

# Focus

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A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

## Blind Brook High School Welcomes New Faculty

By Emily Savino

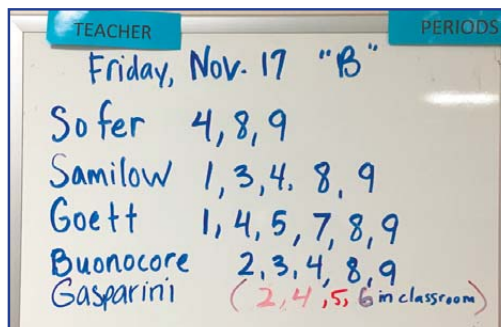
Starting out at a new school can be nerve-racking, but Catalina Nacher, Kacie Schulman, and Lauren Murphy have made a smooth transition into the Blind Brook community.

Nacher teaches the Spanish 3 Honors and AP Spanish classes. In comparison with her old school in Yonkers, the smaller Blind Brook is “more competitive and motivated.” Blind Brook is similar to a private school she used to teach at in respect to being homogenous and small. Her new students at Blind Brook view her in an exceptionally positive light. Senior Caroline Levine says, “Señora Nacher has a lot of energy, and brings a lot of excitement to class. She’s really nice and very helpful, especially with tests and extra work. It’s also really great to see the class material from a different cultural perspective, since she’s from Spain.” Senior Kieran Storch reiterates this praise, “Señora is lighthearted, funny, and is really preparing us well for the AP test.”

Faculty members also speak highly of Nacher. Madeleine Salvatore, a fellow member of the foreign language department says, “She brings excellent exposure to students as she is from Spain, and therefore has a different perspective from other teachers. Señora Nacher also has a different pronunciation from what the students are used to. Sometimes, she and I have full conversations with her speaking Spanish and me speaking Italian! I love her enthusiasm and her love of the subject and the students. She’s been a really great fit for our department and we are very lucky to have her.”

Murphy teaches 7th and 10th through 12th grade physical education and 6th grade health. Murphy has had an experience in the field of education as she has previously taught at a school located in the Bronx. In her old school in the Bronx, The Urban Assembly School for Wildlife Conservation, UASWC, she taught physical education and health. Like Blind Brook, UASWC is a small public school.

*Continued on page 2*



Photos courtesy of Zoe Cohen

*A whiteboard at the high school entrance shows which teachers will be absent that day (left) and the new auditorium set-up (right).*

## New Substitute System Introduced at Blind Brook

By Abby Ochs

At the beginning of the 2017-2018 Blind Brook school year, a new substitute teacher plan was put into place. Students are now required report to the auditorium when their teachers are absent. Attendance is taken in these makeshift classes, just like it would in a normal period, to make sure all the students are accounted for.

The classes that need to go to the auditorium are written daily on the whiteboard placed in front of the stairs going up towards the second floor high school classrooms. They are also posted on the T.V. in the Commons. For the first week or so of school, the new system was on trial basis.

Trying to make the best of this situation, the auditorium stage has been accommodated with a table and chairs to mimic a classroom environment. The school has also purchased lap desks for student to use if they need a hard surface or more space, and do not want to use the table provided.

The permanent substitutes that will be manning the auditorium during times of teacher absences are Rosie DeRosa, Sue Palmiter, and Mari-Anne Baumann. They take turns rotating on who stays in the auditorium. They say, “It is the best of the situation, and the students who want to get the work done, are able to get it done”. Teacher Christine Sabatella says that there are both pros and cons to the new system.

*Continued on page 2*

She says, “The pros are that it takes a lot of pressure off of the administration when it comes to hiring substitutes and finding them in time, and a con is that accountability of the students decreases, and so do the limits of what the teachers can leave as an activity”.

Vice Principal Derek Schuelein says, “This is simply to cover the class. The goal is to resolve a problem we were having which was being able to find subs to cover the classes required”.

He also says that the school could not find any substitutes to hire, and they needed a solution. In the past, Schuelein had to resort to asking other teachers to substitute for a period, right before the period started. This took up the teacher’s time, and did not benefit other students who may have needed to see a teacher for extra help the period they were subbing for another class. This new system does save the district money, though its implementation was not driven by cost.

When asked, some students feel that having to sit in the auditorium is a waste of class time, and sets back productivity. Many feel that not only is the environment itself distracting, but being surrounded by other students is as well. However, some feel that the new lap desks are a good way to address the problem of productivity, and that the tables on the stage help keep the ambience somewhat similar to a classroom. Other students think of the

## Three Blind Brook Seniors Named 2018 National Merit Scholar Semifinalists

By Hannah Marrow

Seniors Christine Argentino, Joie Ng, and Sarah Rogers are among the 16,000 other seniors across the country to be named 2018 National Merit Semifinalists. In the National Merit Scholarship Program’s 63rd year, nearly 1.6 million high school students took the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). In order for the semifinalists to move on to the next round, they must meet high academic standards as well as fill out an application and principal recommendation.

“Hearing [about my qualification as a semi-finalist] was a really lovely surprise because I had forgotten about the PSAT completely! Filling out the application later was not as fun but I am crossing my fingers,” said Argentino.

“I wasn’t expecting [to place as a semi-finalist] so I was very happy when I found out. I think my studying for the ACT helped because it has a shorter testing time so it helped me to pace myself more effectively. I will continue to work hard in the future,” said Ng. In February, these seniors will find out if they advanced into the finalist stage. The Blind Brook community wishes them well as they move on in the competition.

In February, these seniors will find out if they advanced into the finalist stage. The Blind Brook community wishes them well as they move on in the competition.

### Inside Focus

#### Arts and Entertainment

Read about the changes made to Netflix on page 5.

#### Health and Science

Learn how to prevent stress on page 12.

#### Sports

Catch up on the Boys Varsity Soccer season on page 15.

News.....	1
Viewpoints.....	3
Arts and Entertainment.....	5
Features.....	6
Politics.....	10
Health and Science.....	12
Sports.....	15



## Make An Earring, Help A Victim

By Abe Baker-Butler

On October 12, the library was visited by Joan Lloyd, who led a workshop on how to make earrings from scratch. Lloyd, a Yorktown native, is a retired teacher on a mission to conduct as many workshops as she can. But why earrings? It is not for the aesthetics, but rather for victims of domestic violence. Each month, she donates over 800 pairs of volunteer-created earrings to domestic abuse shelters. The workshops are held at a variety of locations, and the earrings are created by students, scouts, and public library-goers. Each participant also gets to keep a pair for every one donated.

Library Media Specialist Tracey Wong, who is new to Blind Brook this year, organized the workshop. As Wong put it, "I love bringing Joan into the library to work with the kids. Scholars learn to contribute and

give back to their community while getting a chance to be creative...This project is a great way to incorporate authentic service learning." Through workshops such as Lloyd's and other initiatives, Wong is trying to combat the stereotype that a library is only for independent study and school assignments. With author workshops, PokemonGo scavenger hunts, and therapeutic coloring, Wong has expanded the library's purview in a variety of areas, including creative pursuits. "The library is a great way to explore and discover things you don't know or haven't done before," said Wong, "Most kids today do not make anything or work with their hands."

At Lloyd's workshop, no previous experience is necessary to make the earrings. Using small hand tools and beads, each student twists and turns wires around earring hooks to create

earrings. And it is not just for girls: although some were reluctant at first, many boys participated and sat diligently learning how to create. According to Wong, the "boys were my experts this time. They were the patient ones showing other students how to do it from start to finish."

Lloyd's workshops, called "Bling's The Thing," produce almost 12,000 earrings for women's shelters every year. According to the Putnam Daily Voice, Lloyd first started the earring workshops after a woman in Shrub Oak, NY suggested the idea. As Lloyd put it, "I didn't know what would happen... a woman at Hart Library [in Shrub Oak] heard what I was doing and said 'Why don't you do a workshop?' I started getting a lot of phone calls and emails." And thus, Lloyd's workshop was born.

Although domestic violence

does not often make the news, it is a huge problem, with 11,000 women in the United States alone murdered in 11 years. In comparison, 6,488 troops died in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars during that same period. Our domestic violence crisis in the U.S. is yielding almost twice the casualties of war, yet war is what makes the news. October was National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and although the earrings help, more must be done to raise awareness for and help those affected by domestic violence. Lloyd's work is helping many victims, but we all have a role in decreasing domestic violence. There are numerous organizations here in Westchester working to help those affected by domestic violence. Visit the websites of Samaritan House, Hope's Door, or My Sister's Place to learn what you can do to help.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Wong

*Blind Brook students support victims of domestic violence by creating earrings in the library on October 12.*



## Blind Brook High School Welcomes New Faculty

*Continued from page 1*

"I think the major difference [between UASWC and Blind Brook] is how much Blind Brook makes you feel like you are part of a community from day one," says Murphy. "Students, parents and staff alike have been extremely welcoming, friendly and helpful." Murphy says that being able to attend and enjoy school events like homecoming is one of the reasons she considers herself lucky to be a part of the Blind Brook community. Murphy was excited to transition from a very small environment to a bigger one, with a full sized gym, lockers and her own desk.

Alongside Murphy, Schulman teaches 10th through 12th physical education, 7th grade physical education, and 7th and 10th grade health. Previously, Schulman worked at Pleasantville High School, Edgemont High School and in the South Orangetown school districts. She has also worked for the Westchester

County Board of Legislators, focused on District Three which includes Mount Pleasant, North Castle, Pleasantville, sections of Briarcliff Manor, Sleepy Hollow and Greenburgh. One major difference between Blind Brook and the schools Schulman has worked for in the past is that the middle and high school are connected and share facilities. She says that "it is exciting joining a school with such a great and supportive community."

The students of Blind Brook have endless positive things to say about their new teachers. "Transitioning from another school into Blind Brook myself, I knew the feeling these teachers must've been experiencing. That's why I think Ms. Schulman and I connected during day one of gym class. Plus, she is extremely nice and cares for her students," says Junior Catherine D'Ambrosio. Sophomore Sabrina Vuong is part of a gym class co-taught by both Murphy

and Schulman; she says, "I love the activities they plan for us. They really encourage participation. I can feel the high spirited activity in the class."

So far this year, the gym teachers have put in an effort to create original games and to expand the student's horizons. Starting off with the unit of cooperative games, they began to teach students how to work together and get along even if you are not friends or even in the same grade. These games have various objectives designed to promote creativity, from having to cross the gym without touching the floor with limited tools to giant memory games. This new unit brought to Blind Brook by Murphy and Schulman has been a success, since not only do students have fun, but are also taught valuable skills.

