Beatty, middle school physical education teachers, now teach a number of gym classes in the high school as well.

Among the new faculty at the high school are teachers Elizabeth Ferucci, Mark Nowak, and James Quigley.

Ferucci is currently filling in for Italian teacher Madeline Salvatore who has been out on maternity leave since last May. Ferucci currently teaches both regular and Honors Italian classes.

Nowak is taking the place of chemistry teacher Michele Sugantino, who has been out on medical leave since the start of the school year.

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Photo courtesy of Dr. Jonathan Ross

Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Ross accepts the Blue Ribbon Award for Blind Brook High School from Ms. Aba Kumi, Director of the National Blue Ribbon Schools program in Washington, D.C. on November 7.

BBHS Named 2016 National Blue Ribbon School

By Sam Gibbs

This year, Blind Brook High School has been named a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education for the first time. Throughout the country a total of only 330 schools were recognized this year.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools program recognizes outstanding public and private schools to celebrate some of the most skilled and effective educators in the country.

Terrel H. Bell, the second Secretary of Education, created the National Blue Ribbon School Program in 1982 to bring public attention to the best schools in the nation, while promoting communication and sharing the best practices used within schools.

Blind Brook was nominated in the "Exemplary High Performing Schools" category, which consists of schools that have their state's highest high school graduation rates, along with the highest achieving students (top 15% in English and mathematics on state assessments).

"In receiving the award, it's hard to be anything but proud of the outstanding work that everyone contributes to make this such a successful district," said Interim Principal Derek Schuelein. "As educators, we come to work each day eager to make a difference in our

students' lives. In as much as our dedication is focused on providing our outstanding students with the best education possible, it's certainly nice to have the results of those efforts so publicly recognized."

Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Ross accepted the award in Washington, D.C. at the Department of Education awards ceremony that took place on November 7 and 8.

Each winner took home an honorary plaque and flag. Blind Brook's flag will be displayed at the King Street campus entrance "as a symbol of the exemplary teaching and learning that occurs not only at Blind Brook High School, but also at the Blind Brook Middle School and the Bruno M. Ponterio Ridge Street School," said Ross.

In a letter to the community, Ross said, "This honor validates and confirms the District's commitment to its vision and mission. The commitment to the success and sustained excellence of our students is a reflection of the high value that all school constituency groups place on public education in this community. All of our students, parents, teacher, staff members and administrators are what makes the Blind Brook School District so special. I salute everyone for this achievement, and offer you my highest praise for this incredible accomplishment."

Lambert on Leave, Schuelein Steps Up, Fuentes Fills Gap at BBHS

By Spencer Feuerman

Principal Patricia Lambert is currently on medical leave following a serious car accident which took place on September 18. She sustained extensive injuries but is expected to make a full recovery, returning to the high school sometime in the near future.

Mr. Derek Schuelein, BBHS Assistant Principal, has been appointed the school's Interim Principal while Lambert is on medical leave.

To fill the vacancy in Schuelein's position, the Board of Education appointed Ms. Lisa Fuentes as Interim Assistant Principal in early October.

For eleven years, Fuentes worked as the Principal of Christopher Columbus High School in the Bronx. She came out of retirement to act as Blind Brook's Interim High School Assistant Principal.

Fuentes has an open door policy and encourages students to visit her if they have any questions or concerns. Her office is located in the high school main office.

Ms. Fuentes has quickly learned High School procedures and has become part of the Blind Brook fabric. She has found the BBHS students and faculty and students to be very open and welcoming.

"I feel like I've always been here," said Fuentes.

In college, Fuentes majored in recreational therapy and minored in education.

After she graduated, she began working as a therapist while simultaneously studying for her master's degree in education.

Inside Focus

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Meet Ms. T, Blind Brook's new Student Assistance Counselor, on page 9.

Politics

Students share their opinions on last week's presidential election. See page 12.

Arts and Entertainment

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Chromebook Initiative Begins at HS

By Allison Chien

At the beginning of the school year, all ninth and tenth grade students were given personal Chromebook computers.

For the past two years, the Chromebooks were exclusively given to middle school students. Now all students in grades 7-10 are owners of school-issued Chromebooks.

The Blind Brook Technology Plan outlines the four stages of the Chromebook Initiative, which began in the 2014-2015 school year and intended to conclude in the 2017-2018 school year.

In the final year of the program, 7th and 12th graders are set to receive Chromebooks. When those seniors (this year's junior class) graduate, their Chromebooks will be given to the following year's 7th graders, completing a cyclic exchange of Chromebooks throughout the middle and high schools.

Students are responsible for bringing their Chromebooks to class everyday, as well as charg-

ing them at home overnight. In order to use their Chromebooks, students and their parents were also required to sign a usage agreement. This document outlines the guidelines for Chromebook operation.

The agreement includes a statement for parents warning them that if their children are to use sites that violate the District's Acceptable Use Policy for technology, their Chromebooks will be promptly taken away. This rule applies to both in-school and home usage of the computers.

In school, students use their Chromebooks to access Google applications, including Google Classroom and Google Drive. These applications allow teachers and students to easily collaborate and share information with each other.

The student and teacher experiences with the Chromebooks has been mostly positive thus far.

"Everything is online now, including the textbooks, I don't

have to make photocopies anymore. The kids do their homework online and I grade it online. Tests and quizzes are handed back immediately," said Christine Sabatella, foreign language teacher.

However, Mrs. Sabatella also believes that Chromebooks have their cons as well. She speculates that a number of her students try playing games and accessing social media during class.

"I'm considering getting a rear view mirror to put in the back of the classroom [to solve this problem]," she said, jokingly.

English 11 and AP Language and Composition teacher Margi Goett thinks that the Chromebooks are valuable, but should not be overused.

"We are living in a world with [increased] virtual interactions, so I think Chromebooks are an important tool," she said, "but I do not see them replacing face-to-face interaction as an equally important part of the classroom."

New Year, New Teachers and Familiar Faces

Continued from page 1

He currently teaches Honors Science Research, Honors Chemistry, and AP Chemistry.

"This year has been a whirlwind so far, but also very exciting. The Blind Brook community of faculty, staff, parents and students have made my transition a smooth one. The students have been great so far...It isn't always the case that students show up with a smile on their faces and a willingness to learn in science classes, but they do here," said Nowak.

Quigley, who teaches 9th grade Global History and 11th grade United States History, previously taught Social Studies in Rockland County and the Bronx.

"My new colleagues have been very helpful in helping me become acclimated to the school," said Quigley. "The student body takes a real ownership in their education and has shown a passion for learning."

Google Classroom Replacing Edline with Mixed Results

By Amanda Cappelli

Google Classroom is an online application that allows students to access and submit assignments. This program is unique in that it allows teachers and students to interact directly through comments, edit suggestions, assignments, and various other posts. Because of this, Google Classroom is now more widely used than Edline for its functionality in high school courses.

There are many perks to Classroom, as it is not only functional, allowing students to do homework, complete assignments, and write essays, but it is also superbly accessible, with the Classroom website,

and apps for smartphone and tablet. This saves valuable class time for both teachers and students, allowing for more productive learning to be done in the 40 minute periods.

"Students can access any assignments of their choice without having to use loose leaf paper and printer paper. It eliminates the excuse of 'I lost it' or 'I left it at home' and it helps students stay organized," said Sophomore Rachel Harris.

The program has an effect outside of the classroom, too. Google Classroom has helped Blind Brook's environmental conservation efforts, as by having everything online, the amount of worksheets being

thrown out on the daily has decreased.

However, Google Classroom is not without its flaws. Teachers are unable to arrange assignments, tests, quizzes, and due dates on a calendar for their students. Without the calendar, it is difficult to plan and prioritize, as many Blind Brook students are finding.

"I don't like not having a calendar option. It's easier to see when [all] things are due in one place," said freshman Ashley Draska.

On the other hand, Edline has always had a calendar feature for not only singular classes, but also for multiple classes. This is especially helpful when teachers are trying

to determine when to schedule exams, as they can see when students already have exams. Edline helps teachers avoid overwhelming their students with multiple tests, quizzes, presentations, and projects in a single day. While students are each given a planner, it is appears to be easier for students to see all due dates and exam dates on a single document that is being updated everyday by the teacher themselves.

As Google Classroom is being implemented into the academic curriculum for younger students, Edline will be phased out and may even become obsolete. Hopefully, by then, Classroom will have improved upon its faults.

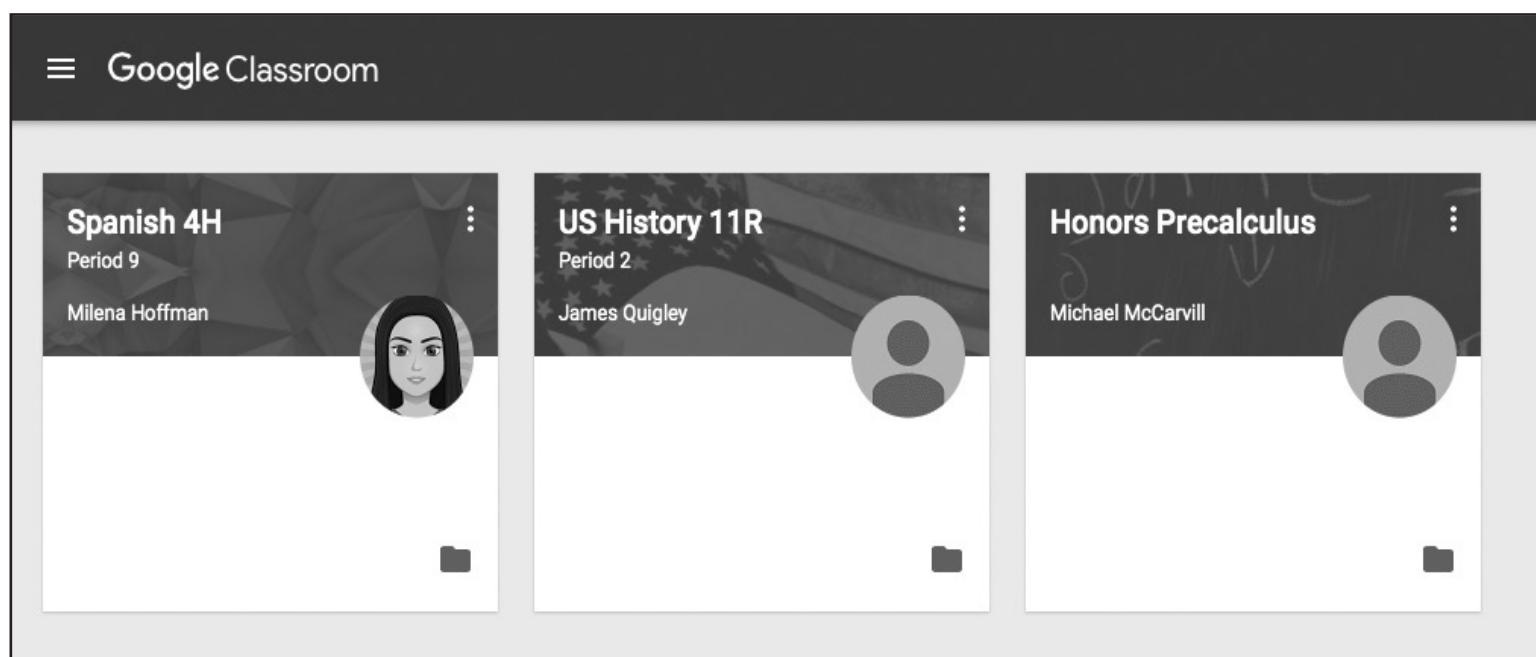


Photo courtesy of Zoe Cohen
A sample of a junior's Google Classroom homepage.

BBMS/HS Reorganizes Administrative and Security Offices

By Jack Wells

Over the summer, the custodians were hard at work reconfiguring key areas of the middle and high school.

