



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

Goodbye, Beautiful People!

By Ailin Sha (IV)
& Alex Strand (II)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On March 11, Boston Latin School Head of School Rachel Skerritt announced that she will step down at the end of the school year via email to the BLS community.

In 2017, Skerritt became the first person of color to lead BLS, and she has been closely involved with the community ever since. She frequently attends BLS athletic and academic competitions, supporting students with pride and enthusiasm.

The COVID-19 pandemic offered Skerritt time to reflect on her priorities as the leader of BLS. In order to spend more time with her family, she would no longer be able to devote as much time to the students and attending events. This was a sacrifice that she decided to make, as she needed to rest and spend time with her son.

Skerritt denies the numerous rumors that have emerged around her reason for resignation — she is in good health, she will not be the next superintendent and she was not fired from her position. Most of all, her decision was not influenced by the members of Class VI. She says, “It broke me that some of our youngest students think they are the reason I’m leaving; [...] they are the exact opposite.”

In the past five years, Skerritt has led many significant changes around the campus. Along with navigating allegations of racism against the school that accompanied her arrival, she also had to confront the chal-



Alex Strand (II)

Head of School Skerritt speaks at the Thanksgiving Pep Rally.

lenges that COVID-19 posed. Despite these difficulties, Skerritt says, “We must all keep moving forward together.”

Under Skerritt, BLS introduced new reporting systems for students who do not adhere to the community’s values. In addition, she promoted open conversations about all identities and educated the student body about cultural responsiveness. BLS English teacher Ms. Lynn Burke explains, “Many educators here have become more comfortable and adept at discussing difficult topics as a direct result of the manner and frequency with which she herself approached these conversations.”

Skerritt also values inclusivity and attentiveness. Due to the large student body, even when she thinks that she has done

something right, the policies do not always work for everyone, and she strives to take time to care for those people.

Often seen interacting with others in the hallways or making announcements during lunch, Skerritt’s approachability is something that students appreciate. Natalie Poflak (II) recalls, “I [have] definitely seen her out in the halls talking to people and she’s a lot more approachable than, I feel, [...] some of our other [Heads of School].”

Accompanying this, Skerritt’s *Instagram* page, which has almost 4,000 followers, is not only a testament to the diverse opportunities that BLS offers, but also to her dedication to the school community.

The new Head of School will be elected through the same process that Skerritt

went through herself. A committee including parents, members of the Boston Teachers Union, students and community members will be formed in the coming weeks. The committee will take applicants through multiple screening processes, eventually voting for a single nominee. The Head of School nominee will then be approved by Boston Public Schools Superintendent Brenda Cassellius. The entire process will take about four to five weeks.

A meeting was held on March 28 to lay out these guidelines to the BLS community. After the meeting, parents and community members anonymously shared their expectations for the next Head of School, which ranged from “Keep the rigid standards!” to “[They] must be a teacher not a politician.” Some even suggested that the committee “clone Skerritt.”

Although Skerritt is not included in the selection process, she hopes the next leader will be working under relatively “normal” conditions, as the impacts of COVID-19 continue to subside. She wishes that they will continue to develop structures that help students learn effectively, while also prioritizing mental health. She emphasizes the importance of leading with love: “Love keeps you coming back the next day — love for the students, the community, the faculty, this place.”

Her resignation does not mean that she will not still be around the halls. Skerritt plans on staying close to Boston and attending BLS events. She concludes, “I’ll definitely stay engaged, and I’ll definitely continue to advocate for students and for this place.”

Students Stand With Ukraine

By Elyssa Cabey (II)
& Ross Wilson (V)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

In response to the current Russian invasion of Ukraine, Boston Latin School students and organizations have launched several initiatives to raise awareness for the crisis and bring aid to those in need.

With a long history of variously hostile and close relations, as well as four months of military buildup on Ukrainian borders, the Russian government launched a full-scale military invasion into Ukraine on February 24. So far, the war has resulted in thousands of civilian casualties and forced over four million refugees to flee Ukraine. The United States government has accused Russian President Vladimir Putin and his forces in Ukraine of committing war crimes, including attacks on civilian centers.

Soon after the initial invasion, the Topol Fellows for Peace and Nonviolence held a Zoom call on March 8 with students and teachers from western Ukraine, which is currently still under Ukrainian control, in order to facilitate discussions about the perspectives of those currently living through a war.

Following the Zoom call, Topol Fellows and Facing History and Ourselves students initiated fundraising campaigns. They are raising money for nonprofit organizations — including Direct Relief and International Medical Corps — that send humanitarian relief and medical aid to those affected by the war.

Facing History student Maia Frost (II) says, “A war isn’t something to take lightly and definitely not something to ignore. It’s important to get involved because this is a humanitarian crisis.”

On March 29, the Topol Fellows held a film screening in the Seevak Room of the 1966 documentary *The War Game*, which depicts the effects of a hypothetical nuclear war. At the screening, Dr. Ira Helfand, co-president of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, spoke on the current threat of nuclear war and its connection to the war in Ukraine.

Dr. Helfand first spoke to the BLS community in November 2021 at the annual BLS Human Rights Day, organized by the Topol Fellows.

“Anyone who heard him would tell you that it was one of the most unforgettable and terrifying things ever,” says Ms. Judi Freeman, Facing History teacher and faculty advisor of the Topol Fellows. “So, it was because of that, that several of the Topol Fellows felt that there needed to be a deeper dive into that,” she adds.

Another group that has been working hard to send money and support to specific people in Ukraine is Flowers for Peace, an advocacy group at BLS. The group is currently raising money for Save the Children, an organization that has been providing aid to Ukrainian children and their caregivers since 2014. Flowers for Peace is also working with the Topol Fellows to raise and send funding to buy supplies for people who have requested help.



Alex Strand (II)

Flowers for Peace hosts a bake sale in support of Ukraine.