Blind Brook is happy to have Nacher, Murphy, and Schulman joining the existing faculty, with hopes for a great year ahead and many more!

## New Substitute System Introduced at Blind Brook

*Continued from page 1*

table as another way to remain isolated from peers that may be distracting. In a few instances, some students have not shown up in the auditorium when they are supposed to and a handful of those who do, leave and re-enter the room, distracting the substitute, and cause chaos throughout. This can be problematic for students who need strict order in the classroom to work productively, especially for the students who have a hard time focusing in the first place.

In the end, it's agreed by many that the new sub system is the best way to handle the situation, even though it may not be ideal to all.

## A House Divided

Abraham Lincoln once said, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” While these words echoed the statehouse of Illinois nearly 160 years ago, they are still true now more than ever. In the past six months, the United States has suffered from two of the worst mass shootings to occur, three of the worst hurricanes to hit the country, a terrorist attack in our own city, and has seen the large scale public re-appearance of white supremacists. With this havoc, devastation, and antagonism, I have seen people come together in solidarity, whether it be through a hurricane relief concert or hosting a memorial for those that were callously killed in the Las Vegas shooting. Even locally, our school Congress is working on raising money to support hurricane relief, and there are organizations that are helping out in other

ways as well.

While Americans temporarily come together both on the local and national scale, our country inevitably becomes disjointed when we begin to think of a solution to the problem at hand. Nowadays, each current event is followed by a political battle that typically ends in division among government and conflict between political parties. This division is causing distrust in the government, and consequently creating animosity among the people of the United States.

It was not until the 2016 presidential election that I was truly aware of the extent to which political views have become a divider among Americans. As more and more pressing issues in politics arise, Americans are more frustrated. Thus, a constant cycle arises. We perpetually

promote interest groups that drive Americans further apart. Finding a harmony between individual groups and the beliefs of the political party should be formed. When leadership fails to recognize the diverse beliefs of Americans, it only inflicts further division and blocks political progression. I would argue that focusing on unity is as important as focusing on some of the major issues facing our country, such as healthcare, national security, and foreign relations.

The first step in ameliorating the division among government is listening to one another. In order to form an opinion, we must understand both sides of an argument. Americans do not often do this. Equality for all Americans includes the acceptance of diverse perspectives. Myopic views on certain beliefs, further magnified in the media, have made Americans very critical of each other's views.

One of George Washington's most critical arguments in his Farewell Address was that Americans must not get carried away in the division of political parties, and instead come together and unite to make joint decisions that will benefit most Americans, not just the elite. Although this speech was made centuries ago, it still rings true.

Republicans and Democrats should come together in order to effectively come up with solutions regarding gun control, terrorism, and hate crimes. Nowadays, politicians use national and state tragedies to improve their political agendas. By promoting discussion between parties, politicians can potentially eliminate the racism, misogyny, and other discrimination that is all too prevalent in our country.

The system of checks and balances in the government is essential in the democratic approach within the federal admin-

istration. Oftentimes, checks and balances are used to completely support one side of the political spectrum depending on the majorities within the different branches of government. For example, President Obama faced a Republican gridlock in the beginning of his presidency that continued through his two terms. We are also seeing the beginnings of this with President Trump. When we hinder progress so much that no change is made, the government begins to become ineffective to the people of the time.

How we protest is equally telling of our resilience as a nation as well as our democratic liberties. Protests should highlight alternatives for change so that politicians can act on the complaints of Americans.

We should come together in light of the bombings, the shootings, the riots, and the violence. How we bounce back from adversity is always the true test of character. Talk to your local politician and voice your opinion because it is more important now than ever. Take advantage of the democratic system we have because people in many other countries do not have the opportunity to voice their opinions. Our veterans have fought for the political system we have and it is our obligation and duty to use it to the best of our ability.

Do not be afraid to talk to one another about politics. Everyone's voice deserves to be heard. Have a conversation and debate and discuss these views that make us uniquely American. If we do not listen to each other, we cannot create positive change. The day that we start talking to each other about politics, especially at the national level, is the day that progression will begin. We must create unity in diversity.

*Eliana Rosenzweig*

Eliana Rosenzweig  
Editor-in-Chief

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## #MeToo

### Senior Hannah Marrow

"Me too." Almost everyone with a Facebook account was inundated with status updates on October 15-16 containing only those two simple words. Those two simple words that probably don't mean much to most people, but to women who have been victims of sexual assault, mean everything.

The trend of posting this simple sentence on social media came after countless women came forward and accused film producer Harvey Weinstein of sexual misconduct. Actress Alyssa Milano suggested that by having women who have been sexually harassed post "Me too" on their Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts, it "might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem." Don't get me wrong, I love the idea of using a platform to spread awareness for a huge social issue and I was so happy to see so many brave and strong women come together and support one another. But while all of this was going on, I couldn't help but wonder: why does it take hundreds of thousands of women opening up about their traumatic experiences in order for people to understand that sexual harassment is a pressing issue that needs to be addressed?

I can admit that, as a young female, I am definitely more aware of the issue and am constantly on high alert. Whenever I want to venture out of Westchester, whether that be seeing a concert in the city or taking the Amtrak to visit a friend at college, I am always told by my mother to travel with a friend or to find a boy to go with me so that I am safer. Additionally, I'm going to college next year, and my dad always finds an opportunity to lecture me about being careful around people of the opposite sex while I'm away. These are things that my parents never said to my older brother when he was growing up. I definitely think that this unequal treatment of young boys and young girls greatly contributes to the fact that a great deal of our population is unknowing of the huge problem facing our society that is sexual harassment. Instead of teaching our daughters to be careful around boys when they go out, we should be teaching our sons to treat women with respect in order to help lower the amount of women who become victims every single day.

Another reason why I believe that many people are unaware of this huge problem is because a lot of women are

discouraged from speaking up about it. Of course, experiencing sexual assault is extremely traumatic and victims should open up about it when they feel comfortable and safe to do so. However, those victims that do muster up the courage to speak up and report their perpetrators often do not get the closure that they deserve. On ABC's *The View* on November 1, guest Congresswoman Jackie Speier discussed her experience with sexual misconduct on Capitol Hill. She disclosed that if someone has been victim of sexual misconduct, they have to go through legal counseling for a month following a visit to the Office of Compliance, then they have to go through mediation, and then they have to wait another month before they are even allowed to file a claim. On top of that laborious process, the victim is required to file a Nondisclosure Agreement so that the perpetrator remains anonymous. As a victim of sexual assault, coming forward is already hard enough, and since filing a claim in it of itself takes two months, it's often emotionally draining for someone to go through with it. Additionally, since the perpetrator's name remains any-

mous, they often face no repercussions and get to keep their job, so the victim is forced to come face to face with them everyday. Speier is currently working on reforming the aforementioned process of filing a sexual assault claim in the hopes that more victims will come forward and pave the way for others to follow suit.

While this problem can't be rectified over night, there are so many women who are taking valiant steps to make this issue less prevalent in society. Whether you're a boy or girl, teenager or adult, I encourage you to stand with the victims of sexual assault and do all that you can to spread awareness. If posting "Me too" to your timeline is all you can do, do it. Those two simple words are a beacon of hope for the countless victims of sexual harassment. They are a signal that people are on their side and are there to support them in overcoming their horrific experience. If we sit back and watch scandal after scandal unfold in the news, then we too are the perpetrators.

*Disclaimer: Though this article uses women as examples, sexual harassment can occur to people of any gender.*



## Balancing the Scales

### Sophomore Shivani Thanneer

I would like to think that our justice system is fair. I'd also like to be realistic. I guess I must choose.

Assault. Kidnapping. Rape. Murder. These were the charges against Erlich Anthony Coker in 1977. Soon after Coker was incarcerated, he escaped from the Georgia Prison and broke into a nearby house. He proceeded to rape and kidnap the resident woman. Although he had already done plenty of damage, his rampage was not yet complete. Coker stole the woman's car and began to drive away from the scene of the crime.

When Coker was caught and brought before the court, his lawyers attempted an insanity plea. According to *The Washington Post*, many defense attorneys are pressured into using this plea: "When you've got no better defense, that's the way to go." This results in a defense whose main goal is to lessen the jail time for the criminal, even if they were not actually mentally impaired. Startlingly, it was

found by the US Supreme Court that Coker was in a rational state of mind when committing all of his crimes. This means that while committing atrocious acts against another human being, Coker was fully aware of his actions. Despite this, the death penalty sentence was overturned by the US Supreme Court.

The bottom line is that our justice system allowed a repeat and unremorseful criminal to live, while his victims and their families suffered. This leads to criminals evading the justice system, because there is no punishment fit for criminals such as Coker, other than the death penalty. In cases like Coker's, the court provides only a the courtesy of the case being heard without actually serving justices for the families and families of his victims.

Recently, a federal jury sentenced Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the criminal involved in the Boston Marathon Bombing, to the death penalty. In response, a transit police officer Richard Donohue said, "The verdict, un-

doubtedly a difficult decision for the jury, gives me relief and closure as well as the ability to move forward." The *New York Times* reported that Donohue was seriously injured during the shoot-out with Tsarnaev in Woburn, Massachusetts; he was directly affected by the impact as were his family members. In court cases like this, the death penalty can in fact work to ensure that the victim's families can receive closure, feel safe, and in turn, receive justice. We must take into account firsthand testimonies such as this one in order to understand why the victims feel it is necessary to invoke the death penalty.

The death penalty is unavoidable under certain circumstance. According to BBC News, a professor at Northeastern University School of Law in Boston, Daniel Medwed, said: "At the end of the day they probably just conducted a balance - that the horror of the crime outweighed any argument that he should be spared," when referencing the

verdict in the Dzhokhar Tsarnaev case. The death penalty, in these cases, is deserved and ultimately balances the scales of justice.

There is still a bitter taste in the back of my mouth when I think about how the families of the victims must be feeling. Take a moment to step into their shoes. I bet that half of us haven't experienced pain like that. Losing a loved one is akin to losing a part of your soul. Eradicating the death penalty as a whole is simply not feasible in our current geopolitical climate. Cases like those of Erlich Anthony Coker and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev reiterate the dire need for an absolute punishment in our justice system. If used effectively, the death penalty will lead to justice for the families of many victims, innocent people who are the most prominent bearers of grief in these criminal cases. Change must start today, because it won't be long until yet another criminal may evade our justice system.