With the entrance way free of any security desk, the security guards now have an office space. Their office was once part of the main office, and now that space is equipped with everything needed to monitor the interior and exterior of the building. This allows the security guards to keep the students and faculty safe under security regulations as a result of their newly remodeled office.

When visitors now enter the

building, they will see the new glass window with a security guard ready to allow them access into the building. Instead of being let into the building before receiving the permission to enter, visitors now are required to wait in the entryway until access is granted. This better ensures the safety of the students by keeping out unwanted visitors.

The new office space allows the security guards to have a more privatized setting with additional room for organization.

"We are now more comfortable, since we are no longer in the main stream where students

are constantly passing by, and the renovations give us a chance to work without any distractions," said security guard Joseph Funiello.

Key administrative offices have been affected due to the recent hiring of the middle school principal. Now that Schuelein is solely the assistant principal for the high school, he and the attendance clerk Ms. Roseann Dirosa, have migrated upstairs. They have moved into the former learning center classroom HLC4, which allows them to work together more efficiently.

Although Schuelein is no lon-

ger near the main office, the move allows for him to be easily accessible to students throughout the day, as opposed to being on the outskirts of student traffic in his previous location in the HS Main Office.

Schuelein said, "The move spreads out the administration and I now can provide supervision [upstairs]. It is nice to be able to see what's going on and to be able to help if anyone needs it. [The move] makes the most sense because if there is ever an emergency, we can be in separate parts of the building which allows us to be more responsive."



Photo/Emma Seguljic
Sign directs visitors to the new security office.



Photo/Zoe Cohen
Blind Brook security guards enjoy their new enclosed observation point by the entrance of the High School and Middle School.

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It's Time to Move On

Checks and balances. Separation of powers. The Bill of Rights. These are crucial components of American democracy. For over 200 years, these safeguards have allowed the United States to exist on the basis of protecting the rights and liberties of citizens. For such a solid system of government, it baffles me that so many Americans are suddenly starting to doubt its effectiveness after last Tuesday's presidential election. Though Donald Trump may have secured the win, he certainly did not gain the ability to reverse centuries of history.

It is no secret that Trump has made a number of offensive re-

marks toward women, minorities, and other groups of people throughout his career. While he did apologize for many of his comments, people still have the right to be angry with Trump's vulgarity and insensitivity. His own supporters even condemn his words. However, Americans need to start thinking rationally about the effect of Trump's beliefs on our society. An absurd number of people seem to be under the impression that Trump is on the verge of turning our country into a totalitarian state. In reality, he has virtually no power to do so.

Yes, the American government is about to become more conser-

vative. In addition to a Republican president-elect, there is now a Republican majority in both houses of Congress, and it is presumed that Trump will appoint a conservative Supreme Court justice to replace Antonin Scalia. However, just because many members of Congress and the Supreme Court are conservative, does not mean that they will all automatically agree with Trump's ideas. It is extremely unlikely that Trump will be able to get any sort of radical legislation enacted, if he even attempts to do so at all. People also need to recognize that a new conservative Supreme Court justice far from guarantees that cases such as *Roe v. Wade* (1973), which declared abortion legal under the Fourteenth Amendment, and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), which declared gay marriage legal under the Fourteenth Amendment, will be overturned. The court that decided *Roe v. Wade* over 40 years ago consisted of a majority of judges nominated by Republican presidents. Since then, the Supreme Court has been comprised of a Republican-nominated majority up until Scalia's death earlier this year.

Fueled by unsubstantiated fears, many liberals' blatant refusal to accept Trump as the nation's next president is highly problematic and completely undermines the United States government. Although Clinton did win the popular vote, Trump won the presidential

election through the electoral college system. This system has been used in our country since its inception. Those who reject Trump as the president-elect are essentially rejecting American democracy itself. This would be a different situation if Trump unfairly won the election. The reality is that we are living in a bubble. Because we live in the Northeast, it is hard for many of us to realize that the rest of the country, aside from the West Coast, is far less liberal. Over 60 million Americans voted for Trump. This is no small number. Just because our community is filled with like-minded individuals does not mean that we can ignore the beliefs and opinions of those we disagree with.

By no means do you have to like Trump, nor do you have to agree with him. Disagreement itself is what fuels politics. However, the disagreement that currently exists throughout the nation is getting violent and out of control. The riots and protests taking place throughout the country are doing nothing but wasting time and energy that could be used for far more constructive purposes.

For the next four years, Donald Trump will be the president of the United States. The chances of him not entering office in January are slim to none. Instead of complaining about the election results, try to keep an open mind. Give Trump the chance he deserves.


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Editor-in-Chief

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Submissions should be no longer than 350 words.

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The Pen Is Just as Mighty as the Computer

Sophomore Carly Kabot

I remember sitting down to choose course selections for ninth grade, filled with excitement that I would finally get to take a class dedicated to writing and publishing. I filled in the form to be brought back to the guidance office a few days later. I was told that the class I was planning on taking, Publications, would not be running. Visibly dismayed, I was told not to worry because there would be plenty of opportunities later on in high school to develop my writing skills. Fast forward a year later signing up for tenth grade courses, where my story continues. Creative Writing, Journalism, and Honors Leadership were cut for the upcoming school year. That's when something inside of me snapped. My growing impatience turned into utter frustration.

Before I continue, I want to make it clear that I'm not against the growing number of STEM related classes and electives. Nevertheless, these classes should be a supplement, not a replacement. In a world where in-

novation has taken flight, I completely see the value in learning things such as coding and robotics. However, our school should be providing a greater diversity of classes to put all students on an even playing field. I want to be given the same opportunity as my peers to thrive and progress, no matter what subjects I'm interested in.

I'm through with pretending to be okay with it, for there is a number of students who are not being given the tools they need to reach their full potential. It's as if we're trying to shove 100 different-sized feet into one shoe. Not all of us want to grow up to be doctors or artists. There is a middle group that we often neglect who have so much to share and a great desire to learn. This is the group in which I have always considered myself to fall, an extremely bothersome place to be. I am not a numbers person, nor an artist. I have a thousand interests, yet no electives are offered to let me explore them.

When next year rolls around,

how do I know I won't be told the same thing? It's happened before, and with the direction our school seems to be heading, kids like me are the ones being left in the dust. For math and science, the options open up the moment freshman year begins, a multitude of paths to take. I understand that due to our budget, it would be nearly impossible to have an equal number of STEM and English classes. All I'm asking for is one writing elective, in any way, shape, or form. To put this in perspective, we have seven honors/AP math classes, five honors/AP science classes, and five science related electives, but only three honors/AP English classes. The numbers don't lie: it's extremely evident which department our school is letting fall behind.

Our English department does an exceptional job at laying down the foundation for thinking, writing, and analyzing literature. However, just like in a regular math class, not everyone wants to be there. Having an English based elective opens the

doors for students who have the passion to dive deeper and the ambition to push themselves beyond learning the standard curriculum. When you have a group of students with a common interest, a unique type of collaborative magic occurs. Ideas bounce off the walls like lightning, excited energy fills the air, and adrenaline vibrates through each student's pen.

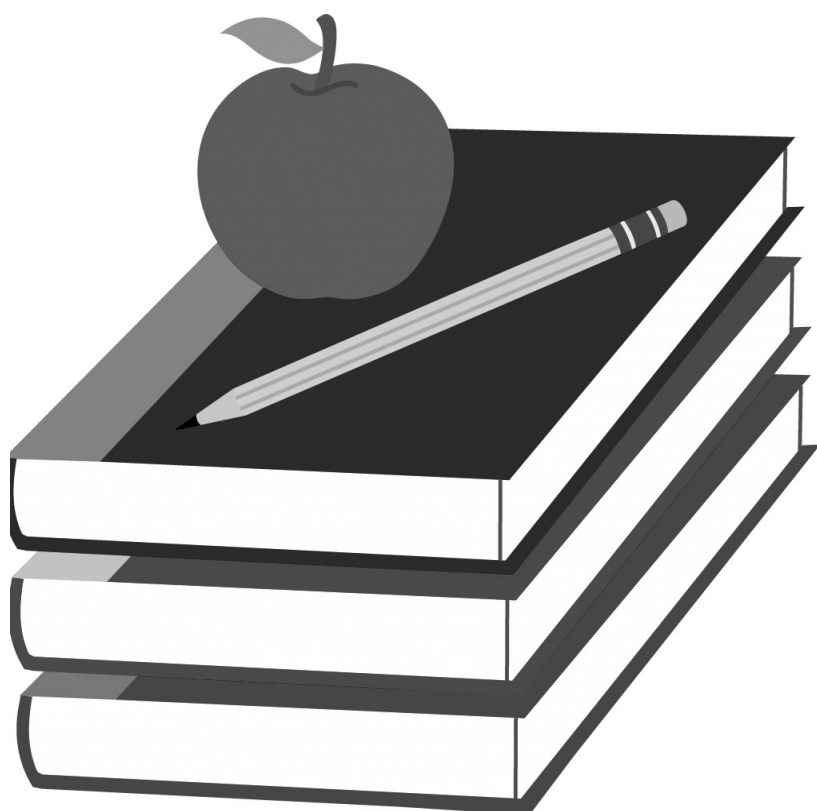
Whether it's a robotics class or a creative writing workshop, we all deserve to not only embrace, but to develop our unique interests. Our world needs creative minds just as much as practical ones. Writing and literature have stood the test of time since man was created. Our generation has a duty not to let it die out. Writing is the portrayal of human essence itself: our experiences, our emotions, and our fears. No matter how far we progress as a society, we still must record our history. The pen is not necessarily mightier than the computer these days, but it's certainly equal. It's time for our school to acknowledge this fact.

Do you need Community Service hours?

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

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Do Something for Yourself, Not Your Transcript

Senior Hannah Brady

Like a lot of other students at Blind Brook, I've lived here my entire life. I grew up swinging on the monkey bars at Ridge Street, dreading the Snowball, and getting excited for class picnics at the beginning of summer. So as I begin my senior year and approach the end of an era, I ask myself, "Did I make the most of my time here?"

To be honest, I don't know that I did. When I think of the last few years, I think of running on six hours of sleep—sometimes less—every day for weeks, skipping lunch over and over again to cram for tests, and drinking so many cups of coffee that I have to constantly explain why I'm shaking so much. I think of taking the ACT once, and being one point away from my goal, and then taking it again and achieving that goal, and then taking it again after that just in case I could get my score up even higher. I think of constantly getting colds because my im-

mune system has been slaughtered by sleep deprivation, and then never staying home because I couldn't bear to miss class. I think of how it's not only me who lives life this way. I think of the late FaceTimes with friends, when it's midnight and we have school the next day, and the conversation seems to always go, "I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it."

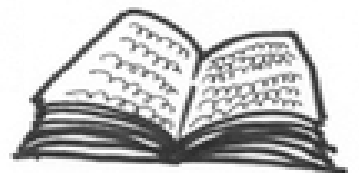
But so many of us do. We survive all of this—hate every minute of it—but emerge, nevertheless, at the end of each year just fine, without ever considering whether or not the work was worth the reward. My grades, my scores, my extracurriculars, my classes: my life's work up until this point. I truly do feel a sense of pride and accomplishment for these things; I poured myself into them. I earned them. But I have also made the mistake of letting them control me, and even worse: define me.

During a college interview a

few weeks back, the only question that threw me off was, "What do you do for fun?" I had absolutely no idea what to say. I could have easily told them about my resume, or even recited memorized quotes from their website, but had no clue what I enjoyed to do. During the rare moments when I realize there is no more work I have to get done and I'm not with friends, I don't have the energy or strength for hobbies. Instead, I prefer to crawl into bed, watch Netflix, and try not to think for hours. I couldn't say this to the college representative, so instead I listed all of my extracurriculars over again, as if they were done by personal choice and not just as things to put on my resume. That is not to say that I do not like my extracurriculars, because I often do, but that I don't do them for myself. I do them because for whatever reason, I feel it necessary to devote every aspect of my life to perfecting

my resume.