The director of Flowers for Peace, Phaidon Athanasopoulos (II), explains, “We really need to do as much as we can, and what we are doing is not a lot, but it helps. And I encourage everyone to join the movement.”

Flowers for Peace holds bake sales in the main lobby and directly outside the school every day before and after school, as well as during lunch. Along with the other items, the group is selling sunflower seeds, since sunflowers are the national flower of Ukraine.

The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine was mentioned in the annual BLS Martin

Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day celebration on March 25, which had the theme of “Lift As We Climb.”

To open the ceremony, Michael Glazkov (V) led a moment of silence in honor of all the people who have been affected in Ukraine. After that moment, he recited MLK’s words in both Ukrainian and English, using the moment to help spread MLK’s message of peace toward the effort for peace in Ukraine.

With many lives being uprooted in parts of the world like Ukraine, Glazkov remarks, “What students need to know is to appreciate what they have right now.”

EDITORS' NOTE



Welcome, everyone, to the final edition of the *Argo* before we turn over command to next year's editorial board! Amid a truly unprecedented time, it's been both our honor and pleasure to deliver journalism to the BLS community.

Before we proceed further, as you may have deduced from our photo, we are sadly spending this final Production Week apart, as Aidan tested positive for COVID-19 earlier in the week. But to all of our devoted Aidan fans out there (if they even exist), do not fret! He is feeling much better and wishes everyone a safe and relaxing April break!

Now, let us return to the reason you picked up these 16 carefully laid-out pages. First featured in the April Issue is the News section, filled to the brim with updates about our community. Flip through our excellent Forum pieces, detailing topics pertinent today. Take a pit stop in A&E, where Kelsey and Maggie's Corner, Ellis's album review and the crossword all return, before moving onto the Sports section, highlighting our appreciation for all of our goalies out there!

As the ever-fickle Boston weather begins to trend upward, be on the lookout for BLS's premier springtime events, including Asian Night on May 13, *SpongeBob Squarepants: The Musical* on June 2 and June 3, Senior Prom on June 9 and Junior Prom on June 24!

And before we forget, here is a special announcement: with the highly anticipated Graduation Issue comes senior shoutouts — send your best wishes to friends, family and students for all of their hard work over the past six or four years.

As we work on this final Editors' Note together, it's hard to believe how quickly this year has flown by — it seems like just yesterday that we were introducing ourselves to one another over awkward icebreakers on Zoom. If anyone out there is considering joining the *Argo* — do it. Nowhere else will you find a more Oxford comma-loving group of editors, writers and associates. To each and every single one of our Argonauts, thank you for all that you've done this year. We couldn't have asked for any better.

Here's to a wonderful year of the *Argo*, surrounded by beautiful people.

With love,
Aidabeth <3

A special shoutout to the *Argo*'s performance in the Suffolk University's 52nd Greater Boston High Newspaper Competition. The Sports section placed first in Excellence in Sports Writing, while the News and Forum sections received honorable mentions in Excellence in News Writing and Excellence in Editorial Writing, respectively!

Argo

Boston Latin School

Ad Veritatem Petendam

The *Argo* strives, in accordance with the highest standards of journalism, to inform and inspire its readers, to provide a forum for constructive debate, and to foster understanding among all members of the Boston Latin School community.



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Silence the Rumors, Support Our Sixies

By Azalea Thompson (I)
& Darren Seto (II)

Staff Writers

Amid the circulation of controversial rumors, Boston Latin School administration continues to introduce programs to support students through the challenges of an in-person year.

Following nearly two years of remote learning, many Class VI students returned to in-person school in September 2021 — for the first time since fifth grade. Similarly, Class V students' first year at BLS was mostly or entirely remote.

These unique circumstances pose obstacles for students new to the school building. Ben Blanchard (VI) notes, "It is challenging to adjust to the BLS bell schedule. My schedule in elementary school and now are different. There is more homework, and commuting to school takes longer."

In response, the guidance department has implemented additional support systems. "Simple things including learning early dismissal procedures, identifying locations around the school and meeting staff were all things eighth-grade students also had to learn this September and October," says BLS guidance counselor Mr. William Murray.

BLS guidance counselor Ms. Andrea Encarnacao remarks, "We did a lot of coaching this fall with both Class VI and V students. Taking notes and learning to prioritize are skills we talked about in our conversations with many of our new students and Class V students."

Despite the abundance of support and resources for students, misinformation regarding Class VI students has recently circulated around the student body through social media and by word of mouth. The conversations it has sparked, however, do not accurately reflect the new class and their experiences.

"Anyone can make a list. The claims that were made are false," says Head of School Rachel Skerritt.

One claim is that a large number of Class VI students are currently failing their classes. BLS administrators, however, say that this is not the case. "There are a lot of claims of numbers of students who are slated not to pass

or who are in academic jeopardy that are untrue," Skerritt adds.

For students in need of academic support, existing programs such as after-school tutoring and Saturday Success School remain available. The challenges caused by the ongoing pandemic and the resulting months of remote learning have, however, prompted BLS administration to introduce new programs — to specifically help the school's youngest students.

In November 2021, BLS implemented a new after-school program in response to the pandemic — Wolfpack Afterschool. The program, led by the director of BLS McCarthy Institute for Transition and Support, Ms. Rose Delorme-Metayer, gives Class VI students the opportunity to complete their homework under supervision before going home. The program begins with an enrichment block, where students participate in activities such as board games and drumming, before completing their homework.

This year, some other non-academic programs continue to support Class VI socially. Peer mentoring, a long-established program, pairs a group of seventh graders with an upperclassman, setting the stage for inter-grade bonding and advice.

"Talking to other students from the peer mentoring [program] gives me the chance to see what options and pathways I can pursue at BLS, such as what classes I should consider in the future," says Blanchard.