## Changes to Netflix

By Amanda Weinberg

With over 49.4 million U.S. subscribers and an estimated company value of \$60 billion, Netflix has taken the world by storm as one of the biggest entertainment powerhouses the human race has ever seen. In order to keep its abundance of viewers satisfied, Netflix is constantly making changes to be in the new with the latest and greatest, even if that means saying goodbye to shows we love.

One of Netflix's newest attributes is its original movies and shows. From well-known television shows like *Orange Is the New Black* to mind-blowing movies like *To the Bone*, Netflix's originals are gaining a massive fan base. "The best part about Netflix's original shows is that they are usually only one or two seasons long," said tenth grader, Izzy Polo. "One season shows like *Atypical* and *13 Reasons Why* make it easy to enjoy a show without having to worry about the time commitment of binge-watching a seven season series," said Polo.

Netflix has recently been releasing its own sequels of famous shows from the past. For example, *Fuller House*, which is the continuation of the hit 90s show, *Full House*, gives its audience a first-hand look into the lives of the Tanner family, twenty years later. Other Netflix renditions of past shows include *The Magic School Bus Rides Again* and *Degrassi Next Class*.

In addition to all of its up to date TV shows, Netflix is always in the loop with the hottest movies. From feel-good family films like *Finding Dory* and *Moana* to astounding yet comical documentaries like *Chasing Cameron* and *Haters Back Off*, Netflix is always adding to its plethora of appealing movies. "It is always interesting to see what new movies are on Netflix," said sophomore Brett Goodman. When it comes to movies, Netflix never fails to cater to all of its viewers.

Unfortunately, in order to make room for all of these brilliant binge-worthy additions, Netflix must let go of some of its best content. Some

noteworthy titles removed this month include *Friday Night Lights*, *30 Rock*, *Love Actually*, *Million Dollar Baby*, *The Titanic*, and many others. Many Netflix subscribers had some difficulty saying goodbye to these titles, but the most controversy was over the removal of the hit 00's soap opera *One Tree Hill*. "Don't even get me started," said tenth grader, Sabrina Hochberg, after being asked about her opinion on *One Tree Hill*'s departure. "I have been watching *One Tree Hill* for over 5 years now. I could always rely on watching it as a stress reliever, and now it's gone," said Hochberg.

On the bright side, Netflix has been modernizing its website with new features that are beneficial to the customer. The number one advantage of Netflix is its lack of advertisements and commercials. This is because it eliminates wasteful time that could be better spent watching the actual program. To enhance this advantage, Netflix has now added a "skip intro" feature, which allows you to skip the theme song or introduction of a show.

Not only is Netflix time efficient, but it is portable. Netflix is available on computers, smartphones, tablets, game consoles, smart TVs, blu-ray players, streaming media players and set-top boxes. Netflix's accessibility strengthens its appeal as well as increases its number of subscribers.

In all of Netflix's hectic yet enjoyable changes, one constant is its loyal body of fans. It seems to be a common stress reliever for high schoolers. "I usually watch Netflix as a break from homework," said junior, Becca Reichman. Reichman is not the only one who finds Netflix to be relaxing. "Watching Netflix is always my go to when I am bored, I always watch it before I go to sleep," said freshman, Jordyn Erenfryd. Netflix seems to be a constant in the lives of the fans as well.

No matter how many changes Netflix makes, whether they are for better or for worse, this world sweeping entertainment powerhouse will always have its supportive and devoted customers to ensure that the company will never lose its dominance in the world of entertainment.

## Almost, Maine

By Justin Levine

*Almost, Maine*, written by John Cariani and directed in this production by Christina Colangelo and senior Madison Goldberg, tells not just one story, but several. The show does not have an overarching plot, but nine short vignettes devoted to telling the stories of two or three people. Most of the stories revolve around love, loss, or both, while many of them contain dramatic elements that add an extra layer. For instance, the scene "This Hurts" portrays a man who cannot feel pain, having to describe his condition to a woman he meets. Other scenes, such as "Where it Went", convey a sense of loss. In this particular scene, a man and a woman try to save their marriage, however the night turns into a series of harsh realizations about their lives.

*Almost, Maine* is also unique with regards to the structure of the scenes. Each actor has a scene which they share with one or two other characters. This made the rehearsal process structured differently than previous shows. Instead of having usual "full cast" rehearsals, directors Goldberg and Colangelo split each rehearsal into particular scenes. This created a focused and tailor-made rehearsal process for each individual in the show, something that truly highlights the talent in and surrounding the production.

"*Almost, Maine* is not your average love story," said senior Emily Zeller. "This show allows for many different stories to be placed into one and shows how everyone in the world goes through similar things even if they do not know each other personally."

The show's nine vignettes also do not all have set endings. Due to the length of each scene, which were typically condensed to around ten minutes, most of the endings were left to the interpretation of the audience. In addition, while each individual character was not set down a good path, they developed in new and interesting ways. Zeller, who plays two roles, Glory and Rhonda, believes this added to the complexity of the show and its characters. "Most plays have definitive endings, happy or sad, allowing the characters to find love or be left alone. *Almost, Maine* allowed the audience to answer that question for themselves. Cariani made it so every character might not find true love, but their



Photo/Rachel Penn

Junior Julia Moelino and Freshman Andrew Lynch run lines together on stage.

experience in each scene allows for personal growth and development, which guides their journey through life to continue in a way that pertains personally to them."

The experience of *Almost, Maine* is one that many people in the theater department have been looking forward to for a while. Sophomore Alex Weiss, who plays East, agrees. "I'm particularly excited for *Almost, Maine* because I think it's incredibly well-written and the overarching themes of love and kindness are very important, more than ever before," he said. However, Weiss has found enjoyment not just from the shows themselves, but from the community formed because of them. "Now, the people in that auditorium are the people who I am most comfortable around," he said. "I find that the people who do the shows, more often than not, turn out to be amazing people and some of my closest friends."

Being a senior also comes with a big responsibility in the theater department. For Zeller, being a senior means passing down the torch to the current juniors at the end of the year, keeping a fun and productive environment for underclassmen, and welcoming in newcomers. Unfortunately, it also means leaving the community she has so long loved. "Being a senior in the BBHS theatre program is bittersweet because leaving such a wonderful group of people will be hard," she says. "But I'm excited to have an amazing year with my favorite people."

For other seniors, such as Goldberg, *Almost, Maine* represents an opportunity to direct. She feels that directing has allowed her to become more involved with the creative process. She also has a set vision for the show and said, "I want *Almost Maine* to turn out as something that is seen as fun, but I also want it to seem grounded and real to the audience...and I want every scene to have differences but have an underlying message of 'love is hard, but it is possible.'"

"[The show] is almost more real. There are some extraordinary circumstances that they're in, but overall, the main theme of this story is love. And that's something that so many people, almost everyone, can relate to," said Goldberg.



Photo/Rachel Penn

Junior Julia Moelino and Sophomore Ethan Berman run lines together on stage.



## From High School Student to Global Citizen

By Arianna Kohilakis

Blind Brook students are no strangers to music festivals. On the East Coast, we frequent the Governors Ball on Randall's Island while listening to tales of Coachella and Lollapalooza from friends and reading about it in the media. I love music festivals because they offer a place to listen to your favorite artists, try specially curated food lineups and wear newly purchased festival attire. Lesser known to many students is the Global Citizen Festival held annually in Central Park. Global Citizen, similar to the aforementioned festivals, is also an occasion of listening, tasting and dressing up, but it has so much more to offer.

The organization Global Citizen was co-founded by Hugh Evans, Simon Moss and Wei Soo in 2008. The company's headquarters is located in New York, where its mission states that the organization essentially serves as a "social platform for a global generation that wants to solve the world's biggest challenges." Over the past nine years, this association has utilized a mix of content and events in an effort to progress their movement for social action and create effective global campaigns that advocate for various causes. Many of this year's Global Citizen events have focused on tackling extreme poverty, raising awareness for HIV/AIDS, achieving economic empowerment and political equality internationally for women, as well as seeking Yazidi Justice following the recent ISIS genocide. In 2017, their Global Citizen Week held from September 17- 23 consisted of over 1.6 million actions which helped contribute to \$3.2 billion worth of commitments. Quantified, this has the potential to affect approximately 221 million lives. The largest of the thirty events included in this week of activism was the Global Citizen Festival.

There are key aspects of the Global Citizen Festival that set it apart from other respected music events. While the musicians certainly play a huge role, they share the spotlight with world leaders; their marketing phrase "pop meets policy" sums this up perfectly. When I attended the festival two years ago, my excitement to see Beyoncé perform was matched by my amazement at the

inspiring speech Malala Yousafzai delivered, only ten minutes before Beyoncé graced the same stage. Additionally, guests do not purchase tickets, but rather earn points through completing a series of tasks on the Global Citizen website, which then enters them in a lottery to be rewarded up to six tickets. The points are earned by taking action related to the focus of the event. This year, the direct goals for the festival were to increase universal access to education, create opportunities for female success and stymie the cuts to US foreign aid. The subsequent tasks related to campaigning for these goals and earning the tickets included sending tweets, signing petitions and calling lawmakers.

Each year, as more people hear about the mission of Global Citizen and social activism continues to grow as an integral part of each community, the festival flourishes. The musical lineup this year included Stevie Wonder, Green Day, The Lumineers, The Chainsmokers, Pharrell Williams, Big Sean, Andra Day and Alessia Cara. These stars were complemented by the support, presence and speeches of global leaders including Justin Trudeau, Michelle Obama, Argentinian President Mauricio Macri and Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg. To many of the approximately 60,000 who attend each year, a highlight of the festival is the unification of the musical artists and the global leaders as they stand together to tackle ubiquitous problems and ignite social change.

Our upbringing in a distinguished community such as Blind Brook often shades the severity of the global poverty millions face every day. Furthermore, our voices and actions can feel powerless when helping people who seem so distant to our everyday lives. The Global Citizen Festival and the entire premise of this profound organization refute these limitations by showing that unification within the Northeast to campaign for shared goals is achievable. When it comes time to make plans for next fall, remember that the Global Citizen Festival provides the opportunity to listen to top musicians for free and embrace the social activist-side we all share.