As I approach the end of my high school career, I try not to think about the college decisions coming my way. Instead, I think of all the things that I can do to make up for wasted time. I try to find time to read, watch the debates and look for things I could enjoy or be passionate about. I try not to cancel plans with friends because of schoolwork, and I try to actually enjoy what I learn, rather than just write it down and memorize it. It is not too late—whether you are a senior, junior, sophomore, or freshman—to go outside and do something for yourself, not for your transcript. After all, when you are an adult looking back on your high school experience, what would you rather have come to mind? A couple of numbers? Or happy memories of the things that you are passionate about, that taught you about yourself, and possibly set you on track for the rest of your life?



Illustrations/Allison Chien

Teenagers, Stress, and Sleep

Sophomore Lisa Brady

Every year the expectations for students rise, and many adolescents are forced to accept the reality that they may not get into the college of their dreams. This is partly because schools put too much pressure on students, and when they cannot meet the requirements, they are left behind.

For example, the average teenager has around three and a half hours of homework a night. This is not ideal, but would be manageable if students were not told that in order to get into a good college, they also need to participate in sports and extracurriculars. This means that if a school day ends around three, and a student has to stay at school for another hour or two for their sports or after-school activities, they might not get home until 5:00 p.m.

If you add another hour for showering and eating dinner, some students may not get to start their work until 6:00 p.m. Adding on three and a half hours of homework, many students do not get a moment of free time until 9:30 p.m. This leaves a small amount of time for leisure, and even less for students that have tests or projects due in addition to homework.

The average teenager gets seven and a quarter hours of sleep every night, which is almost two hours less than the nine hours they are supposed to get. The next day, when a student is assigned homework, what should be three and a half hours worth of work takes four and a half hours or more because sleep-deprivation leads to a de-

cline in efficiency.

The easiest solution to this problem would be if students were assigned less work. However, this solution is nearly impossible because the increased societal pressure to do well is causing students to take on more and more classes in order to compete with other students for limited opportunities. This is because most students understand—though still possible—that it is difficult to be financially successful without first going to college. If all students stopped taking so many classes at the same time, teachers and colleges would be forced to lower their expectations, but very few students are daring enough to do this.

Homework, extracurriculars, and lack of sleep puts too much

pressure on students. On top of all of that, they are expected to balance a social life, study for standardized tests, and fill out college applications. All of this additional testing and work is an enormous burden on top of regular schoolwork. To make matters worse, teachers rarely cut down on assignments and tests despite knowing of students' other obligations.

Students are forced into an over-competitive environment as early as middle school, and are told that they can only be successful if they get good grades. All of this pressure has led to teenagers becoming even more stressed than adults. This is a deep flaw in the education system and needs to be addressed immediately.

Inside the Mind of a Blind Brook Junior

By Arianna Kohilakis

With another September came the most anticipated event since June: school. Whether it had been dreaded or welcomed with excitement, all four-hundred and seventy two of us walked through the front doors once again after bidding our summers goodbye.

Blind Brook is a school which certainly I feel lucky to attend. There are countless clubs to join, sports teams to play for, and events to attend alongside our peers. But once all of this is put aside, the backbone of our entire school is revealed: our classes. Each class is handpicked with hours of aid from our guidance counselors, previous teachers and fellow students.

At times, it seems that we are unsure of what we are getting ourselves into, but in the end we all hope that we've picked classes that'll set us up for successful college applications and bright futures.

First period on the first day of school is the true moment of truth. The questions of whether or not the proper classes were picked are finally so many steps closer to being answered. In my head I tally the hours of work I stipulate I'll have to do in order to succeed in this class. Often times it seems daunting, and I'm left wondering how it is humanly possible to do everything expected from my teachers on top of extracurricular work. Of course, by the time the first few weeks of school pass, many doubts are either refuted or validated.

As a junior, all of the stress seems to be heightened. Each bad grade seems to become a barrier standing in the way of receiving an admittance to a top college choice. The pressure is on to be able to participate in as many extracurriculars as we can all while juggling standardized test preparation. Thoughts of which of these seemingly countless factors will be of the most benefit to us in the long run

flit across our minds. With all of this, becoming distracted or overwhelmed by simple school assignments occurs more often than not.

Perhaps the most prevalent question associated with the mysteries that are classes is: why take Advanced Placement (AP) classes? At Blind Brook, junior year is the first year we are allowed to take these classes, with a few exceptions. With everything fresh and new that we are getting a taste of, AP classes are definitely at the top the list. AP courses give high schoolers the ability to take classes with college-level curricula.

In May, students take AP tests and in many cases are able to attain some form of college course credit if they receive high enough scores on the exams. The idea of being able to take these advanced classes can be extremely motivating and exciting to high school students.

Each course has its reputation. We've all heard that one may have no homework or that the tests are impossible in another. But in reality, the only thing that matters is how you approach the class. As long as you're interested in the subject matter and put in the effort to do well, you're on the way to success.

The compilation of all these thoughts is an early reflection as a junior on the classes, activities and stressors which typically give this year the infamous title of "he11 year". In a competitive district such as Blind Brook, it is very easy to get caught up thinking about grades and how to be the most prepared for when we have to submit our college applications next year. But high school isn't supposed to be interminable. It's supposed to be a time for us to learn and to grow. Even though we all should be thinking about our futures, it's important for us to set aside time to make memories and enjoy the present.



Photo Courtesy of Arianna Kohilakis

Midnight Run

Midnight Run, the BB organization which helps the homeless, is collecting items for its upcoming run on **Friday, January 13, 2017.**

Items needed include

- ☑ Any Winter clothing-- hats, gloves, scarves
- ☑ Large sweaters, sweatshirts and jackets.

Midnight Run also needs donations of

- ☑ **NEW** Mens' underwear, socks, and toiletries.

For more information, contact Rowan **at** RowanisReddy@gmail.com

Watch for the community email coming soon!

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Beginning of the End: SENIORS '17

Seniors' Favorite Lunchtime Eateries

By Jeffrey D'Ambrosio

For seniors, lunch periods are no longer confined to cramped tables in the Commons and the usual choice of cafeteria food. With parking passes hanging from their cars and driver's licenses in their pockets, seniors are eligible to leave campus during their free periods. This long awaited freedom has made coffee and food runs integral parts of many seniors' school days.

"Leaving school is one of the best senior privileges. Many of us seniors are super stressed out with college and AP classes, and leaving school is like a mini break from everything," said senior Petal Samrow.

With the mass exodus of seniors that typically occurs around the middle of the day, the most popular places to grab a bite usually fill up with familiar faces. The Starbucks, Chop't and Chipotle in the Rye Ridge shopping center are always reliable options for students in a hurry to get back to the school before their forty-minute free periods are up. Lenny's Bagels is also a timeless classic among Blind Brook seniors craving breakfast food and morning coffee.

The G*Ville Deli is another top choice amongst seniors. The deli never ceases to impress newcomers by continuing to serve up the ever-popular Grilled Mac n Cheese, Civic Center, and Country Club sandwiches. A walk around the commons will show that their French fries are also in high-demand from Blind Brook seniors.

"If I leave during my free periods, I'm typically going to get food somewhere. And I find myself ending up at the G*ville Deli almost every time," said senior Anthony Provenzano.

Glenville is also home to Glenville Pizza, a favorite among many Blind Brook students. Their wide range of pizza toppings and other dishes, combined with their efficient service make it one of the top choices for seniors craving Italian food

In a unique attempt, senior Rowan Reddy has made it his personal mission to try as many restaurants as possible during his free periods by the end of the school year.

"Since it is still the start of senior year, my friends and I have been taking a tour of all the delis in the area. As of right now, there still isn't one that [we think] outshines all the others," said Reddy.

You Know You're a Senior When...

By Stacy Gerchick and Lauren Rothmann

1. Senioritis starts well before the school year actually does.
2. You nearly pass out the day before school starts after accidentally inhaling all of the spray paint fumes associated with painting "the rock".
3. You wake up in the middle of the night cringing about all of the looming college deadlines you have ahead of you... and all of the essays you still have to write.
4. Filling out the transcript request forms for each college you're applying to is the biggest struggle in your life.
5. You desperately need to talk to your guidance counselor but when you go to their office the door is always closed and you think you might cry. Then you realize every other person in your grade needs to talk to their guidance counselor, too.
6. You go to bed late doing homework every night and then come home to take a nap because you're just so tired, which only means that the cycle starts all over again the next day.
7. You leave to get coffee or food with your friends during your free periods when you know you should really be doing studying or doing your homework.
8. Every new experience to happen in your life is a potential topic for your college essay.
9. The Common Application is the bane of your existence.
10. Then you find out one of your colleges doesn't use the Common App and you just can't even.
11. You have absolutely no idea where in the country you'll be next year or what your life will look like and you're freaking out.
12. You see all the new freshmen walking through the halls and you think back to when you were them and reminisce about how easy life was.
13. Whenever someone hears that you're a senior, the first thing they ask you about is college. Ugh.
14. If someone says the word "supplement" one more time, you think your head might literally explode.
15. Sometimes you just think: what am I even doing with my life? But then you're like, whatever, I'm a senior.

Senior Year Traditions



Photo courtesy of Erica Wels
Seniors Alli Hamburger, Spencer Kaplan, and Jamie Broitman smile for the camera after painting their names on the senior rock, an annual tradition.

By Allison Chien

Senior year is both the most highly anticipated year and the most dreaded one. Along with the infamous college application process comes the prospect of leaving home and saying goodbye to family and lifelong friends. However, through a variety of long-standing traditions,

Blind Brook seniors make sure that this is a year they won't forget.

Many of the senior traditions are full-fledged art projects, including the painting of the senior rock and the decorating of senior cars. Rock painting happens every summer, the day before the start of the new school year.

The members of the senior class gather on campus and spray paint their names on the large rock in the center of the courtyard outside the Middle School cafeteria.

The senior class typically dresses in a white ensemble to paint the rock. After everyone is finished, seniors proudly emerge with hand prints and spray paint on their shirts.

"The rock painting is definitely one of my favorite senior traditions. I have so many pictures from that day of myself and my friends laughing and having fun," said senior Alexa Limb.

Many seniors choose that same day to paint their cars with senior-themed designs. While this is not a school-sanctioned event, a large number of seniors go to the parking lot of Ridge Street School to com-

plete this activity. At the end of the day, various sayings and phrases that incorporate their graduating year stand out on the cars of the seniors.

The Scavenger Hunt is another popular senior tradition. Although it is also not a school sponsored event, the senior class officers typically organize it.

The seniors divide themselves into teams and pick a theme for their group's outfit. Each team must complete as many tasks as they can within one hour. The seniors congregate in the parking lot of SUNY Purchase to receive the scavenger hunt list, and must return after the hour is up.

Last year, the senior Scavenger Hunt was shut down soon after it began as students' health and safety were at risk. Students had disobeyed traffic laws and were speeding.

"Traditions are important. Like anything else, there are good traditions and bad traditions...Painting the rock before school starts is a good tradition. The senior Scavenger Hunt, however, is a very negative tradition, and one that I'm

against. It advocates reckless and sometimes even illegal behavior, and should either be discontinued or significantly modified," said senior Bryan Weintraub.

However, not all seniors share this opinion.

"Our grade really tried to be as safe as possible during our Scavenger Hunt. As far as I could tell, everyone was just trying to have fun and enjoy one of the last days of summer," said Limb.

The senior Halloween parade is an annual tradition which seniors think about once the school year begins.

Seniors arrive in the morning dressed up to show off their costumes before the rest of the school.

One of this year's costume winners, the Jersey Shore Girls Jessie Scher, Gabby Joyce, Joanna Perrotta, and Rachel Lindstrom. A crowd favorite, they donned big hair, gold chains on black and leopard print:

"So many of the seniors' costumes were really clever," said junior Olivia Morrissey. "I can't wait to dress up with my friends next year."