In September 2021, instructors from the Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center came to visit Class VI students at BLS. Sixie homeworks spent the day bonding outdoors in BLS's schoolyard.

In response to changes brought on by the pandemic, Boston Public Schools also distributed Chromebooks to students across the district to facilitate remote learning in 2020 and support classroom instruction through electronics.

Unlike previous years of in-person learning, students are expected to



Mary Bosch (II)

Despite a challenging new environment, sixies are hard at work.

have a device readily available in class this year. School-issued Chromebooks come with the Google Suite messaging app *Google Chat*, which allows students to communicate instantly in a way similar to texting, even during class. The BLS administration, however, recently shut down *Google Chat*. This prompted students to speculate

"Around school, I hear upperclassmen talk about sixies and what we've done, and they associate that with every sixie. And that's one of the main reasons it's been hard for me to adapt to this environment. [...] It's not all of us."

reasons for the sudden change, mixing the sensible with the outlandish.

Skerritt addresses the reasons for the administration's decision, saying, "When we checked in with teachers, we found that

no one was using [*Google Chat*] for instructional purposes, rather more [for an] immediate way for students to communicate [...] which is very compromising to our instruction during the day. [...] It's not related to specific grade levels."

Skerritt describes the unfounded claims as "upsetting not just to administrators, but also to the grade level these claims are about." She adds, "We have to remember that, not only is it inappropriate and untrue, but

that it has an impact on how students feel about their own classmates. [...] We don't want our youngest learners internalizing others' beliefs about what they're capable of. I worry that our seventh graders are going to be distracted in a way that they don't understand how much we and BLS administrators think they can be successful."

Echoing the Head of School's sentiment, Ikra Abbasi (VI) shares how she feels about the school community's attitude toward her class: "Some upperclassmen might think that [...] we don't deserve to be here. Around school, I hear upperclassmen talk about sixies and what we've done, and they associate that with every sixie. And that's one of the main reasons it's been hard for me to adapt to this environment. [...] It's not all of us."

As the end of the school year nears, BLS administration hopes that students will come together as a whole. "No one has truly experienced and learned to pivot the effects of a pandemic in the modern education system. We are still learning to navigate this experiment," remarks Associate Head of School Jonathan Mulhern.

Skerritt has a final message for all BLS students: "There has never been a sixie class at BLS where everyone had it figured out in sixie year. [...] Many students at BLS were once in their shoes at some point, and it's important we do not forget that."

SUPPORT SYSTEMS AROUND THE SCHOOL

Saturday Success School

The Saturday Success School offers help to students in Classes VI to IV who are in need of more academic support in their classes. Students meet every Saturday virtually from 8:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. for three 45-minute sessions for three different subject areas. Teachers, alumni volunteers and upperclassmen tutor students one-on-one or in small groups. This allows students to develop their skills in their chosen subject areas. To register, use this link: bit.ly/saturdaysuccess.

After-School Tutoring

After-school tutoring is a program where students support other students with homework assignments. Tutoring runs after school Monday to Thursday from 2:30 P.M. to 3:30 P.M. General tutoring is in Room 134, while specialized Latin tutoring is available in Room 135. Students who want a structured environment with one-on-one support to complete their homework will benefit from this program. No prior sign-up is required.

Strategies for Success Workshops

Strategies for Success workshops are monthly workshops in different skill areas. Workshops are Thursday afterschool in Room 135 from 2:30 P.M. to 3:30 P.M. Topics include note-taking in math and building strong relationships with teachers. Announcements for these workshops are put out on the Daily Bulletin, and any questions can be emailed to Ms. Rose Delorme-Metayer at rdelormemetayer@bostonpublicschools.org.

Wolfpack Afterschool

Wolfpack Afterschool is a program for Class VI students who would benefit from a structured environment for completing homework assignments. The program runs Monday through Thursday from 2:15 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. Activities include board games, karate and drumming. The homework block is staffed with teachers who will provide academic help, encouragement and support around prioritizing, focus and planning. To commit to the program, students can complete a form by emailing rdelormemetayer@bostonpublicschools.org. For more information, see bit.ly/wolfpas.

No More Z-O-O-M: In-Person Spelling Bee Returns



Josephine LoRusso (V) spells their way to third place citywide!

By **Sylvia O'Hearn (III)**
& **Mary Deng (V)**

Contributing Writers

On March 3, Boston Latin School hosted its first in-person spelling bee in two years, where the first-place winner Josephine LoRusso (V) went on to represent the school at the citywide competition.

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is a decades-old nationwide competition with various levels, starting in the classroom. Winners of classroom bees first compete within their school before the winner advances to the city-wide level. The winner of the city-wide competition moves on to the Scripps National Spelling Bee, held in Washington, D.C.

Held in the auditorium after school, the school spelling bee was facilitated by Head of BLS English Department Ms. Susan Moran. 12 seventh graders and eighth graders competed in an intense two-hour-long competition.

At the BLS spelling bee, students were randomly assigned a number and called up each round based on the order. The pronouncer would then give the student a word to spell. If a student misspelled a word, they were eliminated. The difficulty of the words increased as the rounds progressed.

Because everyone was wearing masks and organizers wanted to ensure absolute clarity, pronouncers gave the student information such as the country of origin, definition, parts of speech, alternative pronun-

ciations and example sentences. In previous years, competitors had to request this information. LoRusso was the last speller remaining, making them the winner of the spelling bee. Their winning word was “drudgery,” meaning “dull, irksome and fatiguing work; uninspiring or menial labor,” according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

LoRusso advanced to the Boston city-wide spelling bee, organized by the Boston Center for Youth and Families, held on March 19 in the Central Branch of the Boston Public Library. They placed third in the city bee against 18 other students.

Their experience with spelling bees stems back to fourth grade, but it was not until seventh grade that LoRusso started competing in a schoolwide spelling bee.