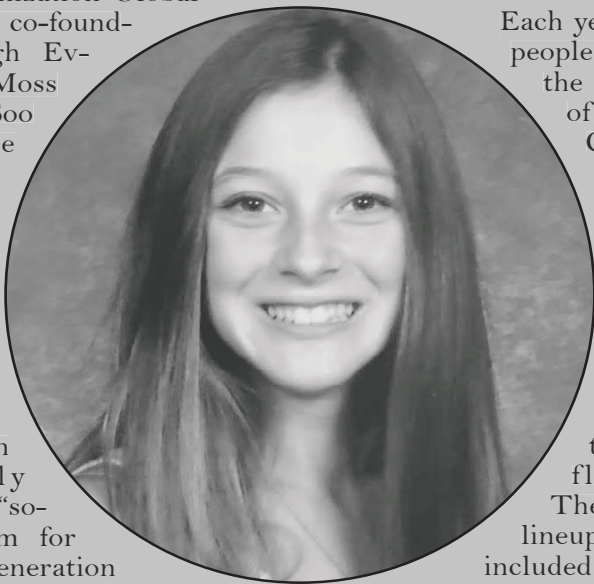


Photo Courtesy of Arianna Kohilakis

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## How Blind Brook Makes Senior Year Memorable

By Julia Morlino

By senior year, students are trying to make every single moment of their last year of high school count. Blind Brook ensures that their students are experiencing that year to the fullest with the many senior traditions we have. Activities such as the Senior Scavenger Hunt, painting the Senior Rock, the Halloween Parade, and Senior of the Day are what all Blind Brook students look forward to being a part of.

The annual Senior Scavenger Hunt usually occurs at the end of August, about two weeks before school starts. Students create their own teams with wacky costumes and meet up to receive a list of tasks to be completed. The team that accomplishes the most assignments in the time provided and with the best of their ability wins! As the first senior tradition of the year, reuniting with fellow classmates is a lot more exciting. It is a great way to jump into the school year with lots of energy and optimism.

Only days after the scavenger hunt, the seniors unite at Blind Brook to paint and sign their names on the Senior Rock. This is the perfect way for seniors to leave a mark on the high school, as the rock is spray painted every year and includes all the names of seniors who have graduated from Blind Brook. This symbolizes the unity that the school creates with the students that are preparing to graduate.

Senior Emily Zeller says, "When we grow up we all watch the seniors go through these events and we see how happy it makes them. The traditions this year's seniors have experienced have brought the grade closer together and have made senior year more fun. Although Blind Brook always enforces individuality throughout high school, I think senior year is truly a time where even though we are still working hard, we can truly let loose, have fun, and be silly. The traditions truly enforce the idea of making senior year last!"

Senior of the Day is also an important tradition at Blind Brook, where every day a senior is recognized and valued for their dedication throughout high school. Each senior is mentioned on the announcements and their picture is displayed on the TV in the Commons. This year, students were introduced to something even more special to heighten their acknowledgment. Senior Lily Kamin thought of the idea for the Senior of the Day to wear a cape around school. In addition, she created an Instagram account to post pictures of the chosen senior wearing the cape. Lily said, "My friends and I have always talked about starting a Senior of the Day tradition with maybe a pin, hat, or sash but I decided on getting a cape at the last minute. I thought it was such a special tradition to be Senior of the Day, and people look forward to it all throughout high school, but no one really acknowledges it once it happens. This Instagram and cape just add a little emphasis on whoever is Senior of the Day. It allows everyone to have a day to be proud of themselves and recognize all the hard work they've done to make it to senior year. It is also something we can look back on years later and reminisce on."

Dressing up for Halloween in school is another privilege the seniors are given, making school a lot more spooky and amusing! This year, the senior class paraded around the school in their costumes during first period and then got to share breakfast together. Senior Justin Levine says that the Halloween Parade is "really exciting as it allows you the chance to get a bunch of friends together and just come up with an awesome costume. Before this year, I definitely remember enjoying the parade, as a lot of the senior costumes are hilarious and creative. This year, the parade is even more exciting now that we are a part of it."



## An Adventure of a Lifetime

By Rebecca Weiss

For many Jewish teens, traveling to Israel for a couple months seems like an amazing experience. Through programs such as NFTY-EIE, sophomores, juniors, and seniors have been able to spend four months in Israel, learning both in the traditional classroom setting and through hands-on experiences. The students spend long days in the classroom, sometimes learning for up to eleven hours. They are taught all of the same subjects they would be learning at Blind Brook, as well as Hebrew and Jewish History.

Learning can be done anywhere, and the NFTY-EIE program takes advantage of Israel with the various trips offered to students. Participants receive lots of firsthand experiences as they visit the historical places that they learn about in the classroom. The students are also able to travel to Poland, take a sea hike, train with the army, and go on a unique desert adventure. While in Poland, the students learn about European Jewish life from the Middle Ages to before the Holocaust. During the sea hike, students gain wilderness experience as they spend days hiking and surviving outside of the urban or suburban areas that they are used to. While training with the army, participants gain an understanding of what it is like to be in the Israel Defense Force. The students also spend three days in the desert enjoying Israel's natural beauty.

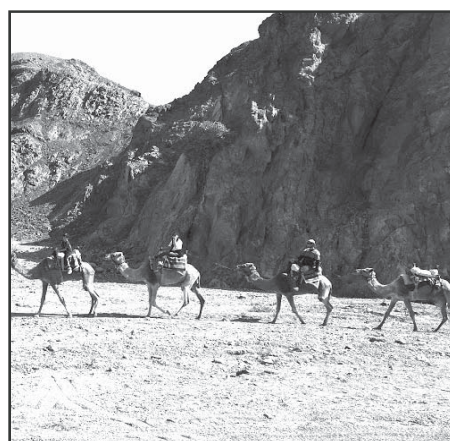
Students stay in Kibbutz Tzuba for most of the trip, a kibbutz lo-

cated about 20 minutes from Jerusalem that houses nearly a hundred other families. A kibbutz is a communal settlement for many families with a dining hall and infirmary. This living situation allows many opportunities for the students to have conversations in Hebrew and get to know the Israelis. The students live in rooms with a roommate and share a bathroom with another room. The kibbutz also has many facilities for students to use such as a pool, basketball court, tennis courts, and a lounge for the students to relax in or have group study sessions.

"I think it's certainly a great opportunity for students," said sophomore Ben Simon. "Being able to go abroad, especially to a place like Israel, brings a lot of cultural involvement and is a unique experience for students here to learn from as well."

Overall, the students gain so much more than simply a trip to Israel. They become more culturally aware when interacting with Israelis in their everyday lives for four months, gain friends for a lifetime, and become independent after being across the world from their parents for a long period of time.

"Israel made me be myself in every situation," said junior Rachel Harris. "Growing up in Rye Brook, there's a certain feeling that you have to do what everyone else does to fit in. But in Israel, I was living with a more diverse group of people from all different backgrounds, allowing me to be more comfortable with just being who I am."



Photos courtesy of Rachel Harris  
Juniors Paige Tankel, Rachel Harris, and Ilana Serin on their trip to Israel through the NFTY-EIE program last spring.

## In the Wake of Disaster

By Carly Kabot

When it rains, it pours. Recently an endless stream of natural disasters has ravaged the United States and its neighbors, impacting thousands of lives all the way from Houston to San Juan. The results of Hurricane Harvey, Maria, Irma and Jose have been cataclysmic, marking 2017 as one of the worst hurricane seasons in decades. Even weeks after the storm, the death toll continues to rise and many people are still unaccounted for. The grave reality of the situation is setting in, as much of the damage left behind is irreversible. Aerial footage has captured the detrimental effects, showing disturbing scenes of countless communities that were wiped off the map. It is hard to imagine that only weeks ago, there were families inside those homes, families whose lives are now changed forever. We have no control over the forces of nature, and we must accept that nobody is immune to disaster. While houses can be rebuilt, the lives lost will never be replaced.

The scale of the destruction has created a widespread humanitarian crisis, with many left struggling to obtain basic necessities. For the first time in over three centuries, the tiny island of Barbuda is uninhabitable. Over a million people were left without power in Puerto Rico, and potable water is scarce in many regions of the island. The Federal Emergency Management Agency estimated that 25% of the homes in the Florida Keys were completely destroyed, with entire highways submerged under water. More than twenty trillion gallons of rain fell across Texas, yet a staggering 80% of residents do not even have flood insurance. St. Thomas's only hospital was hit hard, the roads are impassable, and the power grid is completely gone. To make the situation worse, robbery has skyrocketed in many of these areas, as valuable resources are extremely scant.

Hurricanes may have destroyed both homes and lives, but they have helped strengthen solidarity worldwide. In the wake of disaster, compassion has been a ray of light beaming through the never-ending dark clouds. In a world of constant conflict, we were able to put aside our differences and acknowledge that everyone deserves help in times of need. For once, we are all on the same side against nature, as the empathy and selflessness of strangers has been the buoy keeping those affected afloat. Perhaps there is a silver lining, for the charity of others during this grim time

reminds us that humanity is still alive.

The Blind Brook community has taken up the call to action, even though we are hundreds of miles away from the affected areas. Every year Blind Brook Boys Varsity Soccer holds a carwash to raise money for their team. After the train of recent natural disasters, the boys decided that new merchandise could wait, but the people who needed their help could not. "This year we felt it was important to donate to those in need...the money will be of more benefit to the victims," said junior Zach Kornblum. Their teamwork goes beyond scoring goals on the field, as they were able to raise an astonishing \$4,000 in one day.

The car wash was only the beginning of the school community's effort to lend a hand. The Language Department collected items such as diapers, batteries, and flashlights to donate to Puerto Rico. They emphasized the need for everyone to 'contribute a grain of salt' as together, we have the capability to make a more profound impact. Moreover, Ashley Drazka, a sophomore, organized a bug spray drive for the Island of

St. John. She felt that she had a responsibility to do something, as St. John had been her family's home away from home for over twenty years.

It wasn't long until Congress began a school-wide initiative to raise money for those affected by the recent natural disasters. Without a second thought, it was decided that the money raised would be equally divided and distributed to charities to support victims in Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean. Congress kicked off its Dollars for Disaster Fundraiser at homecoming, raising over \$200 that weekend. The fundraiser continued throughout much of October, and the student body raised over \$1,000.

While a few hundred dollars may seem insignificant compared to the billions needed for repair, countless people across the country have done taken initiative in ways similar to Blind Brook. If we don't act, who will? Our small actions have the capability to greatly change lives. The Blind Brook community can't single handedly change the world, but we can certainly make a dent in it. If our decision to live with empathy and humanity towards all people changes a single life, together we can be stronger than any storm.