Let's Make Stress Our Friend

By Carly Kabot

As the dog days of summer are far behind us, we try to grab hold of the last remnants of summer that are nearly buried under thick piles of growing homework. School and stress go together like cookies and milk; it's a pair that's hard to break. If you've never been stressed before, you haven't ventured outside your comfort zone or strived for something beyond your reach. While a stress free day at Blind Brook sounds like an oxymoron, it doesn't have to be.

Some students thrive on stress, using the adrenaline created to fuel them through their school careers and beyond. For the overwhelming majority of students in our district and throughout the country, this isn't the case. According to the American Psychological Association, stress levels in teens now rival those of adults due to increased standards of education and intelligence.

We live in a world where we are always expected to be one step ahead of the person next to us. In a national survey, the APA concluded that 49% of students feel overwhelmed by the combination of assignments, extracurriculars, and the college process. A staggering 42% of those students admit that they do not know how to deal with stress, while 13% say they don't even have enough time to set aside to be able to.

Stress triggers a myriad of issues: poor sleep habits, depression, eating disorders, and over all angst and resentment. If we don't give ourselves enough time to simply take a step back and think, we are doing ourselves a major disservice.

In schools like ours, we can look at stress in terms of the big three: pressure, competition, and atmosphere. There is a constant strain not only on grades, but what you should be able to amount to. It's not enough to only be able to test well, but to be involved and show leadership in clubs, sports, and among peers. We are expected to be this perfectly well rounded person that doesn't exist. There is this mentality that you are constantly competing, especially in terms of college, not only with students in your grade, but now on a global level. This creates an atmosphere in which students are mentally exhausted and are inclined to create a pessimistic outlook at such a young age.

A study by Noelle Leonard, PhD, conducted at NYU, brings up

a valid point, "We are concerned that students in these selective, high pressure high schools can get burned out even before they reach college." It's time to realign our perspective and reevaluate what's important to us as a community. High School should be looked at as a beginning. Yes, it is where stress is born, but it is also where we can learn to manipulate it to make it work for our benefit. The Study conducted by NYU explains how some stress is healthy, that it pushes us forward and gives us a drive. It's all about making sure it doesn't reach that next level that could damage us without our realization.

Before we all dive into the bulk of this year head first, let's agree to show stress it's place.

One major aspect is time management. Cramming and procrastination have become a norm, but it's a known fact that students with good organizational skills are significantly less anxious than those on the other side of the spectrum. Moreover, this

creates room to enjoy things other than work and school, like breathing. In all seriousness, something as simple as making a to-do list and checking it off can ease anxiety. Another facet is being involved in things you feel passionate about, making activities less about having to do them and more about wanting to. Being with people who you enjoy and make you laugh is something that has benefits all through life, as shown by a study by The Huffington Post. Laughing causes a physical reaction by stimulating circulation and aiding in muscle relaxation.

One thing that countless studies show is it truly comes down to balance. Maybe we shouldn't be in a rush to accomplish things, but instead working harder to first find this harmony in our life. We often try to do this backwards, but it shouldn't be a vice versa situation. Stress isn't going anywhere, so it's better to learn now how you can be friends with yours. Like all friends, you are going to have bumps in the road. It's there to accelerate you, not hold you back. Keep it all in perspective and judge yourself by the whole, not by a bad day or poor test score. It's easier said than done, but next time you find yourself freaking out about the pop quiz in front of you, remember this: You are never alone.



Photo Courtesy of Carly Kabot

Blind Brook Welcomes New Student Assistance Counselor

By Noah Zeitlin

Ms. Monique Tricario, the new Student Assistance Counselor, has many goals which include the continuation of programs instituted by Angela Marciano, who left last year. These programs were run by Mr. Pellegrin last spring in the interim.

Tricario's main focus is on educating people about the dangers of the substance abuse and alcohol abuse.

She would also like to grow new programs to meet student needs.

One of her new responsibilities that she is in charge of is Red Ribbon Week in October, which brings awareness to substance abuse because October is National Substance Awareness Month.

"[Red Ribbon Week] started when a District Attorney got killed," Tricario said, "and so after that they started this initiative to raise awareness of drugs and substance abuse."

Tricario is also taking the responsibility of SADD, or the Students Against Destructive Decisions club. She believes that this club is very important, even if the reason for joining is to find out how to help a friend. It is designed to get students to stop making decisions that they will regret in the future.

In addition to working in the high school, Tricario wants to work with Middle School students as well. She wants middle school to have the same resources as the high school and give them the opportunity to receive help with problems along the lines of substance abuse and decision making.

This would be a change from previous years because in the past the students in the middle school had to rely on their guidance counselors for any problem.

"You're the one in charge of making the world that you want," Tricario said.

Tricario suggests that students check out her bulletin board near the Nurse's office. She runs a variety of different groups where students come together to discuss a common interest or concern. Some groups include those for students who are new to the district and a senior group. If students are interested in being part of a group or to learn more about other groups Tricario asks that students stop by my office.

Tricario's office is located upstairs near the sophomore locker area, around the corner from the Athletics offices. She encourages students to stop by, introduce themselves, and ask questions.

Office Hours
7:30am - 3:00pm
No appointment needed!

Students can stop by, call, or email, especially if one wants an appointment.

Top 3 Things To Meet With Ms. Tricario About:

1. Relationship issues with parents and peers
2. Managing stress
3. Questions and concerns about alcohol and other drug use

And The Winner Is...

DONALD TRUMP



"I'm very happy with
the results."
-Julia Bucci, 11

"I am optimistic for
the future."
-Daniel Croche, 9

"I hate that the campaign-
ing was so ruthless."
-Eric Wagner, 10

"It's sad that every-
one is divided."
-Elise Yockelson, 12



Illustration/Jared Benson

Stop Judging Trump Supporters

An Opinion

By Lauren Rothmann

It's 9 o'clock at night on Election Day, and I'm sitting with my Dad in front of the TV. I had resigned myself to watching Hillary Clinton become the first female president, and so I decided to stay up until her victory was called by the media networks. However, once a handful of state polls had closed, and Florida was "too close to call", I found myself cautiously optimistic and hopeful that Trump would win the state. There was no doubt in my mind that Clinton would win the election, but I had hoped that she wouldn't win by as great of a margin as pollsters were predicting.

When Trump was declared the winner of North Carolina's electoral college votes, my house was so quiet, you really could hear a pin drop. At first speechless, I turned to my Dad who had his eyes glued to the TV screen.

"Dad," I started so quietly it was almost a whisper, but then a smile broke out on my face because I couldn't imagine that

this was actually happening. "What if he... wins?"

For the rest of the night, I stayed up in disbelief as I witnessed what I thought was the impossible-Donald Trump winning the presidential election.

The next day, I was still shocked by the election results. The House of Representatives, the Senate, and the White House would now all be controlled by Republicans, so the government will be united under one party. Our nation has been immobilized due to gridlock for far too long, and now I am eager to see what Congress will be able to accomplish now that the majority in each house is working toward common goals.

I walked into school the day after the elections with a smile on my face, happy that for maybe the first time in a while, real change will happen, and for the better.

It has been a week since Election Day, and I look forward to what the next four years will bring under the Trump administration. I now understand the

rationale behind those supporting him, even though I didn't completely during the primary election season. That being said, I am by no means a racist or a xenophobe, and I am definitely not a misogynist. I am saddened by those who automatically assume these horrible labels belong to those who rooted for Trump last Tuesday night, and who identify as Republican.

Not every Trump supporter conforms to bigotry, and likewise neither do Donald Trump or the Republican Party. Neither Trump nor his party have supported extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan or the American Nazi Party in any way. The fact that members of the KKK endorsed Trump does not make him a racist, because, according to the *Washington Times*, members of the very same group have endorsed Hillary Clinton as well.

The inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump in January does not signify the replacement of all sanity and rationality in this country for

discrimination and xenophobia. It stands for the beginning of a much needed change which extends far beyond simply the party lines of American government. Voters who support Trump, support the fact that he favors a reinforcement and re-evaluation of laws in regard to undocumented immigrants. Voters who support Trump, support the fact that he values the protection of the Second Amendment while promising to lower crime rates nationwide. Voters who support Trump, support the fact that he wants to expand our country's military and eradicate radical Islamic terrorist groups.

In the United States we have something called freedom of speech, where Americans have the right to express their views and opinions without being subject to persecution. The 60 million Americans who voted for Trump do not deserve to be treated with blatant scorn and disrespect because of the candidate they supported on Election Day.

New President, New Fears

An Opinion

By Allison Chien

On the morning of November 9, I awoke to a barrage of notifications informing me that Donald Trump had won the election.

This was simultaneously surprising and unsurprising- I had wanted so badly for Hillary to win and had somehow convinced myself that it was a definite victory, but I also knew deep down that history has shown over and over again that the straight, white male always prevails.

Before and during the election, I had the apparently naive and foolish hope that someone so blatantly nasty and hateful as Trump could never garner enough support to acquire the most important position of power in this free country. He seemed like a caricature of a man, easily angered and spewing evil, illogical words.

I couldn't grasp how someone would want such a personality to be privy to the most confidential national secrets, to control so many facets of hundreds of millions of people's daily lives, to be able to deploy military troops and fire nuclear weapons.

That silly hope was quickly dashed and the acceptance that a great number of someones out there actually wanted him in office set in.

The fact that Trump supporters can simply, completely, and utterly disregard the highly offensive statements that Trump has brazenly screamed out during speeches, on audio tracks, even on live national television, fills me with anger and fear like no other.

While not all of them are racists and sexists, the fact that they don't regard it as a deal breaker is the problem. By electing Donald Trump, those voters have allowed racism and sexism to be justified. If my president can do it, why can't I?

The now rampant racism is terrifying. Swastikas are being spray painted on buildings. White supremacists have become increasingly vocal. People, especially Muslims, blacks, and Jews, have been outright attacked and abused by their fellow countrymen.

During breakfast recently, I watched a report on middle schoolers (children who are barely teenagers!!) in Michigan who chanted "Build that wall!" at their Latino classmates.

That fear wasn't just for others either, it is also for myself, something that had never truly occurred to me before. It became particularly palpable when I read an article listing various attacks on Asian Americans in the days following Trump's election. They, like many oth-

er people of color, were being told to "go back to where you came from", that "this is a nation for whites only", and "you don't belong here". One girl's attack had even turned violent when the white man grabbed her wrist and refused to let go, laughing at her struggles.

As I read these accounts, I realized that that could be me, I was just as susceptible as the next person. Before, there had always been a kind of selfish bliss in the belief that Asian Americans didn't seem to face quite the same threats that other races did. Now, with a racist man at the forefront of the government, having been elected by those who overlook that racism, that notion doesn't seem to stand anymore.

Perhaps the racism was so easily ignored because the same majority of people have been passive about racism for so long, allowing it to exist in as a quiet acceptance. Most people are obviously not flagrantly racist and derogatory towards others; instead it is apparent as ignorance. I have actually been on the receiving end of this ignorance. Once, during my freshman year, I was at a meeting that revolved around debate and speaking when we went off into groups for an activity and a white sophomore was part of my group. She asked me,

"Are you new here?" and when I flabbergastedly stared at her, she followed up with "Do you speak English?". I briefly sat in stunned silence, trying to comprehend what she just said, before I decided to ignore her and the activity in perfectly fluent English.

Looking back, I should've taken the opportunity to inform her that I've lived in the U.S. for my entire life, that I've been in the same school as her since first grade, that she was quite, in fact, wrong. You'd think someone in a club primarily focused on the English language, with her English speaking friends, would probably, just maybe, speak English. Instead, I allowed this offence to pass, passively allowing that racist ignorance to continue.

The problem is not Donald Trump, though he did provoke the loud, outspoken racism of the few; it is in the majority who allow that racism to continue, whether it be through lack of action or ignorance.