Studying for the spelling bee involved a packet of words that each competitor received before the event. Not all the words in the actual bee, however, were guaranteed to be on the list. LoRusso explains that they used a PDF editor called *Kami* to study remotely both last year and this year. When practicing, they would follow a system of highlighting answers that they spelled incorrectly in red, answers they spelled correctly once in yellow and answers they spelled correctly more than once in green.

Last year's spelling bee was held remotely as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, where students competed over Zoom.

Ms. Vali Tamm, a longtime parent volunteer for the BLS spelling bee, reflects,

“It's difficult on Zoom for everybody, so it was great to be back in the school to watch the students. The thing that I noticed that is different [between pre-COVID-19] and [post-COVID-19] is just the level of camaraderie between the students.”

When organizing the event, COVID-19 was the main concern: a possible virtual option was considered and the School constantly monitored the infection rates. Unlike in previous years, students were not allowed to show up to support their classmates, and no snacks were provided.

“We kept our options open until the very week of the bee, because we wanted to be sure it would be completely safe. [...] Fortunately for that week, the infection rate was very low and things, in general, in our own building, were starting to open up a little bit. So, we felt it was safe to hold it in person,” explains Ms. Moran.

Reflecting on their experience after winning the School spelling bee and receiving third place in the citywide competition, LoRusso shares, “It was a lot less stressful than I thought it was going to be. [...] Overall, I had a lot more fun than I thought I was going to.”

drudgery /druːdʒ(ə)rē/ noun dull, irksome and fatiguing work; uninspiring or menial labor	Origins: Middle English (druggen + -erie)
Winning the schoolwide spelling bee was not drudgery.	
Credit: Joanna Lin (III)	

A Safe Space at BLS: Young Women of Color

By **Caitlin Donovan (II)**
& **Kristiana Dycj (II)**

Contributing Writers

While listening to the weekly W block announcements, Boston Latin School students might hear an announcement on the intercom: “The Young Women of Color (YWOC) are meeting this period in the Seevak Room.”

Started by Ms. Rose Delorme-Metayer, director of the McCarthy Institute, in 2018, YWOC has grown to 30 consistent members who come to experience a diverse and safe space at BLS. With meetings alternating between the Seevak Room and Room 014 during W block, members are encouraged to be themselves in important discussions that focus on social justice issues regarding racial inequity.

The YWOC officers agree that the foremost goal of the club is to offer students of color a comfortable place to talk about shared experiences and current events. Having a safe environment to thoroughly discuss matters such as race, gender and intersectionality are important to both members and club officers. Mariam Sirage (I), president of YWOC, explains, “A lot of what we do is we pick people's brains when it comes to certain concepts like race.”

In March, the club facilitated multiple events including a Spirit Week for Women's History Month and a food drive for St. Mary's Food Pantry, which is a member agency of the Greater Boston Food Bank. The Spirit Week included themes such as Pajama Day, Pink Wednesday and Throwback Thursday — all of which were meant to boost school spirit and promote the club's message regarding inclusion and participation.

YWOC runs other events such as a book club at the first meeting of every month, a study block once a month and a social mixer involving other clubs at the end of every month.

Often seen partnering with BLS Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge, BLS Talented and Gifted Lati-



Members of BLS Young Women of Color at a W block meeting.

nos and BLS Young Men of Color, the club focuses its attention on working with diverse culture clubs to unify the school community in a comfortable environment. In the past, they have collaborated on yearly events such as the Kwanzaa celebration and the Black History Month spirit events. There, interactive activities like Kahoots and dance contests take place.

In addition to in-person events, YWOC's *Instagram* page has a new series of teacher spotlights, which invites female educators of color at BLS to speak on their career, role in the school and experience as a woman of color. So far, BLS history teacher Ms. Cheralyn Pinchem and BLS

biology teacher Ms. Paula Guzman have participated in this series. During Black History Month, their account also held raffles for members to win self-care baskets.

The club also provides the opportunity for upperclassmen to give advice and words of encouragement to younger students. Vice President Ebony Offre (I) says, “If I were in seventh grade and I knew someone in 12th grade, I would look up to them. That's what this club is, too: to help younger kids get situated here.”

Like most clubs at BLS, YWOC has an all-upperclassman board, with the majority being seniors. This provides them with both the opportunity to offer advice

and encouragement to the younger students, but also poses questions concerning the future of the club, especially with the change in leadership.

Despite the club being relatively new, officers like Offre hope that YWOC will become deeply ingrained at BLS, where there is always community engagement and involvement.

YWOC member Deborah Desir (III) concludes, “Going to BLS, especially as a person of color, is a scary thing. When I first came to BLS, I was one of two Black girls in my homeroom, so it was just really nice seeing more people that do look like me.”

Boston Youth Advocate for #PeopleNotProfit

By **Quyen Vo (III)**
& **Olivia Chen (VI)**

Contributing Writers

The #PeopleNotProfit Boston Climate Strike, which occurred on March 25 at Boston Common, is one of a series of global strikes under Fridays For Future, an international movement.

Under the theme of “People Not Profit,” this year’s strike was co-sponsored by the Boston Climate Action Network, Healing, Empathy, Redemption, Oasis, Extinction Rebellion Boston and the Boston University Environmental Student Organization. Individuals and organizations gathered to interact and advocate for their work through fliers, signs, speeches and singing. Among the crowd were 12 Boston Latin School students.

Maya Nelson (II), co-president of Boston Latin School Youth Climate Action Network and a member of the Massachusetts Youth Climate Coalition, was one of eight speakers at the strike. Nelson highlighted the intersection of her work in climate activism with her identity as a young adult. She aimed to convey the collective power that youth have to create change.

In her speech, Nelson tackled two main problems that Boston is not yet equipped to address: sea-level rise and air pollution. Nel-

son also emphasized that discussions surrounding climate change are incomplete without acknowledging how certain communities in Boston are disproportionately affected, such as Hispanic and Black communities.