Photo Courtesy of Carly Kabot



"I love to bake because there is always something new I can try, and at the end of the day nothing can really fail because I can always try again."  
- Mika Finkman

Pastry Chef



Concert Hall Pianist

"I felt this connection with music and my passion for music developed. It's really hard to pursue music professionally but I definitely want to keep playing music."  
- Alex Chao



# HUMAN BLIND

"Everyone should find something to do that can relieve stress and make them feel good, whether it's music, art, sports, and that's what it was for me."  
-Mrs Hoffman

Runner



Baseball Coach

"After school and during the week, I have a job at pro-swing baseball facility. Having a job outside of school is like a balancing act. You have to find a way to do both to the best of your ability."  
- Devin Weiss



"I follow Walt Disney's Advice in my life, 'If you can dream it, you can do it!' in my spare time, you can usually find me at the happiest place on earth... Disney."  
- Mr. Ambrosio

Disney Enthusiast



Nationally Ranked Squash Player



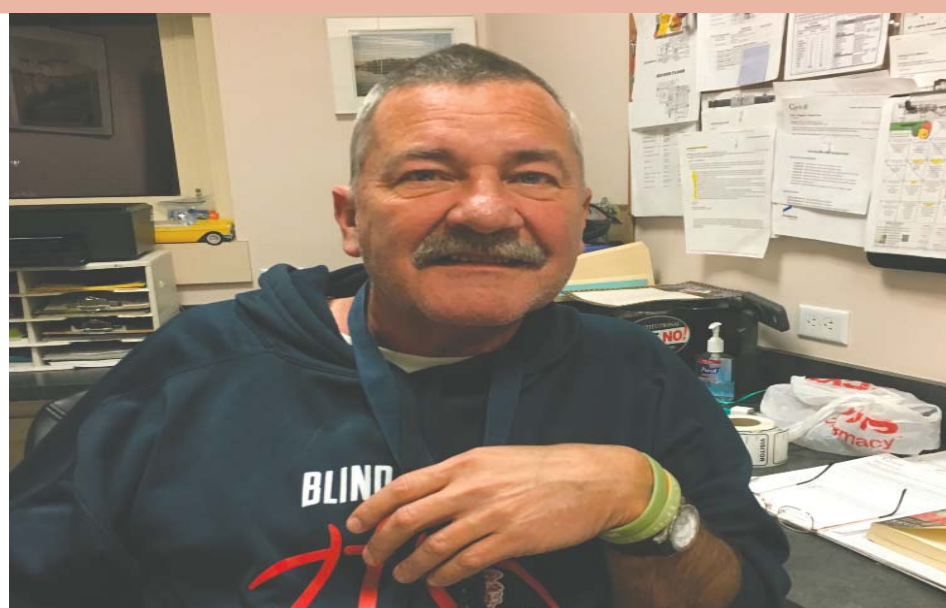
"Squash is honestly such a physical battle and many compare it to mental chess. The fighting aspect of it is like no other sport I have played and that is something that I cannot get enough of."  
- Russel Scharf

# NS OF BROOK



"Fencing has to be the coolest sport there is, or at least it's up there. Where else do you get to go 1 v. 1 like in the movies with blades and helmets?"  
-Nestor Levin

Fencer



Grandfather

"My grand daughter started talking when she was a year old. Most kids don't even say anything then. And she is so smart. And I had three kids, but then her, it's like being reborn again having her around."  
-Joe Ahrenburg



# We Need To Act On Gun Safety

By: Abe Baker Butler

Consider this: seven children are shot and killed each day in the United States. In the past 7 years, 33,000 people have been killed by guns in the nation. Yet, America is an anomaly: the gun homicide rate in the U.S. is 25 times that of other high income countries. Why? What is it about the U.S. and guns? Why are Americans much more likely to be shot than other around the world?

Unlike many other nations, gun culture is long embedded in American history: In 1791, the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was ratified, ensuring the right to keep and bear arms to all citizens. One hundred years later, the National Rifle Association (NRA) was established to prepare civilians in the case of war. Fast forward to today, the NRA is a powerful lobbying force. In recent years, the NRA has blocked numerous laws attempting to regulate the use and sale of guns. At the same time, the number of mass shootings and gun deaths have increased dramatically. The names Columbine, Sandy Hook, Pulse nightclub all carry images of tremendous violence and grief. Additionally, in October, a shooter in a Las Vegas hotel with at least 23 guns killed 58 and injured nearly 500 attendees of a country music concert in Las Vegas in what is the largest mass shooting in American history. With the ever-increasing complexity of firearms and numerous mass shootings each year, it is natural to infer that something needs to change.

The NRA is a strictly pro-gun organization. According to the organization's website, the NRA is "America's foremost defender of Second Amendment rights." As a result, the NRA has opposed many proposed gun control regulations in recent years, even on military-style assault weapons. While some argue that civilians need these powerful weapons to protect against a government or fellow citizen gone awry, this argument is far outweighed by the human cost of gun violence. Few suggest that the government should ban all guns, as they can be useful for hunting, recreation, and some instances of self-defense. Some also argue that gun control laws would be ineffective. However, this argument does not make sense when put in context with other issues. For example, there are countless burglaries in the U.S. but there are still laws making this illegal because these laws decrease the amount of burglaries and allow those who commit this crime to be prosecuted. The same logical way of thinking

could be applied to gun regulations. Additionally, federal restrictions on assault weapons, such as AK-47's, could significantly reduce gun deaths. In countries where assault weapons are banned, such as Australia, the gun homicide rate is 18 times lower than that in the United States. Australia has also had no mass shooting since instituting this ban. In addition, a 2016 study in the Lancet found that universal background checks could cut firearm deaths by 50% or more in the U.S. If background checks were performed before the sale of ammunition, deaths would likely decrease by more than 80%.

The issue of firearm control also ties into domestic abuse. According to Mayors Against Illegal Guns, 57% of mass shootings involve domestic violence. Moreover, the majority of states do not prohibit those convicted of domestic abuse or stalking from owning a gun. And if one is not convinced of the correlation between stalking and domestic firearm violence, 76% of women killed by a romantic partner were stalked within the previous year.

Just this past winter, a gun show took place at the Westchester County Center. Due to a loophole in federal law, purchasers at gun shows are not subjected to background checks when they buy from certain vendors. This risks the safety of everyone in the area. Although the County Legislature passed a ban prohibiting the gun show from occurring on County property, the County Executive vetoed the legislation to allow the show.

Now is the time to institute comprehensive gun control measures that save lives and make sense. Although the NRA recently supported a ban on bump stocks, an accessory used by the Las Vegas gunman to make semiautomatic weapons function like automatic weapons, the nation needs to do more. The government needs to institute universal background checks and safety features, ban certain types of assault weapons, and tighten regulations on where guns can be stored. In a time when the government is focused on deporting illegal immigrants and issuing travel bans, it is important to remember that there are pressing issues that need to be addressed and solved here at home. By expressing concerns to elected representatives and advocating for common-sense gun regulations, everyone can help to save countless men, women, and children who would otherwise fall victim to gun violence. It is undeniable that everyone must act now to make society safer for all.



Photo Courtesy of Abe Baker Butler

# Equality Behind the Wheel

By: Emma Stevens

On September 19th, 2017, Saudi Arabia announced news that is life changing for half the population in a country well known for its oppression of women. For the first time in its history, Saudi Arabia is allowing its female citizens to drive, starting in June 2018.

For many, it may be shocking that there is still such intense and extreme gender discrimination that this advancement for women's rights has not already been made. Saudi Arabia was the most recent nation to allow women participate in elections, leaving Vatican City the only country left in the world with voting restrictions even slightly based on gender. In 2011, the radical decision that King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia made to allow women to vote in the 2015 municipal elections was bittersweet considering there was still a problem: how can women vote, if they don't even have the ability to drive to the polls?

It is hard to imagine in such a modern society that some nations still believe that gender is a basis to divide and segregate people. Sophomore Abby Schlactus says, "It's very upsetting to me that women in Saudi Arabia were only just granted the liberty to drive."

CNN reporter Peter Bergen explains the importance of this development by saying "women driving themselves aren't just symbolic--they're also part of a larger social transformation going on in Saudi society that is arguably the most important in almost half a century." Driving grants access technology and different resources that allow more and more women to advance and gain greater freedom. Sophomore Michael Lieberman considers the royal decree as a "long, overdue effort, which is moving the country forward."

According to many Americans, 2017 is a year of regression. Considering the election of Donald Trump, the Charlottesville white supremacy events, shootings, bombings, and multiple natural disasters that have occurred within the past two months, many people in the United States and around the globe have succumbed to calamity and tragedy, and fallen into a pessimistic ideology. Lieberman further explains that he "used to love politics," but due to recent events in America and other nations, he now has absolutely no interest in turning on the TV and watching the news, or picking up an article and reading about international relations.

Countless people view this amazing news of females being granted the right to drive as a light at the end of the tunnel. Junior Emily Savino says, "I believe that this a great step in the right direction for these women. Everyone was created equal and

they have a right to be treated that way."

Even today, it is not only Saudi Arabia that is struggling with gender equality. According to the US News, while Saudi women are among the most worstly discriminated against females in the world, other nations treat women just as poorly.

In South Korea, "female workers earn a third less than their male counterparts." India, Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, and Egypt are also considered to be in the top 10 countries in which gender inequality is most prevalent. Even in the United States, the political discourse during the 2016 election demonstrated a lack of equality for women, along with the recent sexual harassment allegations against Harvey Weinstein.

Education, representation, and overall discrimination against women has been so prevalent over time that many people find it disgusting that the progress in Saudi Arabia is only the start to women gaining equal rights now in modern day society. Junior Abby Strauzer commented "the unfortunate fact that only now these Saudi women are getting these rights is awful, and other females just as equal to them, have already acquired over a century or more earlier than them." Strauzer goes on to explain that the discriminatory actions taken against these women are "not the headline of any newspaper, because no one wants to acknowledge the fact that we live in a world where things are not equal among everyone."

Many argue that she is right. Women face discrimination in many aspects of life all over the world. From being shown basic decency to allowing to being given equal opportunity to succeed in business ventures, and even simple tasks such as driving a vehicle are things that women in the 21st century are still struggling with. However, the fact that there are finally steps being taken in these conservative countries to eliminate these vast gaps between the genders show does give many hope for a future with greater gender equality.