As we move into a turbulent, uncertain future, I can only hope that that majority can be educated to understand the necessity of stopping racism, and we can embrace our American identity as a land for everyone, no matter their race, sex, religion, and unite as one.

My Presidential Playlist

By Allison Chien

As the election of 2016 has drawn to its inevitably dramatic conclusion, we reminisced upon the roller coaster that this presidential race has turned out to be. Rather than the politically experienced, middle aged white guys that are usually expected, we got our first female presidential candidate from one of the two larger parties, and an orange businessman with the barest inklings regarding politics. This past year or so has turned out to be even more scandalous and brazen than anyone had ever speculated, as Trump and Clinton repeatedly bashed each other, attacking their opponent with highly personal barbs and constantly bringing unsavory memories at every rally and debate. Also at every rally, a fabulously curated playlist is presented to convey a particular message to supporters.

It seems only fitting that there be a playlist for Election Day. Here are the songs that helped me survive November 8th.

“Never Gonna Give You Up” by Rick Astley Like Trump, I also admire Hillary’s persistence, as she has become

an omnipresent feature in both the foreground and background of American politics for many years. Therefore, this classic by Rick Astley is the perfect tune for her to jam out to while waiting for her army of campaign planners and speech writers to complete her next speeches promising the American people a better future under her leadership. With lyrics like “Never gonna let you down, Never gonna run around and desert you”, this really does provide quite some inspiration for our future president, no?

“Lousy Connection” by Ezra Furman This song embodies Trump’s various actions throughout his campaign. The lyrics tell the story of a guy trying to profess his love to his romantic interest and ultimately failing to get the message across, due to a bad signal and an inability to clearly convey the message. “It’s late at night; it’s time to tell you my secrets” evokes memories of Trump’s midnight Twitter rages; “But I, I don’t wanna be the bad guy, I wanna see myself from the outside” describe his attempts to quell the storms of hatred after his sexist and racist statements, and ultimate failures; “And my rich friends and me just sit and blow smoke rings” brings to mind

the fact that Trump is part of very top fraction of the American income bracket, proudly evading tax payments and boasting shamelessly about his other less than wholesome accomplishments.

“Cool Girl” by Tove Lo The chorus of this techno pop single, “I’m a cool girl, ice cold, I roll my eyes at you, boy”, embodies Hillary Clinton and her attitude toward her orange opponent. I actually quite like the second line since it describes her “The Office” style stares into the camera during the presidential debates after Trump said something especially nasty and obnoxious.

“Blurred Lines” by Robin Thicke The controversy surrounding the morally ambiguous words of this song provide a parallel for the derogatory, rape culture justifying statements that Donald Trump was revealed to have uttered. Both the song and Trump seem to provide the view that sexual assault is acceptable and that women are asking for it. Trump has even claimed that all the women on “The Apprentice”

flirted with him and wanted to seduce him, something that just sounds unrealistic and convoluted.

“Bo\$\$” by Fifth Harmony This song, which hit its peak in the summer of 2015, achieves a similarly empowering effect as Clinton’s female voter group oriented slogans. “Bo\$\$” features lyrics like “Michelle Obama, Purse all heavy getting Oprah dollars” that are identical to some of Clinton’s campaigns, as when Michelle Obama, the most well liked woman in Washington, D.C., endorsed Clinton at the Democratic National Convention by giving a speech on women’s rights, earning her a huge round of applause.

“It’s the End of the World As We Know It” by R.E.M. On November 8th, Americans chose their next president. The course of American history will be changed forever; nothing shall be as it was previously. If Secretary Clinton wins, the first female president will take office; on the other hand, if Trump wins, who knows what policies he’ll decide to go forth with? If he does follow through with the claims he has made during his nationwide campaign, then the world will most definitely change from what we know it as.



Photo Courtesy of Allison Chien

Crucible Casts Spell on Blind Brook

By Danielle Barsky

The Crucible makes its debut on November 18th and 19th at 7:30 PM in the George Trautwein Auditorium.

Directed by English teacher Christina Colangelo, the production is an adaptation of the play written in 1953 by Arthur Miller. The events in the play are based on Salem, Massachusetts during the 1690s. Throughout this time period, Puritans settled in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and were part of a theocratic government.

The Crucible is a dramatized story about the Salem Witch Trials, when numerous women were accused and convicted of witchcraft and as a result were executed. It is an allegory for the Cold War during the 1950s between America and the Soviet Union. During the McCarthy era, many people accused of being communists or communist sympathizers were put on trial and sentenced to prison.

The play opens when Abigail Williams and Betty Parris are caught dancing in the woods around a fire with their servant, Tituba. In Puritan society, this was seen as wicked because the girls were creating love potions and charms, and such conjuring usurped a heavenly power.

When Abigail’s uncle and Betty’s father confront them, Abigail denies practicing witchcraft and contrives a tale which creates a domino effect. Abigail blames Tituba who is then forced to confess for something she did not do. Tituba then reveals more names of potential witches leading the entire town to accuse each other to avoid being killed.

“I’m most excited to put on this

play because I think it’s relevant, as there are a lot of accusations against different minority types in this unsafe world,” said junior Justin Levine playing Reverend John Hale, a minister who comes to Salem to examine the witches.

Rehearsals have already begun and the cast is busy preparing and practicing for the show. Emily Zeller, a junior, playing Abigail Williams. “I am very excited for *The Crucible* because it is different and I’ve never been in a drama. It’s a unique experience and story line, which is much more serious than the musicals we have done and is based off of something that actually happened. I look forward to returning to the theater department and seeing everyone,” Zeller said.

While 11th grade English classes typically read the play, this year’s class will have an in school field trip to see the performance. “*The Crucible* is a great text for examining poor leadership, as much of what is happening in *The Crucible* has happened repeatedly across history and is actually still occurring today,” said English teacher Margi Goett.

Colangelo and Goett discussed how beneficial it would be if students came to the production. “I am so pleased that the PTA has provided the funding for a special production just for the eleventh grade to make both the genre and the lessons of leadership come alive on the stage for students,” said Colangelo.

Tickets are on sale now through Friday, November 18 from 11-2:30 p.m. and before the shows on Friday and Saturday from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Adult tickets cost \$15 and tickets for children under 12 and senior citizens cost \$12.



Photo/Noah Zeitlin

Lead actors, seniors Emily Kitchin and Sammy Landino, rehearse a scene from Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* which opens November 18 at 8 PM. Tickets now on sale.

AP Art Students Concentrate on Rigorous Courseload

By Alana Applebaum and Alexa Limb

For seniors with a passion for art, AP Art offers a rigorous curriculum that pushes its students to achieve their highest creative potentials. It is offered to students who have completed previous art classes that include Studio Art, Advanced Art, and Portfolio Development. After their junior year, these highly talented students are recommended by Ms. Petras, who teaches all of the art courses at Blind Brook, to move up to a more demanding course that allows them to have more freedom in their compositions.

Potential AP students are required to show a range of artistic skills and abilities in the twenty-four pieces they submit at the end of the year. At the culmination of the AP course, there are twelve judges who critique their submissions. "It is challenging because of quick deadlines and it is difficult to make cohesive body of work in such a short amount of time," said Petras.

Heather Melvin, a current senior in AP Art, is very excited to tackle her final art course before moving on to pursue her love for the subject in college. Although she feels confident that she will succeed in a more independent class, she recognizes that it is significantly more challenging. All of the art pieces have to be cohesive and students only have two weeks to finish each one.

"Ms. Petras pushes you to do your best and try new techniques that you've never done before," she said.

Every piece that students complete has to revolve around a specific theme, which is known as a "concentration". Over the summer, students have to pick their own original theme that they will abide by for the rest of the year.

"My concentration focuses on the beauty of vintage posters. On a trip to Hawaii, I went into a vintage poster store and was immediately astounded by the beauty of the old posters. I fell in love with these beautiful posters and am very excited to experiment with different mediums and hopefully my artwork can live up to the exquisiteness of my references," said senior Carlie Fern.

Other students have decided to focus on aspects of nature for their concentrations.

"My concentration is in lake houses because I felt like I wanted a sentimental value to my artwork. Every year we spend a lot of the summer at my grandmother's lake house so I decided to make that was my main focus," said Senior Lauren Santasiero.

Santasiero is enjoying the more intense and student-centered curriculum of AP art. However, she recognizes the course's increased level of difficulty compared to the other art classes that she has taken in high school. "Last year [in Studio Art] we didn't have specific dates to finish our pieces, so my hardest challenge this year so far is meeting the two week deadline for my paintings," she said.

Despite the difficulty that she sometimes faces, Santasiero is putting her best foot forward and is very motivated to produce a professional set of artwork to finish high school with.

AP Art is often one of the first steps in an art career. Santasiero plans on incorporating the skills she has learned this year throughout her future studies. "I'm hoping to never stop making art and to continue with it in college. This class will definitely prepare me for a college course because of the specific deadlines and the high expectations for our artwork."

Will Queen Bey Rule the AMAs?

By Olivia Morrissey

The 44th annual American Music Awards will take place on Sunday, November 20 at 8:00 on ABC. It will be hosted by Gigi Hadid and feature performances by Lady Gaga, Twenty One Pilots, Bruno Mars, The Weeknd, Shawn Mendes, and Ariana Grande featuring Nicki Minaj who have been nominated for some of the most popular categories include, Artist of the Year, Collaboration of the Year, New Artist of the Year, and Favorite Male and Female Artist for Pop/Rock, Country, Rap/Hip-Hop, and Soul/R&B.

Nominees in each category are based on several criteria such as social media activity, digital song sales, and number of video views. The data is analyzed for each artist over the course of the year and then the top choices for each category are determined. Fans then go to the American Music Awards website and vote for their favorite artist. Hadid, as host, will announce the winners.

Nominations for the 2016 American Music Awards were announced in mid-October by Joe Jonas and Rachel Platten. This year, Drake broke the record by being nominated for thirteen awards. Rihanna has the second most nominations and is up for seven awards.

The nominees for Artist of the Year are Adele, Beyoncé, Justin Bieber, Drake, Selena Gomez, Ariana Grande, Rihanna, Twenty One Pilots, Carrie Underwood, and The Weeknd. These artists have all released hits in the last year.

Alessia Cara, The Chainsmokers, DNCE, Shawn Mendes, and Zayn are nominated for New Artist of the Year. While Zayn gained popularity from his group One Direction before becoming a soloist, the other nominees have had multiple songs on the top charts this year.

The nominees for Collaboration of the Year are "Don't Let Me Down" by The Chainsmokers featuring Daya, "One Dance" by Drake

featuring Wizkid and Kyla, "Work From Home" by Fifth Harmony featuring Ty Dolla \$ign, "Work" by Rihanna featuring Drake, and "Like I'm Gonna Lose You" by Meghan Trainor featuring John Legend.

Justin Bieber, Drake, and The Weeknd are nominated for Favorite Male Artist for Pop/Rock. Bieber's "Purpose" and Drake's "Views" are both high in the charts. However, The Weeknd has recently passed both of them due to their newest song "Starboy".

Adele, Selena Gomez, and Rihanna are the female nominees for the same award. Adele released a new album, "25", after many years of not producing music and also went on a world tour. Selena Gomez whose hits "Same Old Love" and "Good for You," have earned high marks among fans will compete against Rihanna whose album, "Anti", featuring the songs, "Work" and "Needed Me" was released earlier this year.

Drake, Fetty Wap, and Future are nominees for Favorite Rap/Hip-Hop Artists. The songs up for an award in this same category are "Panda" by Desiigner, "Hotline Bling" by Drake, and "679" by Fetty Wap.

Top Soundtrack nominees include *Purple Rain*, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, and *Suicide Squad: The Album*. Prince's legendary foray into film, *Purple Rain*, in 1984, starred Prince, who died earlier this year. *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* was a hit in theaters released in 2015 directed by J.J. Abrams. *Suicide Squad*, the popular movie, features songs from nominated artists Ty Dolla \$ign, Twenty One Pilots, Eminem and Panic! At The Disco.