These communities are exposed to more industrial facilities than any other race, which makes air pollution a major problem for them. Nelson comments on a scientific study proving the effect: “Within cities [in predominantly Black communities,] the researchers found exposure inequality actually increased slightly during the study period.”

The effects do not end there. Destruction threatens Crane Ledge Woods, a 24-acre property in Hyde Park, in a proposed project that would cut through the forest to build ten new buildings. In response, activists like Nelson have called for the Boston City Council to allocate funds dedicated to green space infrastructure acquisition, which could ensure the conservation of wildlife and a green space for residents.

BLS students living with the impact of climate change and urban development also voiced their concerns.

One major concern is the consumption of plastic and the lack of sustainable alternatives. Avani Shah (IV), a student participant in the strike, thinks that recycling is not helping the community use less plastic because



Maya Nelson (II) speaks at the #PeopleNotProfit Boston Climate Strike.

they “still default to using plastic, and there just aren’t enough options or ways to avoid it.”

Advocates also reported being excluded from conversations where they feel their presence could make a difference. Ita Berg (IV) shares that developers in Dorchester are providing “misleading blueprints, scheduling open meetings at times we aren’t available and getting building permits right from the city without talking to any of us.” The lack

of input from people who are most directly impacted is a concern commonly shared among her peers.

Youth also feel the pressure of scientists’ predictions that the time to address the environmental crisis is running out. Esther Rosi-Kessel (II) concludes, “All of climate change is affecting us a lot because we know that we’re going to be growing up with this and, it’s just going to get worse unless something happens soon.”

Topols Take on Threats to Democracy

By **Sofia Daffin (II)**
& **Andrea Pineda (VI)**

Contributing Writers

Amid the current political climate in the United States, Boston Latin School Topol Fellows for Peace and Nonviolence held a discussion with students on threats to American democracy on March 24.

This interactive presentation aimed to inform students about political injustices that have plagued the U.S. in recent decades. The 20 attendees from across all grade levels were free to share their perspectives on American democracy. They also asked questions regarding its impact on the government and politics. The talk covered a variety of topics, including

the January 6 insurrection, the recent uprising of white supremacist ideology, voter suppression laws and the presidency of Donald Trump.

The Topol Fellows were inspired to host the discussion after a slew of events back in November that sparked national outrage. Topol Fellow Jasmine Lee (I) notes, “We first started thinking about the topic around November because we were talking about the Kyle Rittenhouse trial. While we were talking about that, there was also a lot of stuff in the news about banned books. So those two things combined made us think about the overall topic of threats to our democracy.”

The Topol Fellows are a group that advocates for education and action on human rights issues locally, nationally and globally.

This includes staying informed on the political climate of the United States, as the laws and systems of government that are being upheld today will greatly impact future generations.

Another Topol Fellow, Gabi Vasquez-Rosado (I), says, “I think that a big part of what inspired us to put on an event like this is our current political climate and how concerning it is and how relevant and impactful it is to each person here. So it’s not just an issue that impacts one group. But it’s a really widespread issue that a lot of younger people don’t know about.”

The presentation provided students with information that is not taught in academic classes, informing participants on real-world issues taking place. Many found it to

be an eye-opening experience.

One participant, Jessica Tang (I), shares, “One of my most surprising takeaways from this event was that our government is strongly linked with large corporations. Companies with a lot of money are able to have a strong impact on our politics, which is something I did not know about.”

Topol Fellows and attendees alike were in agreement that understanding the rising dangers to American democracy are integral to being an informed global citizen.

Topol Fellow Tiffany Dang (I) explains, “These kids are [going to] be voting later on when they’re adults. And so it’s important that we start now to get the conversation started and get them involved in civic engagement.”

Reminiscing With Rashaun and Rutstein

By **Andrew Su (IV)** & **Iris Tian (IV)**

Contributing Writers

Spotlight on...

Rashaun Martin ('97)

Recently, Boston Latin School graduate Rashaun Martin ('97) has been recognized for his merit by winning the Black Excellence On The Hill Award.

Nominated by East Boston State Representative and former student Adrian Madaro ('07), Martin received the Black Excellence On The Hill Award on February 28. This award celebrates leaders in Boston who are working to uplift Boston’s Black community.

Currently the Director of Recruitment

for Boston Public Schools, Martin recruits people of underrepresented racial and ethnic identities to make BPS faculty and the board of educators more reflective of society’s demographics. In doing so, he finds that students will be able to “learn from and look up to a diverse community of teachers whose backgrounds more closely reflect their own,” according to the East Boston Times.

At BLS, Martin recalls that his teachers had a great impact on his growth as a student. In his early high school years, he notes, “I struggled [...] academically. I went to summer school several times [and] repeated the ninth grade.”

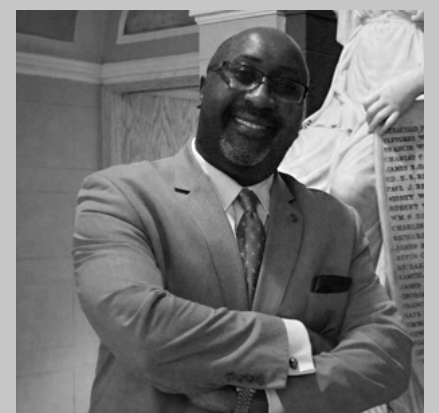
In freshman year, however, he received a “wake-up call” when his teacher told him

that he needed to figure out how to succeed or he was going to struggle in the future.

Martin adds, “I know people have been telling me that forever, but somehow, it clicked and I finally became a different student.”

After almost nine years teaching at BLS, he went on to take on leadership roles in local educational institutions, becoming the principal at two Boston schools, Education Manager at the USS Constitution Museum and now the Director of Recruitment at BPS.