Disapproval gender inequality is popular among people of all ages. Many girls growing up in the United States in the 21st century may take for granted the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution, protecting their rights because that is all they know. Meanwhile, girls the same age are living on a different continent and face different struggles as a result of gender discrimination. This unfair treatment must be eradicated beginning with Saudi Arabia's decision allowing women to drive. Strauzer says: "this repulses me the most, and this is just one small step in the right direction."



## Diplomacy or Destruction

By Sam Lazar

In recent months, tension has been escalating between the U.S. and North Korea. North Korea's test of missiles has been considered extremely provocative and a verbal war has erupted between President Trump and the leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-Un. Recently, Trump has said "The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea." Trump has dubbed North Korea's leader as "Rocket Man" and has also said, "Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and his regime". Political analysts say that diplomatic action is necessary to prevent an armed conflict and officials must clearly establish

the ground rules of nuclear deterrence for both sides. Trump's comments about Kim Jong Un are not helping to decrease tension, saying Trump's remarks constitute a direct challenge to North Korea's "leader-first" system in which no one is allowed to insult the "supreme dignity" of Kim Jong Un, which has increased tensions between the two nations and causes an increased fear regarding a nuclear war. Under their mutual defense treaty, the United States takes operational control of South Korean troops in the event of war on the divided Korean Peninsula. The two allies also hone their war plans through annual joint military exercises. As Kim Jong Un has accelerated his nuclear missile program in recent

years, South Korean defense officials have publicly discussed preemptive strikes at critical missile and nuclear sites in North Korea and an operation to eliminate the North's top leaders. After North Korea's sixth, and by far most powerful, nuclear test last month the South Korean defense minister, Song Young-moo, told lawmakers in Seoul that a special forces unit with a task of removing Mr. Kim would be established by the end of the year. In addition, North Korean hackers stole a vast collection of data, which included war plans jointly drawn by the U.S and South Korea.

American military plans for dealing with North Korean conflict have been rewritten in recent months by Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, in response to North

Korea's accelerated threats. Chances of a war could be magnified by a misunderstanding over intentions, uncertainty regarding North Korea's nuclear doctrine, and the increasing focus on both sides on how to prepare for a worse case scenario. The best way to reduce possibility of an armed conflict is through greater negotiations. As of now, it is likely North Korea will continue with its testing, while the United States will continue with its economic sanctions, therefore safeguards should be established to avoid nuclear war. At a minimum, Trump and Kim Jong Un should find a way to diplomatically resolve their differences and avoid a nuclear conflict that would cause unimaginable death and destruction.



Illustration/Ben Striar

## Travel Ban 3.0

By Mitch Saunders

On January 27, 2017, President Donald Trump signed his first executive order banning travel from seven Muslim majority countries, including Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The ban was for an initial period of 90 days and did not permit refugees to enter the United States for a period of 120 days. In addition, Syrian refugees were prohibited from entering the country indefinitely. However, chaos in airports and confusion among US officials rose as they were largely unaware of this change and thus unable to implement the ban in an orderly fashion. This original travel ban was eventually overturned by a number of federal judges.

Shortly thereafter, a second travel ban was emplaced. The list also included seven countries but

Iraq was not removed from the list. Lawful permanent residents were excluded from the ban and Syrian refugees were permitted but only 50,000 total refugees were permitted on an annual basis to enter the country. A district court judge in Hawaii issued an order freezing this new travel ban, followed by another judge in Maryland. The Supreme Court agreed to hear arguments on the travel ban and permitted the lifting of the temporary block that the lower courts had put in place. This order expired before the court could hear it.

In September, President Trump issued a new order banning all travel to the United States from the following countries: Chad, North Korea, Venezuela, Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Somalia. This new order was more extensive than the original travel ban, imposing permanent

restrictions on travel rather than a 90-day suspension. The additional countries were non-Muslim in an effort to dismantle criticism that these bans were based on religious discrimination and xenophobia. This new order took effect on October 18, and is the subject of additional challenges. A federal judge, Judge Judge Derrick K. Watson, in Hawaii has recently blocked this ban with respect to all countries, with the exception of the non-Muslim countries of North Korea and Venezuela. In his decision, Watson wrote that this third ban "suffers from precisely the same maladies as its predecessor" and that it "plainly discriminates based on nationality", which acts against the "founding principles of this Nation."

The blockage of these three orders suggests that the permitance of Trump's travel ban in

the form that he would like is unlikely to succeed. However, the White House has said that they are "confident that the Judiciary will ultimately uphold the President's lawful and necessary action and swiftly restore its vital protections for the safety of the American people." Although the implementation Trump's ban has been continually blocked, the idea that he was able to gain the support for this ban amongst many Americans demonstrates how many citizens feel about the Muslim community and a rise of islamophobia in the United States. It is also likely that another version of Trump's ban will be created and could face being blocked by the judicial system. However, this is not guaranteed and grants a lot of uncertainty for the future of many immigrants and refugees of this nation.



## 7 Tips to Prevent Stress

By Margot Schwartz

High school students are notorious for stressing over exams, especially at a competitive school like Blind Brook. Here are some tips to help make exams a little less painful:

### 1. Location, location, location!

Whether it is moving to different rooms in your house, going to the library, or going to the park, switching study locations is a great way to maintain energy while studying. It is easy to mindlessly study material only to realize you have not been paying attention to any of the information you have been reading. Switching locations frequently will help keep you awake and not feeling restless from long hours of studying.

### 2. Choose playlists wisely

For me, listening to my favorite songs while trying to study typically ends with me getting no work done. Usually, I will be re-view my notes for five minutes before becoming unable to resist the urge to sing along to the lyrics of the song. Consequently, listening to music that is not particularly enjoyable can be a great study trick. The music provides background noise to help you stay focused but is not a distraction. For example, whenever I have a big exam I will listen to classical music on a low volume so I don't get distracted.

### 3. Take periodic breaks

Continuously studying for hours on end is never effective. Although it may seem like the best way to learn a lot of information in a short period of time, you are actually better off taking breaks. This gives your brain time to rest and comprehend the information you have just studied. Study breaks can also motivate you to work harder and stay focused while studying to achieve the study break. Study breaks can be extremely rewarding when you have worked for a long time. I am always most effective when I tell myself, "If I work for another half hour, I can have a 15 minute break."

### 4. Dance breaks

If you are like me, you are tempted to watch Netflix, text friends, or other time-consuming activities during study breaks. However, these types of activities often will take longer than a study

break should, and ruin motivation to continue studying once the study break session is over. I have found a great substitute for these activities is dancing. Putting on my favorite music and getting all of my energy out provides a quick way for me to relax.

### 5. Use your phone to your advantage

Since my freshman year of high school, I have had an aversion to using my planner consistently. I remember to use my planner for approximately one week of school but that is about it. I began to struggle with staying on top of my work and prioritizing the work that I was given. However, unlike in most study-related situations, your phone can actually be a great solution to this particular problem.

The phone is usually near you, making it easy to put an upcoming test in your calendar or to add notes on the topic of study. You can easily make a study plan for yourself wherever you are and it only takes a few minutes. Simply making a plan for yourself that's always accessible will maximize your study time.

### 6. Have a designated area for studying

When you are studying at your house, it is important to have a place that is designated solely to studying and school work. Therefore, studying in bed actually hinders your studying process! By dividing these areas of studying and sleep, the stress of school work will not interfere with your sleep schedule and vice versa. In addition, by having a designated study space, when I leave the study space I am not preoccupied with the thoughts about studying.

### 7. Reviewing material each night goes a long way

Instead of waiting until the night before a test to start studying, review your notes from class each night. Even if you have other deadlines that are closer, carving out 10 minutes to review your notes will save you time in the end. You will also be able to ask a teacher questions about the material soon rather than later. It will allow you to learn the information instead of mindlessly trying to memorize a bunch of words the night before.



Photo Courtesy of Margot Schwartz

## Community Coalition

By Joie Ng

Being a high school student can be very stressful in terms of balancing schoolwork and extracurricular activities in addition to maintaining a social life. Expectations from parents and peer pressures among many other factors can lead students to turn to drugs as a way to cope with anxiety or as a way to fit in.

The Blind Brook Community Coalition is an organization that has a mission to educate the Rye Brook community about youth substance-use issues and advocate for the prevention of underage drug and alcohol use. Students, parents, educators, law enforcement, faith-based groups, and many other community groups are united under this common goal, allowing the Coalition to have a pervading presence not only in the school, but in the greater community as well.

Meetings take place on one Tuesday every month and are open to everyone. In these meetings, members discuss some of the problems that the community is currently facing, each person bringing expertise from their own area to brainstorm possible activities that can be organized to address these issues.

In an effort to focus these community relevant issues, the Coalition hosts a wide variety of events each year. For instance, they sponsor wellness week and the annual ninth grade team building trip in order to promote general well-

ness and mindfulness. They have also invited speakers such as Mykee Fowlin to give presentations to promote the importance of inclusion and tolerance towards all people.

The Coalition is currently working on a project involving mindfulness training in which twenty staff members from all three school levels – elementary, middle, and high school – are being trained to be able to implement mindfulness techniques as tools to help students manage stress and cope with it more effectively. The ultimate goal is that the scope of this training will eventually extend to all school staff.

Students play an active role in the Coalition by spreading its message at school. They help to represent the Coalition at county wide events and plan campus events such as Drug Take Back Day, hosted in collaboration with the police department, with the aim to educate people on the proper disposal of prescription drugs. Many are also active members of the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) club.

The Blind Brook Community Coalition is always open to everybody. Students who are interested in getting involved are encouraged to visit Mrs. Tricarico, the BBHS Student Assistance Services counselor. Visit the Coalition website for more information at [www.blindbrookcoalition.org](http://www.blindbrookcoalition.org).

## Weaponry That Doesn't Meet the Eye

By Nicole Rosenzweig

Rifles, missiles, submarines, bombs, and jets are commonly known weapons of warfare, but as of the recent attacks on U.S. diplomats in Cuba, sonic weaponry has been brought into the limelight.

The State Department has reported that almost two dozen diplomats at the American Embassy in Havana, Cuba were afflicted with a myriad of medical conditions, including hearing loss, sleep disturbance, headaches, nausea, and cognitive difficulties from attacks that use sonic weaponry.

Sonic waves, or sound energy waves, range from frequencies too low to be heard by humans to frequencies too high for the human ear to detect. Infrasound consists of low-frequency sound waves that humans cannot hear, while ultrasound reaches frequencies above 20,000 hertz, far beyond human hearing capabilities. According to the New York Times, it is more likely that ultrasound waves were used to harm the U.S. diplomats than infrasound waves.