Nominees for all awards are posted on the AMA website where fans are able to choose who they want to win. Go to <http://ama.votenow.tv> to cast your votes.



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Climate Change: The Point of No Return

By Joie Ng

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

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

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

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

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

resulting in rising sea levels. Scientists estimate that over 13 million Americans may be forced to relocate by as early as the year 2100. Furthermore, humanity has devastated approximately 1.27 million square miles, or 10 percent of Earth’s wilderness, in the last 20 years, while climate change has led to the damage of about 93 percent of the Great Barrier Reef.

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

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

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

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

Countless problems must be tackled, including the settlement of common methods for documenting greenhouse gas emissions, and how aid will be provided to developing countries to help lower emissions and deal with the impacts of climate change. But despite dismal predictions of impending consequences linked with climate change, this deal provides a beacon of hope that the world’s nations will successfully collaborate to make the future of this planet a bit brighter.



Photo courtesy of Joie Ng

Lidar Laser Technology Unearths Mysteries of the Past

By Nicole Rosenzweig

Archaeologists have been carefully investigating the lands of Siem Reap in Cambodia for decades, that is, until recently when technology took the place of their tedious work. In the past, archaeologists have scrounged for evidence that would uncover geographical features of Angkor, the center of the Khmer empire. From approximately 802 A.D. to 1431 A.D., this urban city spanned a large area that now consists of Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos. Archaeologists dedicated to this pursuit had to forge through dense jungles, rice paddies, and buffalo grazing fields in order to find more evidence about early Cambodian life.

According to the New York Times, earlier this year archaeologists Shaun Mackey and Kong Leaksmy revolutionized the means by which Angkor is studied. Using a portable GPS device with data from an aerial survey of the area, Mackey and Leaksmy were led to a field. This area contained a patch of dirt that traced the archaeologists back thousands of years. The dirt patch is thought to be a mounded embankment where present Cambodians’ ancestors may have changed the surrounding land in order to build homes.

Mackey and Leaksmy belong to the Cambodian Archaeological Lidar Initiative (CALI), which utilizes advanced Lidar technology. Lidar shoots extremely rapid pulses of light at the ground from lasers mounted on helicopters. The way the light bounces back can indicate minor nuances in the landscape, illustrating places where past civilizations altered their environment, despite obstructions such as thick vegetation.

According to CALI, Lidar devices can shoot millions of laser pulses every few seconds so that in forested areas at least a small percentage of those laser pulses make it to the forest floor and bounce back to the sensor. The amount of time it takes for the laser pulses to return is a function of the distance between the sensor and whatever the laser bounced off of. This allows the CALI group to calculate where the “return” came from, since precise positions and orientations of the sensor are already known.

Prior to such technology, an accurate ground survey of archaeological features in the Cambodian landscape could take years or even decades of work.

“We’ve all spent hours getting clawed and shredded by bamboo forests with thorns or dense scrub and bush, in the hope that we might find something,” said Mackey.

According to the New York Times, Lidar-generated maps display the complex urban landscape that spans across multiple provinces of modern-day Cambodia, in addition to a developed network of canals, earthworks, and dams used by the ancient Angkorians to control water flow. This technology eliminates a great deal of hard work by allowing archaeologists to make targeted digs, rather than aimlessly searching through large masses of land.

One particularly groundbreaking discovery was that the capital city of Angkor was arranged in a grid pattern, similar to modern cities. Originally, people thought that the temple cities were disconnected and self-contained. However, the Greater Angkor Project at the University of Sydney used Lidar data to prove that ancient mounds were in fact organized in a tight grid pattern.

“Previous maps only show us different temples – they look like different units, where settlements around them seem to be concentrated around these temples – but with lidar we know that is not actually the case. We know it was all inhabited, and the city is larger than expected,” said Heng Phipal, a Cambodian archaeologist involved with the Greater Angkor Project.

Looking forward, archaeologists hope to unveil the reasoning behind the collapse of Angkor. Scholars had been under the impression that the empire fell in 1431 A.D. after its capital was attacked by an invading Thai army, as supported by stone inscriptions in ancient temples. They also believed that the population of the city relocated toward Phnom Penh, the current capital of Cambodia. However, the scanning of this area showed no evidence of an influx of refugees. With the help of Lidar technology, the true history of the Khmer Empire is well on its way to finally being revealed.



It's Child's Play

By Kellie Franzblau

Many kids go to the doctor's office with their parents and if they are lucky maybe they will get a lollipop, or even a cartoon Band-Aid after a shot. Most children leave the health decisions up to their parents; however, recent studies suggest that instead of letting parents make medical decisions, children should be taking charge. Much controversy has centered on the debate of when people should be in charge of their medical choices and how children should be prepared to make these choices. Medical decisions are different for everyone, and they become important for everyone at different times in peoples' lives.

The general consensus of experts is "sooner rather than later"- children should have exposure to medical choices before they turn 18 years old. In teaching adolescents how to properly handle difficult aspects of adulthood children are given opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them in a safer environment. Dr. Aviva Katz, a pediatric surgeon, mentions, "You wouldn't expect a kid to drive without hours of Drivers Ed. Why would you expect someone to make medical decisions if they've never had a chance in a safer environment?" At Blind Brook High School, before learning how to drive, student

must take a permit test to ensure they know the rules of the road before even stepping foot in the driver's seat of a car. It is only after one passes the permit test that they can drive in a car. Even then, students must drive with an instructor, take a class to learn about the dangers of driving on the road, and pass a road test to become fully licensed.

One way to apply methods of creating safe driving experiences for adolescents on decisions made regarding health, would be to look to Canada for guidance, which bases these choices on the ability of the patient to understand their condition. In fact, Canadian researchers gave young people ages 12 to 16 and their parents the same information on the child's condition and choices of possible treatment. In the simulation experiment, many younger study subjects gave made decisions that were just as good, if not better, than the parents did. The study demonstrated the capabilities of adolescents to take difficult decisions and make rational, critical choices that feel right to them. As children become more exposed to decision-making, they will be more prepared for not only tough medical decisions, but also decisions regarding family, jobs, and buying a house. Adolescents can start to ask questions and develop opinions be-

fore they go off to college so that they don't find themselves overwhelmed by the independence to which they are granted. When adolescents are truly informed about their health, they begin to take control of their own illness and by taking control they are relieving the emotional stress that often leaves a burden on young adults. When adolescents can make mistakes in a safe environment, they can learn from the mistakes before the stakes are raised later on in life. Some argue that the ability to make medical choices should solely belong to adults. Historically, minors have not been able to make important decisions. Arthur Caplan, Director of the Division of Bioethics at New York University's Langone Medical Center, said, "The law tends to think in bright lines: You can vote at this age — we don't give 16-year-olds half a vote." If those who are under 18 can't even vote, Caplan and others question how can children suddenly be expected to make choice about their health. While it would be nice if there were no restrictions on the decisions of minors, there are rules and regulations put in place to protect the lives of children. For example, even if a child refuses surgery because of religious beliefs, there are legal precedents that can make them to undergo surgery anyway. Essentially, doctors

have the upper hand when it comes to making decisions about how a child is treated. Some argue that children's brains are not developed enough to make difficult choices before they are 18. As a senior at Blind Brook High School put it, "Children have not lived long enough to have minds capable of making crucial decisions." In the teenage years a person's frontal lobe, which makes helps humans make rational decisions, is not fully developed. Lack of development in the frontal lobe causes teens to rely on the amygdala, the emotion center of the brain, to make choices. Consequently, teens are prone to make emotional choices instead of rational choices, often to poor medical choices. If a child is depressed, his or her feelings of depression can make them give up on their health and refuse treatment.

Allowing people to make tough medical choices at a young age can potentially increase their independence and decision-making in the future. But, keeping the control of a child's medical treatments in the hands of adults, children don't make rational decisions based solely on their emotions. Regardless of contrasting opinions and views on making medical decisions, it is important to have a comprehensive medical system for people of all ages.

Not Your Average Puff Piece

By Jeffrey D'Ambrosio

E-cigarettes have seen success in the marketplace as they are branded as the "safe" alternative to regular cigarettes, however, scientists have proven that this is far from the truth.

While e-cigarettes may seem like a better choice, they prove to be just as dangerous as normal cigarettes due to their inclusion of many similarly harmful chemicals that normal cigarettes are known to have.

Instead of heating up tobacco to release nicotine and other addictive chemicals, e-cigarettes use a battery powered internal heater in order to emit chemicals, while creating less smoke than an average cigarette. Minors, according to the FDA, may not know of the chemicals present in the e-cigarette.

According to the FDA, "Youth are using e-cigarettes at increasing and

alarming rates." Between 2014 and 2015, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) studies found e-cigarette use among high school students increased by 19 percent. If the trend keeps up, tobacco's detrimental effects will inevitably impose health risks upon the younger population.

Inside their bulky cylinders, E-cigarettes have small compartments constructed to ensure the sale of replaceable parts and continual smoking. Within the E-cigarette, a heating device, power source, and liquid cartridge, are able to be removed or replaced if needed.

By puffing on the mouthpiece, the battery powers the heating device, which vaporizes the liquid inside the cartridge. The resulting aerosol, or vapor, is inhaled by the user. Without using the burning of tobacco, the vapor produced by e-cigarettes

delivers nicotine.

Due to the addictive power of nicotine itself, the National Institute on Drug Abuse has been cautious to label them as a safer, less toxic alternative to cigarettes. "Nicotine is a highly addictive drug, and recent research suggests nicotine exposure may also prime the brain to become addicted to other substances," the NIDA said, alluding to the dangers nicotine has on young smokers everywhere.

Most harmful, according to the NIDA, in these devices are the carcinogens and toxic chemicals such as formaldehyde and acetaldehyde being released from repeated use of the same device.

In lab tests conducted in 2009, the FDA found "detectable levels of toxic cancer-causing chemicals, including an ingredient used in anti-freeze, in two leading brands of e-cigarettes."

Formaldehyde has the ability to cause cancer among many users, highlighting the negative factors of e-cigarette use over normal cigarette use. While users of e-cigarettes will also not inhale as much tar as normal cigarette users, some flavors contain the chemical diacetyl, which can cause irreversible damage with "popcorn lung" disease, according to the American Lung Association. This disease causes severe damage by scarring the tiny air sacs that are a vital part of the respiratory system.

To some, adult e-cigarette use is seen as the start on a path to quit smoking. People ardently believe that addicts would be able to satisfy their nicotine craving while reducing

how much tobacco they inhale. With their relatively new presence, e-cigarettes cannot prove or disprove these claims as the FDA is in the process of conducting extensive research on the comparability of both cigarettes.

As of early 2016, the FDA's regulations for e-cigarette sales has been very strict, as manufacturers must show that their e-cigarettes are safer than conventional cigarettes in order to maintain their ability to sell their product.

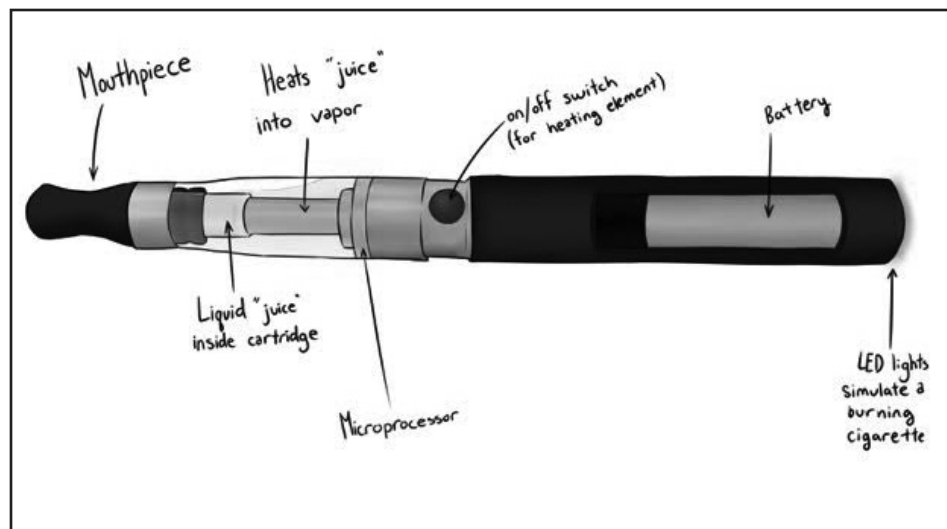
According to the CDC, over the last decade, the United States has seen a decline in cigarette use amongst adults from 20.9% to 16.8% between the years 2005 - 2014.