Martin values the practice of humility and service to others as well as building relationships. He reflects, “I’ve always taken the approach that I can make someone’s today better than it was yesterday [...], or [tomorrow] better than today.”



Spotlight on...

Martin Rutstein ('57)

In the Boston Latin School auditorium, one may notice that the seats have plaques inscribed with quotations of donors, one of which was made by BLS graduate Martin Rutstein ('57).

Dr. Rutstein’s plaque reads “*Ego superstes!*” — meaning “I am a survivor!” in

Latin — a tribute to his years of hard work and dedication to succeed in school.

He recalls the dependency of students on their peers throughout his six years at BLS. He says, “I remember how close we were and how much we mattered [to each other].”

Dr. Rutstein believes that his time at BLS has taught him a great deal: “As difficult as it was, there was always some [expert] here and there who would help you along and get you through it.”

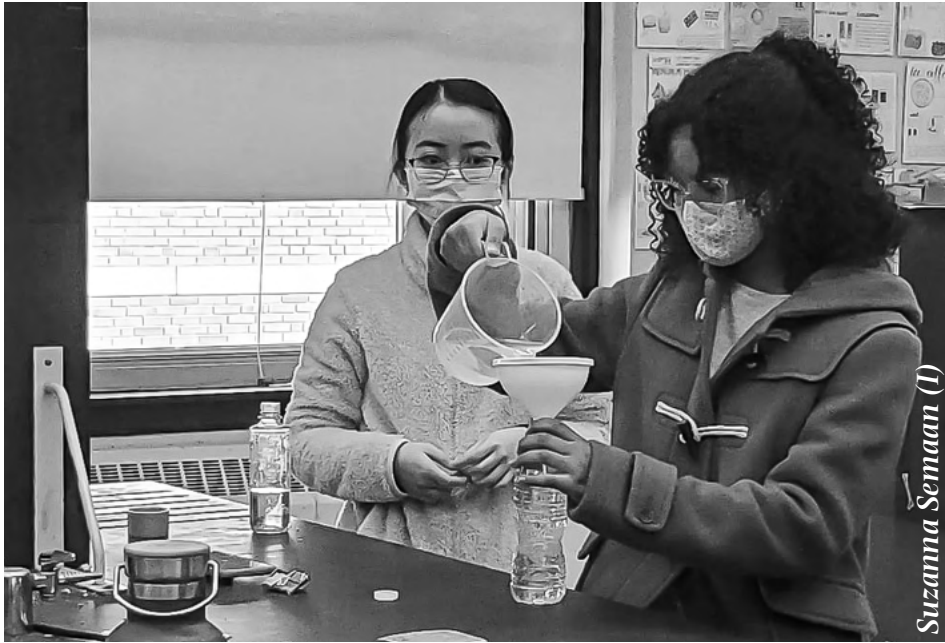
Today, Dr. Rutstein is a retired profes-

sor of mineralogy at the State University of New York at New Paltz. His expertise also brought him to be the current director of Ecological Consulting and Management Services, which identifies environmental materials of concern, such as lead and cancer-causing asbestos, in air, water and infrastructure.

Throughout his journey, Dr. Rutstein credits BLS for teaching him work ethic and resiliency. His advice for achieving success is to “have the motivation to do it [...] and work harder.”



Our Society Is Engineered for Men



Suzanna Semaan (I)

FemInSTEM members create lava lamps together.

By **Fiona Yuan (III)**

Staff Writer

“Raise your hand if you’re a woman in science who’s had to choose between missing out or wearing ill-fitting uniforms, safety equipment, or outdoor gear made for men because that’s all that was available.”

Biologist Jessica Mounts voiced her disappointment on *Twitter* after the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s first all-female spacewalk in 2019 was canceled due to a lack of fitting spacesuits. Gender norms and the continuous cycle of female misrepresentation in society puts women at an inherent disadvantage, leading to inconveniences and even fatal consequences.

Beyond the realm of space, gender

discrimination is widespread throughout our society, especially in the workplace. As reported by *The New York Times*, many offices today rely on a standard office temperature based on a “thermal comfort model” developed in the 1960s. The equation that developed this standard temperature factors in the metabolic resting rate of a 40-year-old man, about 154 pounds. Women, however, generally are physically smaller and have more body fat. This leads women to have lower metabolic rates, which therefore causes them to be more sensitive to colder temperatures. In fields where women are underrepresented, their comfort is not held at the same standard as their male counterparts. Instead of perpetuating the stereotype that “women are always cold,” perhaps it is time to reconsider what the

system deems as normal.

Equipment ranging from scientific gear to construction and policing tools have also heightened risks for women. According to *The Guardian*, personal protective equipment issued to the police do not consider a woman’s larger chest or wider hips and thighs — both uncomfortable and hazardous for women, especially for those who work in dangerous situations. In one case, a female officer was stabbed and killed after she had removed her uncomfortable stab suit to use a hydraulic ram to enter a flat.

For her capstone project, Willa Davis (I) has analyzed the causes of the gender gap in STEM. Davis points out, “Women have been excluded from ‘men’s jobs’ (positions of power, science, construction, law enforcement) for so long that even when they enter these fields, they face barriers that still hold them back.” Simply not having gear that fits a woman’s body is one of them. For women pursuing work in a male-dominated industry, it is extremely harmful when the basic foundations of comfort and safety are not met.

The list goes on. *The Washington Post* reports that in a car crash, a woman is “47 percent more likely to be seriously injured and 17 percent more likely to die than a man,” as cars are designed with the blueprint of a five-foot nine-inch man — the average height for men in the United States. Many women often have to lean forward to see above the dashboard and use the pedals.

Women’s bodies are also often stereotyped to be complicated because their hormonal changes are seen to be too infrequent and their menstrual cycles too

unpredictable. This misconception has discouraged research on women medically and in the safety of workplaces, with drugs and vaccines and even tools that do not take into account a woman’s body.