However, many scientists are doubtful that the occurrences in Cuba can be explained by the presence of a hidden ultrasound weapon. The use of sonic weaponry has proven largely ineffective in the United States, and it seems unlikely that the Cuban military was suddenly able to execute this feat seamlessly using ultrasound weaponry.

The usage of sonic waves have been rendered successful in only certain cases.

BBC News explains that sound cannons have been used in attempts to

control crowds among police forces worldwide. Sound cannons were also fitted to a ship as a defense mechanism against Somali pirates and were supplied to London police during the 2012 Olympics. Some sound cannons are able to produce deafening noises, which is strikingly different from the operation thought to have taken place in Cuba.

Additionally, sound has been utilized in psychological operations. In an attempt to deny Iraqi prisoners of war sufficient rest and force them to cooperate in interrogations, the U.S. Army played heavy metal and Western children's music. Similarly, some shop owners in the United Kingdom use devices that emit high-pitched sounds which cannot be heard by most people aged 25 and older to keep teenagers from lingering at the entrances of their shops. However, unlike the events in Havana, in most cases these sounds were able to be heard by the human ear.

Factors that are commonly overlooked when aiming to find the root of the issue are contagious anxiety or other psychogenic contributors. According to the Chicago Tribune, many United States citizens who recently visited Cuba have reported similar symptoms to those experienced by the U.S. diplomats. The United States government is reluctant to vouch for these reports but has since issued a travel warning cautioning Americans that they should avoid traveling to Cuba right now.

It remains unknown whether or not ultrasound waves have the potential to physically and cognitively impair humans, as reported in this instance.



## Hurricane Havoc: Is Climate Change to Blame?

By Chloe Ng

This hurricane season has been one of the worst, with this past September in particular being the most active month for hurricanes ever to be recorded in the Atlantic. In August, Hurricane Harvey made its mark in Texas, causing severe flooding and around 180 billion dollars of damage. Just a few weeks later, Hurricane Irma emerged as the strongest Atlantic hurricane in recorded history, according to National Geographic. Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico and numerous islands in the Caribbean shortly afterwards.

So far, this year's Atlantic hurricane season has brought a total of 15 named storms, six of which have been category 3 or higher, which are classified as major hurricanes. With more than one month left in the season, latest forecasts predict that this year will be significantly more active than average. The formation of the major hurricanes over the last few months is attributed to a combination of chance, unusual weather patterns, and various climate factors.

Firstly, El Niño conditions are neutral for the first time in a few

years. These conditions allow for a higher possibility of stronger and more frequent hurricane activity due to the reduction in vertical wind shear. Wind shear, the variation in the speed or direction of wind, normally tilts the vortex in the center of a hurricane and removes some heat or moisture from those areas. The reduced El Niño also indicates that the water in the Atlantic Ocean has a higher thermal potential and evaporates more easily into the air.

Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (AMO), a climate cycle involving the sea surface temperature of the northern Atlantic Ocean, is another component influencing hurricane activity this year. For the past decade or so, AMO has provided relatively good conditions for hurricane formation. Other factors such as the population of affected areas, quality of infrastructure, and how long the storm stayed over land contributed greatly as well. However, another consequential force may have been further exacerbating these natural disasters behind the scenes.

The debate over the effects of climate change is controversial

and politically-charged, but most scientists agree that it played a role in making the latest hurricanes stronger and more catastrophic. Climate change since the Industrial Revolution has caused the environment to undergo rapid transformations, each of which continue to have impacts at a global scale.

Mean global temperatures have risen almost 1 degree Celsius since 1880, and while this may not seem like much, NASA's Earth Observatory notes that a global temperature drop of only 1-2 degrees was significant enough to cause the ice age. The warmer air and surface water near the oceans as a result of these increased temperatures provide more energy for both creating and sustaining stronger storms. According to NPR, part of the Gulf of Mexico was 4 degrees hotter than normal temperature when Hurricane Harvey passed over and it developed into a Category 4 Hurricane. Furthermore, warmer air can hold more moisture than cooler air, giving recent storms a higher capacity to unleash copious amounts of rainfall when over land.

The storm surge brought by

hurricanes are a major concern that is heightened by climate change. Accounting for nearly 90% of hurricane deaths, storm surges can reach up to 20 feet. Climate change has caused average sea levels to rise almost 39 mm during the past decade alone, and at a rate of around 3.4 mm per year according to NASA. Higher sea levels push surges even higher and farther inland than usual, worsening the threat of hurricanes. This mix of higher sea levels, storm surge, and larger amounts of rainfall combine to inflict more severe damage from flooding as well as other water related problems as well.

Climate change did not cause the recent hurricanes but rather propagated them in ways that have never been seen before. While the exact role that climate change played is debated, it is not entirely removed from the picture. Unlike other factors, the modern changes in the earth's weather patterns play a more subtle role in influencing hurricane destruction by increasing the probabilities of harsher storms and magnifying the effects of existing hurricane sources.

## Saturn: A Whole New World

By Amanda Weinberg

On September 15, 2017, NASA's robotic spacecraft Cassini ended its decade-long mission of exploring the Saturnian system from orbit. Before Cassini, scientists were only able to observe the Saturnian system from Earth as well as a few flyby spacecraft. With over 2.5 million commands executed and 294 orbits around Saturn, Cassini exceeded all expectations and in turn, has shifted the world's view on the complex gas giant that is Saturn.

Cassini's mission resulted from the collaboration of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the European Space Agency (ESA), and Agenzia Spaziale Italiana (ASI). A single nation could not undertake such a costly mission alone. However,

with the help of international participation and shared investments, Cassini's mission was made possible.

This spacecraft was first launched on October 15, 1997. Nearly seven years later, on July 1, 2004, Cassini made its arrival at Saturn. According to the ESA, the objectives of the initial, nominal mission included thorough observations of Saturn, Saturn's ring system, the magnetosphere, the icy moons, and Titan, Saturn's largest moon. The mission had an outcome of 75 Saturnian orbits along with 44 Titan Flybys.

In July 2008, the mission was extended for an additional two years and was called the "Equinox Mission", which had a main objective of observing the Saturnian system while the Sun crossed

Saturn's equatorial plane.

Not too long after the termination of the "Equinox Mission", a second extension was put in place, the "Solstice Mission". The "Solstice Mission" was the final mission and according to the ESA, had a main goal of monitoring the seasonal changes induced by varying solar illumination, until the Sun reaches its highest elevation above Saturn's equatorial plane.

Cassini gave the world a better understanding of Saturn's ring system. By studying their distribution, size, and composition, the spacecraft was able to uncover never-before seen-details and features of Saturn's rings. For instance, according to NASA, it is now known that Saturn's rings are composed of particles that can range in size from a tiny grain to as massive as a mountain. Cassini was also able to record the lowest Saturnian ring temperature of -203 degrees Celsius.

Before Cassini's mission, not much was known about Saturn's largest moon, Titan, other than the fact that it is approximately the size of Mercury and is surrounded by a thick nitrogen based atmosphere. In order to learn more about Titan, a Huygens probe, built and operated by the ESA was sent to Titan's surface, making it the first landing on an outer solar system moon. According to NASA, Cassini and Huygens managed to map the surface of Titan, study its at-

mospheric reactions and discover that Titan has seas and lakes of liquid methane and ethane, restored by rain from hydrocarbon clouds. Evidence was provided that Titan has an inner liquid ocean beneath its surface, most likely composed of ammonia and water.

Cassini was also able to observe Saturn's ring-moon interactions. The most significant example being the correlation made between Enceladus, one of Saturn's moons and Saturn's E ring. Enceladus is a small, active moon and under its crust lies an ocean of salt water. Cassini discovered that jets of that water combined with icy particles and organic chemicals are continuously seeping out of the south polar region of this mysterious ocean world. Some of the material makes it's way back onto Enceladus' surface, but the remainder breaks off to form Saturn's E ring.

Saturn is surrounded by a massive magnetic bubble known as the magnetosphere. Prior to the mission of Cassini, scientists had gathered very little information on the magnetosphere because magnetic fields are not visible to the human eye. Cassini was able to map the magnetosphere, enabling the study of the flow of excited gases under its influence and of how the magnetosphere affects the auroras on Saturn.

Scientists hope to get more answers as they analyze data from Cassini's final orbits of Saturn.



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## Kaepernick Continues Protests in Spite of Backlash

By Michael Discolo

It was over a year ago that San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick made the controversial decision to kneel during the national anthem before a pre-season game, and since then he has sparked discussion about racism, police brutality, and the ethics of the National Football League. As Kaepernick's protest continued throughout 2016, a domino effect was created as more and more players each week decided to kneel, sit, or put their fists up in opposition to the treatment of the African American community...Now an unsigned free agent, Kaepernick is looked at by his fans as a hero and a successful activist towards racial inequality who has paid the ultimate price by using his position as a football player

to protest in support of the African American community even if it means he will not be able to play in the NFL again.

"If [the NFL] takes football away and my endorsements away from me, I know that I stood up for what is right," Kaepernick said to reporters in August 2016.

However, others feel that due to some of Kaepernick's actions over the past year, the praise that his fan base is giving him may not be well deserved.

The narrative that the media is portraying involving the Kaepernick issue is that he has been "blackballed" by the NFL and teams are refusing to sign him due to his political beliefs. However, Colin Kaepernick was not released or even fined for his actions last year, but was supported by the San Francisco 49ers organization for the most part. "In respecting such American principles as freedom of expression, we recognize the right of an individual to choose and participate, or not, in our celebration of the national anthem," said 49ers owner Jed York. According to The Huffington Post, York also matched Kaepernick's \$1 million to organizations including the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation, organizations that are working to fight inequality and to mend the relationship between police and citizens. Kaepernick was not forced out of San Francisco during the offseason, but instead choose to opt out of his contract and his 14.5 million dollars owed to him this year. It can be argued that NFL teams do not want to

sign Kaepernick because he shines a massive media spotlight on the team and they believe he could cause locker room issues with other players.