E-cigarette ads encourage this trend, aiming to rope in new or old users with the shallow promise of a cleaner smoking experience. E-cigarette companies commonly present their products as creating less smoke for users and boast a variety of flavors like bubblegum and cotton candy to smokers.

The difference between e-cigarettes and normal cigarettes is clear, as both have the potential to reintroduce the general population to the same harmful chemicals, but with renewed strength.

Acting on the knowledge of the potential harm of the internal chemicals, the FDA finally banned the sale of e-cigarettes to minors in early August 2016.

Given how relatively new the widespread sale and usage of e-cigarettes, the FDA is continuing to closely monitor the possible effects they may have from secondhand smoke and constant use.



Illustration/Sabrina Vuong

The FDA has found "detectable levels of cancer causing chemicals" in e-cigarettes, which are increasingly being used by minors, who think "vaping" is safer than smoking regular cigarettes.

Health and Science

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

November 2016



Photos/Rachel Penn

Blind Brook seniors Catherine Boudaze and Harrison Lawrence sporting stheir Fitbits.

A Great Fit

By Danielle Barsky

Within the past decade, physical activity trackers have become extremely popular among all ages across the U.S. There has never been a better selection of them, as physical activity trackers have recently become available in different shapes, colors, sizes, and technologically advanced features.

Physical activity trackers are a great way to get motivated on a lazy Sunday afternoon and help your body be as healthy as can be. With all of the models and brands available, trackers help people everywhere become successful while also encouraging users to be the best version of themselves.

There are three types of physical trackers: the bracelet, clip-on, or watch. Many choose bracelets and watches because of its feasibility and convenience, but if one wants their tracker to look more discreet, a clip-on is the better option.

However, clip-ons do not have a display so one has to rely on another device, such as a smartphone or computer in order to view their tracked activity.

People often choose their trackers based on different sports that they play, such as waterproof trackers available for swimmers. Cyclists also have selections, as they can track how

many miles were pedaled with options for pairing the tracker to bike equipment. Having an effective app that can sync to the physical activity tracker is additionally vital to understand the information that the tracker collects.

"I really like my Fitbit because I would never know how many steps I take and the amount of calories I burn each day if I didn't have one," said junior Olivia Morrissey. "It is very interesting to be able to see these statistics by clicking a button," she said.

Fitbit trackers are often the perfect product for adolescents and adults who want to track every part of their day, such as activity, exercise, food, weight, and sleep. One can sync their statistics wirelessly and automatically on Fitbit's highly rated app, or on a computer.

With the Fitbit, it is easy to reach goals with electronic tools that demonstrate progress and achievement. It has unbeatable technology and a plethora of models, including the Fitbit Surge and the Fitbit Charge HR, so everyone's approach to the brand can be different.

The Fitbit Charge 2 is a top rated product currently on the market. Some features include a heart rate monitor, caller ID, text message notifications, sleep monitoring, and a silent

alarm. Its battery life lasts as much as five days. The wristband's flexibility and durability is great for multi-sport functions. As Fitbit's number one selling model, one can stay active with encouraging reminders and guided, personalized breathing sessions to take a break from a stressful day.

"I like my Fitbit because I think it's interesting to track your steps and distance. I also like to compete with my parents to see who gets the most steps," said Hannah Steinthal, a junior.

One cannot walk through the High School hallways without seeing students on their iPhones, carrying Apple computers or showing off their new Apple Watch to friends.

Apple has been making these widely used products for years, impressing people across the world with innovative ideas that, at first, many thought were not possible. With the new iPhone, IOS 10 and Watch Series 2, the company has been redefining everyday standards to make life and fitness tracking easier.

The Apple Watch Series 2 is the company's latest design that is water resistant, has a built in GPS, and a new fast dual-core processor. Full of new and exciting features, the watch is the perfect fit for an exercise enthusiast who wants to maximize their fitness

potential. The watch even has its own workout app, where one can choose from a myriad of different fitness activities such as swimming, biking, or running.

Apple Watch users can view their own progress and the progress of their friends and family. The watch gives one badges when reaching new milestones that add a smile to your day and includes notifications from a "coach" to help motivate users to be active and healthy in their everyday activities.

With the health app on the iPhone, all your data is in one place, collected by fitness apps downloaded by the user to track progress.

Ethan Richards, a junior, said, "It truly is an all-in-one watch that you can really do anything you want with." The product keeps users informed, organized and connected while inspiring everyone to meet their fitness goals.

Most trackers cost between \$50-\$250 depending on the functions of the physical activity monitor, such as heart rate monitors or GPS navigation.

One cannot go wrong with whatever they choose, whether one is a student athlete or simply looking to live a healthier lifestyle.

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“Standing Up” For What’s Right

By Michael Discolo

During the end of the 2016 summer, Colin Kaepernick, quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers, became, overnight, one of the most talked about and one of the most hated athletes in all of American sports. Unlike many other athletes, he did not do this through his play on field or his words after the game, but instead through one simple action before the first whistle was even blown. What I am referring to is Kaepernick’s protest of the national anthem. Instead of standing like the other hundreds of thousand of people that night in San Francisco, Kaepernick decided to sit down on the bench to the dismay of many. The next day Kaepernick explained his decision by saying, “I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people ... to me this is bigger than football.” While there is an ongoing argument whether his protest was justified and should be allowed in the NFL, it has split the general population. Only one thing is for sure, Kaepernick’s protest has grabbed the attention of the entire country.

Personally, I do not have a problem with Kaepernick’s decision to sit or kneel to raise awareness of Black oppression in America. In fact, not only do I not have a problem with it, I feel that his protest exemplifies what America is all about. He is simply exercising his right given to him by the first amendment of our Constitution. Also, the facts do side with Kaepernick’s argument. It has been statistically proven in the past number of years that African Americans are more likely to be brutalized by the police, given unfair sentences for small crimes and are still discriminated in their daily lives. I believe the people who say it is disrespectful to America for him to kneel during the Star Spangled Banner are being senseless. There is a reason why players kneel on the field when a fellow athlete is injured; it is to show respect for that injured player. In Kaepernick’s situation, he is kneeling to show he recognizes the anthem and why people continue to stand. He is not doing it to shame America or ridicule his peers for singing along; he is simply not standing to call attention to his belief and he has accomplished that. It is also clear that the critics of Kaepernick’s protest who have said that his kneeling will ultimately have no effect on calling attention to his belief has been disproven. While no significant changes have been seen in the treatment of African Americans in our country, week by week more and more NFL players have joined Kaepernick in opting not to stand for the anthem and more and more attention is emerging.

On the other hand, some of these

players have chosen other ways to show their beliefs on the current state of blacks in America. Here is where my only problem lies with these protests. Beginning in week two of the NFL season, multiple high profile players stood up and rose their right fists during the Star Spangled Anthem. For those who are unsure whether this action is similar to kneeling or sitting, it is the complete opposite. The raised fist, originally a representation of Black Power in the late 1960s and early 1970s, became popular through an African American revolutionary group known as the Black Panthers, whose original goals included equal rights, a Free Breakfast Program and protection of blacks from police brutality. Over time, the group became labeled as a violent extremist group due to some

members’ advocacy of violence against established power structures. NFL players raising their fists in pride are aligning themselves with this group whose past violence completely contradicts why NFL players are protesting the national anthem (in a peaceful protest of kneeling) and instead displays a negative message to their fans. Though I do not believe the NFL should be able

to fine or suspend these players, because it takes away their civil liberties, I would not be surprised if they ended up doing so. The NFL already was a weak reputation of a league full of “women beaters” and “thugs” and do not need another controversy to further destroy their image.

As an average citizen, I do support Kaepernick’s protest; as a coach I would have a far different view. Since his first protest, the media has been extremely critical of his Head Coach Chip Kelly. Though they weren’t intended to, Kaepernick’s protests have often had a negative reflection on Kelly as he has been questioned on his control of his players and his locker room. If I were a coach, I would most likely have released or traded Kaepernick by now. This is very similar to the struggle of Michael Sam, the first openly gay NFL player, to find a team that would keep him. While I have absolutely no issue with either of their beliefs, as a coach I wouldn’t want my team to be constantly distracted by the media because of players who while talented, are clearly expendable.

While Kaepernick’s efforts to change the way our country treats African Americans through kneeling may not have made immediate changes, it has led to a chain reaction that will hopefully lead to a change in the U.S. in the future. Even though giving birth to these protests may cause Kaepernick to have to look for a new job, that may just be the price for “standing up” for what’s right.

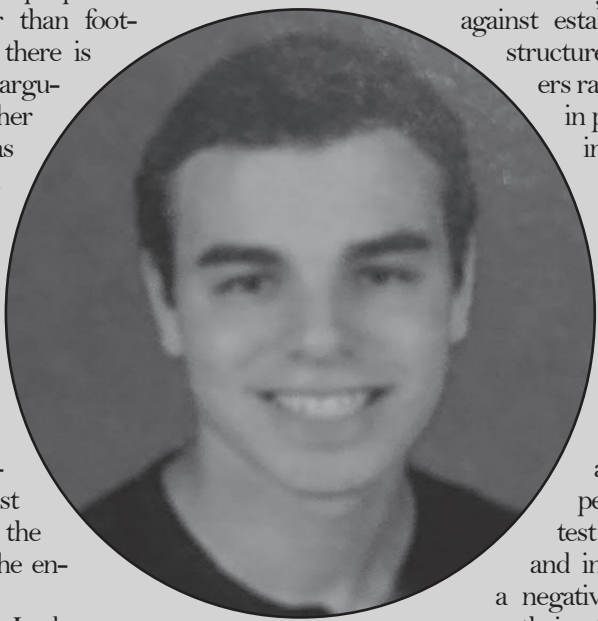


Photo courtesy of Michael Discolo

Goldman’s Athletic Improvement

By Abby Strauzer

Since Mr. Goldman has arrived at the Blind Brook School District, he has made it a goal to greatly improve the Athletic Department. He and the Department have been working very hard to make many noticeable improvements, in addition to improving the leadership and overall quality of sports at Blind Brook.

“At the end of last school year, Ty Sells and I held a meeting with the coaching staff to discuss student leadership and ways the enhance the relationship between players and coaches,” Goldman said.

Goldman held a follow up meeting to reinforce this message with coaches at the start of the fall season.

“The Athletic Department is trying to build upon a strong sense of school pride: the “Go Trojans” sign (on the main HS field and track) is helping to showcase our main outdoor facility and the entry way into the HS gymnasium has been redesigned with plaques, trophies, and awards.”

Goldman has expanded school’s spirit and he has started to look into ideas for a fitness center “... so that all students have an opportunity to stay in shape or come up with a strength and conditioning program for sport specific training.”

Groups have also discussed that the room could be used for yoga and mindfulness activities.

“Generally, teams are doing as expected,” Goldman said. “All of our teams are on schedule to qualify for the playoffs. Several of our individual sport participants will earn a spot as well,” Goldman said

Goldman’s favorite part about the fall sport season is seeing students come out to support school teams. “Our Homecoming was amazing this year! Every Varsity team won on Homecoming, and I think a large part of that was the boost in energy the players felt from the support of the fans in attendance,”

Goldman said.