The problem is that society defines the “population’s average” as an average-sized man, which is an outdated and exclusive blueprint. If women are not comfortable in what they do nor are they given the basic necessities to succeed, the idea that “women do not belong in the workforce” will continue to be perpetuated.

Boston Latin School chemistry and physics teacher Ms. Katie Dunn adds, “I think this problem as a whole transcends biological sex — there’s a problem when design for people tries to reduce a population to the average. Everyone deserves the opportunity to pursue their goals or the right to effective treatment, and there is no ‘average’ person.”

It is important to factor in women’s needs in engineering designs, both to discontinue gender stigmas and to encourage more women to pursue their passions. With the growth of female representation in the workforce, it is only natural that society begins to push more inclusive standards.

Co-president of BLS Ladies’ Collective Mayara Ryland (I) remarks, “Some people do not even think there are issues because they have never been exposed to the actual disparities between women and men, but addressing this to more and more people will allow for more outreach and support on this important issue.” Striving for a more equitable society begins with reconstructing how society defines basic functions of comfort.

Boston Still Has a White Supremacy Problem

By **Michelle Wang (IV)**

Staff Writer

During this year’s South Boston Saint Patrick’s Day parade, people displaying neo-Nazi symbols were seen holding up a “Keep Boston Irish” sign, one of many instances of white supremacy tainting Boston’s progressive reputation.

South Boston’s annual parade, though known for its lively festivities, has a history of publicly displaying propaganda and excluding certain minority communities, such as the LGBTQ+ community.

Even during cultural celebrations in Boston, hate toward minority groups still manages to be seen, contradicting the city’s popular self-image as an all-inclusive and progressive community.

This year’s parade was not the first sighting of neo-Nazi supporters in the Boston area. Earlier this year in February, another group of people also wearing neo-Nazi symbols was spotted outside of Brigham and Women’s Hospital holding a sign that reads “B&W Hospital Kills Whites.” They were calling out two doctors by name, who were working on establishing healthcare equity for communities of color in Boston.

People have seen explicit white supremacy and white-nationalist supporters multiple times this year. It is disturbing how confident these hate groups are to show up at public centers in Boston. If Boston were truly as all-inclusive as it claims to be, hate groups and supporters would not manifest themselves so unashamedly in public.

Oriana Dunker (IV) remarks, “Boston is seen as progressive because we have more diversity; there are more people of color who live in Boston compared to some other [cities]. More diversity, however, doesn’t always mean less racism.”



Boston.com

White supremacists gather on West Broadway at the South Boston Saint Patrick’s Day Parade.

Dunker brings up a strong point as to what progressive really means. Being surrounded by various predominantly white suburbs, such as Brookline and Milton, has strengthened Boston’s reputation as a flourishing progressive and diverse city, in contrast to neighboring towns’ relative homogeneity. Too often, however, are “progressive” and “diverse” used synonymously.

Acts of explicit racism are often overlooked in Boston, as white supremacy is ingrained in the city’s oldest institutions. The Boston education industries can be hotspots for bias and discrimination against people of color because of how white supremacy played a big part in the formation of these places.

Up to this day, Boston neighborhoods remain segregated, leading to further segregation in schools. Black and Latinx youth continue to receive weak

education in schools that lack the basic materials and necessities needed for good instruction.

As Ita Berg (IV) puts it, “White supremacy is part of Boston’s history, so it inevitably is part of Boston’s present. For example, I think you can see white supremacy in Boston’s policing: neighborhoods with high populations of color, especially mainly Black neighborhoods, are policed much more heavily than mainly white neighborhoods, and if one neighborhood is policed more heavily than another, of course, more crime is found and more arrests are made in the heavier-policed neighborhood.”

While Boston’s flourishing Irish and Italian communities make up a central and historic part of Boston’s cultural diversity, intentionally refraining from referring to white people as “white” when discussing white supremacy and racism,

and instead making an effort to use ethnic names, can derail the conversation from people of color. The “Keep Boston Irish” sign is a perfect example of this phenomenon; although it sounds less threatening, it clearly amounts to “Keep Boston White.”

BLS English teacher Ms. Marie Helen Carr adds, “As Boston expanded and grew more diverse, [their] original culture didn’t dissipate and we can see folks still [identifying] more with the ethnic backgrounds of their ancestors rather than [...] as white people.”

In order to live up to Boston’s progressive reputation, one must be able to acknowledge how white supremacy dictates every decision as wide-reaching as legislation and as personal as a community celebration. As the BLS T.H.R.I.V.E core values state, we must lead forth into a brighter future.

Should BPS Lift Its Mask Mandate?

Yes, BPS Should Lift Its Mask Mandate

By **Thomas Oakes (IV)**

Contributing Writer

Within a week of Governor Charlie Baker's announcement that the state-wide mask mandate for schools would be lifted, over 120 school districts across Massachusetts announced they would be lifting mandatory masking. Boston Public Schools, however, announced they would continue to require masks within the district. But this is a mistake: as rates of death and transmission decrease and vaccination rates increase, now is the time to give students and families the choice to go to school without masks on. Both the science and the experiences of students call for our officials to follow suit in giving students the choice of unmasking.

The understanding throughout this pandemic has been that once a certain level of risk is no longer present in the general community, people would regain the right to make personal decisions about their behavior regarding the spread of COVID-19. As a society, levels of risk are inherent and unavoidable. When the health risk falls low enough, it is the people's right to make their own medical choices.

This is the reason why many people have decided to cautiously fall back into pre-COVID-19 activities without maintaining masks and social distancing.

It is time for officials to extend this autonomy to schools, especially in a city like Boston. Even with the majority of school districts lifting mask mandates, COVID-19 rates continue to fall throughout the state, down four percent in hospitalization, 16 percent in Intensive Care Unit admission and 36 percent in deaths over the past two weeks per data collected by *The New York Times*. Even as new cases inevitably appear, cases remain at their lowest levels nationally since last July.