Also, others believe that Kaepernick's failure to be signed to a team is in part due to his playing skills, which have not been exceptional as he failed to take the 49ers to the playoffs for the past three years. Others argue Kaepernick's actions in the past year have been self-centered and were not intended to benefit the country as a whole. Kaepernick also angered many of his former supporters as he has stated numerous times that he would no longer kneel during the national anthem if he was signed by an NFL team this season. As the Kaepernick controversy continues to polarize the

world of sports, the state of the NFL has quickly deteriorated over the past year. According to Business Insider, the NFL's ratings have dropped 10% in the past year, with many experts pointing the blame at the protests for losing a large portion of

the conservative male audience. This swift and significant fall is predicted to lose networks broadcasting NFL games over \$200 million in annual earnings. Also, Papa John's Pizza, one of the NFL's largest sponsors, has pulled numerous commercials because they do not want to be associated with the politics involving the league at the moment. In fact, the stock in Papa John's has dropped by 24% since the beginning of the season. Additionally, the ongoing power struggle between owners and players for the right to protest the anthem continues. Just last month Houston Texans owner Bob McNair reacted to his players' ongoing protesting by saying, "We can't have inmates running the prison." Similarly, Jerry Jones, owner of the Dallas Cowboys, has threatened to sit players who continue to kneel during the national anthem.

Racism and police brutality in the United States are just as present as it was last year, seeing as over 1,000 Americans have been killed by police forces in 2017. In order for a progressive solution to be met, the owners and players must make an effort to compromise with each other.

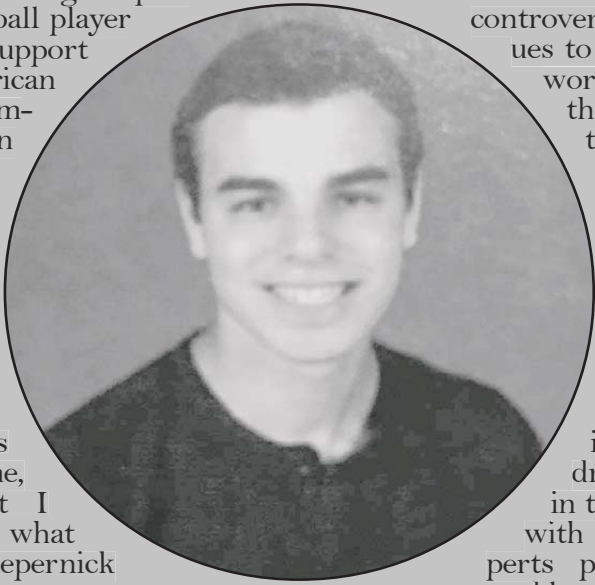


Photo Courtesy of Michael Discolo

## BBBVS Season Concludes: Short-lived or Successful?

By Scott Rosson

The season has concluded for the Blind Brook Boys Varsity Soccer Team, and the team was #1 seed in Class B of the sectional playoffs. Although the team ultimately lost in the second round of sectionals to Rye Neck, the team finished the season with 12 wins, 2 losses, and 2 ties. The Trojans played a 4-2-1-3 and the 4th best Class B team in New York state does not have a weak link in their starting lineup, it all starts with senior captain and goalkeeper Jordan Schoen. Schoen has been phenomenal all year, making huge saves when they were needed to be made.

In front of Schoen, the four players in the back, led by junior captain Bryan Wei who played in the center, prevented the other team from crossing their line. The defense plays very aggressively and always covers for one another. On the left is junior Damian Cuk, in the center is junior Rowan Kansler and Wei, and on the right is junior Zach Zimmerman.

The center midfield position is occupied by sophomore Martin Gonzalez and Alex Feuerstein. Gonzalez is quick and uses his speed and skill to set up scoring chances. Feuerstein plays more defensively than Gonzalez. However, he does occasionally rush and use his skill when the opportunity arises. In front of the two center midfielders, is junior Zach Kornblum who plays a very dynamic position. He sets up his forwards with passes and through balls, and can also establish scoring chances for himself.

In the offensive line is sophomore Isaac Mintz on the left, senior Oliver Kleban in the middle, and senior captain Jake DiGiansante on the right. Mintz is a quick and physical player, with the option to cut in and shoot or cross the ball to the other side of the field. DiGiansante is both strong and fast so he uses this to burn defenders out wide, allowing him to create solid scoring

opportunities. DiGiansante ended the year with 13 goals. Kleban finished the year with 19 goals, which led the league and Class B. Kleban holds the ball well near the top of the field using soccer skills and tricks, and will also send his wings wide.

The team also consists of many talented substitutes like Max Chalfin, Ross Gessow, Jack Shapiro, and Tom Neubauer fill the voids for the starters, which is essential for the efficiency and success of the team.

Junior captain, Bryan Wei, has a positive outlook on the season. He says, "We've grown to trust each other and truly play together as a team, making our play more fluid and dynamic. After 16 games in a season, we have an unspoken trust that we will always back each other up and support each other." The team as a whole has developed an incredible amount of chemistry which has inevitably factored into the success of their season.

Another reason for the team's success can be attributed to the change in leadership on the team. Marcos Monteagudo is a first-year head coach who implemented a new system and team formation in the game that has helped the team win time and time again. Senior Alex Feuerstein says, "Our new coach is the reason we have had such a successful season. He united us under one goal and made us believe that we could achieve something great, and he kept pushing us. Without him, I strongly believe we wouldn't have had such a successful season."

With a new coach and a lot of talent, the team had high expectations for the season ahead of them. After finishing first seed for Class B and fourth in New York State, the bar was set even higher for the playoffs. Although the boys made it to the semifinals in the sectional tournaments, they were not able to beat the Rye Neck Panthers. To some the team exceeded expectations, and to others, their season was rather short-lived.



Photo courtesy of Noah Zeitlin  
Blind Brook's Boys Varsity Soccer take a team picture.



## Season Reflections



Photo courtesy of Noah Zeitlin  
Senior captain Sarah Rattner sprints past her opponent from Briarcliff.

### By Justin Schuster

After a long, hard season of moral victories, the girls varsity soccer season was seen as a success to many, despite their struggle to win games. Led by team captains Sarah Rattner and Lily Koenig, the team finished with a record of 3-11-2. Ultimately, on October 21st, the team lost 5-1 in their first round of sectionals to the best team in the section, the Bronxville Broncos. Despite their losing record, key players such as the all-league defender Sarah Rattner and goalie Lily Kamin led the team to sectionals. In addition, all-league honorable mention players Lily Koenig, Rachel Sosin, Kaitlyn Shaw and Ellie Sanchez led the team in their successes. Rattner says, "Overall I think our season didn't go as planned. It was a rough year on papers with bumps along the way. Almost all of the young players were newcomers and both captains sustained major injuries at the end of the season. The scores did not accurately represent how we played, or our heart and love for the game."

Next year, with new plans and training tactics, I have faith that the team will bounce back and be better than ever!" As the season progressed, the team only got better. Throughout the season the girls did not just improve on the field, but they learned how to play as a cohesive team. The Junior captain of next year's season, Kaitlyn Shaw is optimistic about the team moving forward. Shaw said, "Even though we are losing a lot of solid players, we have a lot of talent and athleticism going into next season." The players are looking to continue and improve their level of commitment, passion for the game, and hard work for soccer season next fall. In fact, the team will most likely be continuing to play soccer for the duration of the upcoming winter and spring in preparation for next year's season. While the team's final record cannot change for this past season, ultimately the team is looking forward to working extremely hard next year and improving their record as well as advancing in sectionals.

### By Lily Janjigian

The Blind Brook varsity cross country team has concluded their season with a strong finish. Participating in 10 meets in their regular season, the team finished with an overall record of 5 wins and 5 losses. In addition to the regular season meets, the team also competed in the postseason county cross-country meet on October 28 at Croton Park and the sectionals cross-country meet on November 4 at Bowdoin Park. Led by captains Nick Espinal and Lisa Brady, the team has worked hard throughout the season, with practices held nearly every day. "The entire team is integral in our success. It takes true teamwork to win a meet," Coach Katie Walker said. Team members Nick Espinal, Ryan

Wallace, Alex Simon, Sean Keilman, Logan Chang, and Thomas Bartolotta competed in the boys race at the county meet and Lisa Brady, Rachel Penn, and Allison Chien competed in the girls race. Even more runners competed in sectionals. Espinal was the only member who qualified for All-League and he also now holds the school-wide record for the mile, with an impressive time of 4:59, just breaking 5 minutes. The previous record of 5:01 was held by a Blind Brook graduate of the class of 2012, Zachary Kratochvil. Captain Brady reflects on the season, saying, "It was a really good season with new athletes experiencing a lot of improvement and returning athletes getting new personal records."



Photo courtesy of Noah Zeitlin  
Senior Thomas Bartolotta runs at a home cross country meet.



Photo Courtesy of Noah Zeitlin  
Sophomore Guillermo Prieto runs around Blind Brook practicing for an upcoming meet.

## BBGVB Looking for a Fresh Start

### By Evan Ketchabaw

After the girls varsity basketball team finished with a losing record last year, captains Lily Kamin and Carly Discolo are looking to make a serious change in their game record. The team lost two former seniors, Jamie Broitman and Kaveri Reddy, along with former star freshman Gwenn Sabato, who transferred schools. This year the team is relying on new young players as well as some returning plays to up their game.

"We need to improve both our offense and our defense, because last year, scoring was one of our weaknesses and we let up too many easy points," Kamin said.

"I really want to increase our skill in the transition game as I think that will have a significant impact on the season. The opportunities are there, but we just have to execute." Also, to succeed in their league and section, a strong defense will be essential. The team is determined not let up "easy" breakaway layup points this year.

As senior captains, Kamin and Discolo both are focusing on bringing their team closer together and boosting team chemistry. Coming closer as teammates in any sport will improve friendship and playing ability. One thing that hurt the lady trojans last year was selfishness.

To fix the problem, Kamin says, "We need to play more as a team and use each player on the court to create the best opportunities available."

To get a head start on the season this year, the team has held an open gym to shoot around and practice drills in order to prepare themselves for the season.

Over the off-season, the firing of their long-time head coach, Manny Martinez, who coached at Blind Brook High School for 17 years, will definitely impact the team as they start their season. Kamin states, "I believe everyone on this team had a strong relationship with him and seeing

him go is sad. It was great to have him as a coach." However, the players do not want this to be a distraction from the season. They want to work just as hard, despite the loss of their coach.

Both Kamin and Discolo are very confident and have a positive outlook for the upcoming season. They are thrilled with their new coach Jack Adler as he offers the team a new perspective on the game. Both of them added, "We have a lot of upperclassmen and underclassmen this year and I know everyone will contribute a lot. We are very excited to be captains this season because we know it's going to be a great one!"