Goldman will hold another meeting with winter coaching staff to follow up on the progress.

“One of the challenges with the winter sport schedule is trying to find adequate gym space for all of our teams. I always try to speak with all our coaches to come up with the best possible schedule to make sure everyone gets enough time in the gyms.”

Goldman hopes for more snow this year so that the Ski team will have better conditions than last year when there was little to no snow on the ground for them to compete and/or practice on.

Goldman has also started a Captains’ Council. He sees the Captains’ Council as “an opportunity for team captains to come together and share the experience of being a team captain and hopefully learn from each other about the best ways to be a leader among their peers,” Goldman said.

“I was motivated to find an opportunity to speak with the students identified as Varsity Captains,” Goldman said.

“The Captains’ Council will hopefully meet twice each season, once towards the beginning or middle of the season, and once towards the very end or right after the season,” Goldman said.

“My hope is to have a conversation with the team captains to talk about leadership and the responsibilities that come along with being named a team captain,” Goldman said.

“Also, if there are any questions or experiences that are shared in the group, I want the other student leaders to be able to help answer the question, or to learn from the experiences of other captains,” Goldman said.

While the Athletic Department annually sponsors Midnight Madness in November, it will sponsor Winter Homecoming on January 6.



Photo/Anna Campbell

Mr. Goldman wants to improve leadership and the quality of sports at Blind Brook.



Photo/Kaitlyn Basset
Mr. Beatty, BBMS and BBHS Physical Education teacher looks to the bright side of physical fitness with new technology in gym.

By David Rosenberg

After working in the Middle School for many years, physical education teacher Mr. Matthew Beatty has taken control of a number of high school gym classes. This year in gym class 10-12, Beatty has made some changes to help students really “get their head in the game” on a regular basis. As a teacher, he wants students to really get something out of his class. He

intensity, during 2nd period gym because they have to sit in their sweat for the remainder of the day. This is why he created a variety of options that appealed to the different types of people in his classes. Mr. Beatty also gave students the option of completing class activities at home, if they didn’t want to do them in class. To do this, students downloaded an app in which they tracked the distance and time they ran in, they then submitted their

Beatty Touts Peer Motivation

decided to take action and implement a new system in which students could choose to participate in one of many activities. Students had the option to play a team sport or participate in personal fitness. To determine whether one wanted to participate in the team sport or the personal fitness option, he gave his students’ a fitness test and based on their results, they either chose to play a team sport or work on their fitness by themselves. As many students have not felt motivated to go all out in terms of their workout records to Beatty. The use of technology is very helpful to allow students to do activities on their own time. The point of physical education is to learn and improve on a variety of sports and Beatty has an ingenious idea of making this happen. He takes videos of the students playing a sport, then tells them for homework to watch a professional athlete do the same activity, noticing things you do both alike and differently. In doing this, one can see what is needed to improve and what one is already doing well. This achieves the ultimate goal of the class, which is learning about different sports and improving in a variety of sports to the best of your ability. A key factor in gym class is motivation. Mr. Beatty said, “Motivating the kids does not help them, the kids motivating each other helps them.” Beatty wants the students to be motivated by their peers because they are each other’s greatest fans. He really wants students to be self-learners and take those skills and apply them to the real world. Beatty said a way to get students to respond better to sports they don’t excel

in is to intervene and try to help them. After improvement, hopefully they will begin to enjoy the sport and actually develop a desire to play outside of school.

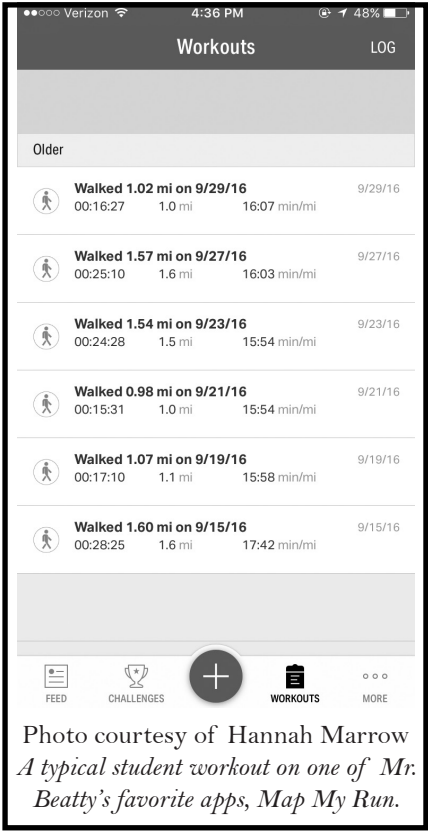
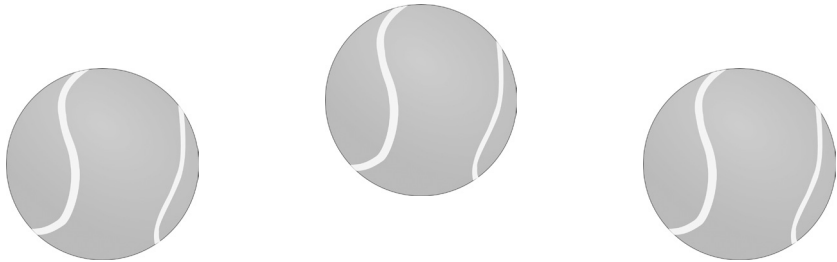


Photo courtesy of Hannah Marrow
A typical student workout on one of Mr. Beatty’s favorite apps, Map My Run.



Girls Varsity Tennis Captains Lead Young Team through 5-5 Season

By Michael Aburtyng

The Girls’ Varsity Tennis team did not have as strong of a season as they had hoped, ending with a record of 5 wins and 5 losses. The loss of many seniors from last year meant the younger players had to step up and rise to the occasion. Having many underclassmen on the team is good for the future, but the lack of experience lead to some challenges for this year’s team. To prepare for matches, the team powers through a series of drills and rallies with each other. While the team prioritizes physical preparation for every match, preparing themselves mentally is equally important, particularly for the younger players. Tennis is both a mental and physical sport. Team members believe that being in a positive state before and during the match improves their performance. “Our team dynamic is a huge strength, everyone gets a long and cheers each other on,” co-captain Kaveri Reddy said. Reddy, a senior, has been on the team for her entire high school career. She believes the team benefits from the positive energy because it causes people to play better and not get down on themselves. The team as a whole has many

strengths. The players believe that they have good communication, a good work ethic and the drive to be successful. “The team’s biggest weakness is consistency,” said sophomore Rhea Munjal. “Most of us wanted to hit a winner on the first shot and end the point. In the future, we need to work on remaining consistent so we can win the point.” Munjal believes that if the team wants to be more successful in the future they have to become more conservative and not try to hit a winning shot on every point. Coach Davis also believes that one of the team’s biggest weaknesses is giving the opponents free points. She believes that the team should not double fault as often as they do and they need to keep the ball in play and not get frustrated. Even though the team’s record is not as good as they wanted it to be, Reddy believed that they still had a successful season. “I think everyone played to the best of their ability and succeeded,” Reddy said. Despite the 5-5 record for the season, captains Petal Samrow, Lauren Santarsiero, Mindy Leader and Reddy hope to lead this year’s young team as veteran role models.

Varsity Football Keeps Dream Alive for Next Year

By Damian Cuk

If one were to walk by the upper baseball field after school in September, one would see the Varsity Football team working hard and giving it their all. What one does not see is what makes this team special. BB Varsity Football is a team that has set very high expectations for themselves. Their main goal is to be the first football team to reach Section 1, Class B playoffs in history. The team, led by Pasty Manganeli, believes that the way to achieve their goal will take more than just hard work and giving it their all on the field. It will require the team to become a brotherhood, a very tight knit group of teammates. Captains Sam Brandeis, Jake Wynn, and Robert Giuliano are lead a team of eight Seniors, fourteen juniors, twelve sophomores, and one freshman. “Everyone plays hard for the benefit of the team. Each player is equally important to the success of our team,” Giuliano said. The team prepared for the season since August and the results of their hard work were displayed at their season opener against

Montessori Academy at Yonkers. They won this game 34-12. Losing their next game 28-0 to the number one team in the league, Pleasantville, their record became 1-1. After another heart-breaking defeat, losing 10-0 to Ardsley, the team went into their homecoming game with a two game losing streak. Our Trojans performed spectacularly at Homecoming. Grabbing a 20-10 win under the lights really gave the boys some motivation and confidence for the remainder of the season. Just a week later, the guys were able to get a 23-7 win at home against Briarcliff to bring their record to 3-2. With two games left in the season, they were on the way to achieving their goal of reaching the playoffs. “Our defense has been playing great all year and the offense has been coming around in the past few weeks,” Giuliano said at the time. While the Trojans pressed on, their season ended 4-5. While disappointed, the team looks to next year to start anew.



VARSITY SOCCER



Photo/Emma Seguljic
Freshman Nicole Rosenzweig steals the ball away from her opponent.

Girls Varsity Soccer Rebuilds on Road to Sectionals

By Hannah Schaenman
The Girls Varsity Soccer team knew they would be facing a year where they would have to start anew and grow as a team. “Going into the season, we all knew it would be a year of rebuilding and learning one another’s style of play, considering 14 members of our team graduated last year,” said junior starter, Sarah Rattner. The team did not have high expectations, but as the season progressed, the team set higher standards for themselves. “We are continuing to work hard and build our new team,” said junior Captain Lily Koenig. Led by Coach Shawn Simone, the team has grown tremendously since the beginning of the season by working together, and being able to perform better at a faster pace of play. Having faced a challenging beginning to the season, the team eventually became a strong insync unit. With all having the same goal in mind, to make sectionals, the girls work on improving

each practice, and improving their ability to work together as a team. “After a difficult first few matches, we finally began to play as a team,” said Rattner. The last games were crucial for the team to make sectionals. The girls gave 100% effort each practice hoping to finish the season with victories, making sectionals an easier target. Yet, in their first sectional game against Croton, the team lost 7-2. “When preseason began in late August, I sat down with my coach and evaluated the season to come,” said senior Haley Feurman. “For the Girls’ Varsity team, getting into sectionals was purely an added bonus. We played a competitive team in sectionals and played our hearts out. Although this loss marked the end of my BBGVS career and the end of the season, everyone left the field smiling,” Feurman said. “Overall we have really developed into a true family, always knowing we will have each others backs,” Rattner said.

Trojans’ Deep Run Ends Long Road to Sectionals

By Michael Discolo
Throughout the history of Blind Brook sports, the Boys Varsity Soccer team program has been one of the most dominant, successful teams, not just at Blind Brook, but in all of Section 1 sports. The Trojans have won numerous section and league titles and also two state championships leading to high expectations each fall season. This has also caused many fans to be superstitiously worried, that the magic may not return, especially when the Trojans began their 2016 season with a 1-1 tie to Pleasantville and a devastating 1-0 overtime loss to Edgemont. Fortunately, as the season progressed, the team improved. They turned their disappointing start around with several key wins at the right time as the Trojans built up momentum, for the playoffs right around the corner. “After a slow start on the season we’re really hitting our stride. After beating

high profile teams including Bronxville, Rye Neck, and Keio during a five game win streak, we feel there is no team in the section we can’t beat,” said Senior Captain Jake Cohen. This successful stretch has not featured all positives for the Trojans as both Cohen and goalkeeper Jared Weinberg have faced injuries causing younger, less experienced players to step up in this time of need. “Although the team has acquired many injuries to key players, the team was continuously playing to our strengths and has overcome these unfortunate situations,” said Junior Max Chalfin. The Boys’ had a common goal for this postseason, another Section title. They looked to be “a high seed and make a deep run,” said Chalfin. Though the Trojans went through a tight race against many title contenders in the title race, they lost 1-0 in their first round of semi-finals to Rye Neck High School.



Photo/Noah Zeitlin
Senior Paul Trokie passes the ball to senior teammate Joao Souza.