These trends are reflected in Boston, as cases across Boston Latin School fell to six last week according to Head of School Rachel Skerritt's weekly update. This is all happening while indoor mask mandates have been lifted for venues including stores, restaurants, gyms and municipal buildings, showing that lifting mask mandates and giving people the right to choose has ultimately been a successful endeavor.

"The science says that cases are falling, and with masks already being optional in the cafeteria [while eating] and in sports, [...] I'd be ready to take mine off," says Mark Snekvik (IV). This feeling is growing as sites with potential for high transmissions, such as the BLS dining hall, will be less crowded in the coming warmer months with more students choosing to sit outside.

Many argue that lifting the mask mandate during a time with the potential for a coming wave would leave high-risk students and families more at risk of COVID-19. Lifting the mandate, however, is about choice, and those families will still have the opportunity to wear masks in their day-to-day life, which the majority of the BLS community will likely continue to do.

With 72.7 percent of the Boston community vaccinated per city data and the majority of the BLS community vaccinated, levels of risk fall even lower.

Although caution is still necessary, we are finally at a place where individual choice can be restored, which includes adding schools to the growing list of mask-optional venues. It would finally give students the option to breathe freely during gym, interact with peers without face coverings and see their friends' faces again for the final months of the school year.

Disclaimer: This article was finished April 2 and does not reflect the current rise in COVID-19 cases. Lifting the mask mandate would be contingent on low or stable cases, hospitalizations and deaths.



No, BPS Should Not Lift Its Mask Mandate

By **Mia White (III)**

Contributing Writer

In the past few years, the subject of mask-wearing has been a constant source of debate. Masks are an essential part of keeping COVID-19 cases at a minimum, proven time and time again by the recent surges of the Omicron and Delta variants. In addition to shielding the individual from viruses, they also provide protection to others against any additional contagious sickness the wearer could be carrying.

While a decrease in new cases has brought about the argument for a change in mask mandates and policies within schools, the inconsistent patterns of cases over the past few months tell a different story.

The recent surges of COVID-19 cases due to both the Omicron and Delta variants follow the pattern of a spike that occurs right after a period when cases are low and mask restrictions begin to relax. This suggests that what seems like the best course of action one week could have negative

consequences the next. If the mask mandate is lifted this week, what would the repercussions of that decision be shortly after, and at what cost?

When dealing with such an unpredictable and novel virus, it is important to remember and acknowledge the different impacts that it might have on people from all walks of life. Although many young people might not feel extreme symptoms if they were to contract COVID-19, those with compromised immune systems would be severely affected. Beyond that, there might be others who do not wish to bring home the illness to elderly or immunocompromised family members. It is necessary to recognize the risk that removing masks poses to everyone, not just the vast majority.

While some may argue that masks hinder personal connection due to the lack of genuine face-to-face communication, this inconvenience comes with plenty of upsides since the beginning of the pandemic two years ago. Without masks worn properly and mandates kept in place, things that people are now able to do, such as commuting, attending school or work and going to social events, would be impossible. Masks slow down the rate in which COVID-19 spreads, and in doing so, allows people to interact with one another while also staying safe.

Slowing the spread of COVID-19 is already difficult, but removing mandates in school would introduce an extra layer of challenges, especially with the many high-traffic areas in the building such as hallways, stairwells and the dining hall. In these spaces, students are often shoulder-to-shoulder with one another with no possible way to exercise social distancing. If one student were to have COVID-19, the chances of it spreading to another student in one of these spaces would be dramatically higher if that student was not wearing a mask. Although indoor space is not an adjustable variable, preventative mask-wearing is.

After two long years, finding a new normal has been a difficult task for everyone. Through this delicate process, it is important to keep in mind the reasons why mask mandates were put into place. Even though the policies may be a barrier or a bother to some, the benefits that masks bring largely outweigh the slight discomfort — especially when it comes to the safety of the entire community.

Let Seniors Chill Out, Not Burn Out

By **Mary Harrington (II)**

Contributing Writer

As seniors near the end of their Boston Latin School careers, the pressures for them are at an all-time high. While some seniors have already committed to colleges, others still are focused on making this life-altering decision. Without a doubt, this transition causes the motivation levels of seniors to drop significantly. By early May, they will have finished AP exams and other important milestones in their high school careers, so they will be looking to lay back a little. The school should ease the stress and pressure off of the seniors by decreasing the amount of homework, tests and projects at the end of the school year.

The process of applying to colleges, getting accepted and choosing a school to attend are some of the most stressful moments in a student's high school career. Despite all the help that BLS provides with its exceptional guidance team and the Schawbel College Resource Center, the additional amount of work that the school piles onto seniors is excessive and should be decreased. Tamar Dorvelus (I) agrees, saying, "The assignments and projects that seniors are getting at this point in the year feels more like busy work than anything else."

In order to decrease the amount of work, teachers could assign less as the school year progresses. By May, after AP tests are taken and most seniors are aware of where they are headed to after they graduate, the only homework that should be given is work that is necessary. How this would look would differ among classes. Sarah Connolly (I) suggests that "potentially giving seniors some free passes on assignments (not all, of course) could help with the overwhelming feelings a lot of us are experiencing."

Many students and teachers joke about "senioritis," an affliction describing the lack of motivation felt by seniors reaching the end of their high school years. This, however, is a real phenomenon that involves severe burnout and lower motivation levels. At a high school as rigorous as BLS, seniors have been feeling burned out for a long time already and are at their peak performance levels. "[I have] gotten myself into a bit of a vicious cycle of not feeling motivated to get my work done, yet still really stressing out about it and the grades I receive in my classes," says Connolly.

Whether or not seniors should have finals in their classes has been heavily debated here at BLS. By the time they take them, most seniors will be looking toward the next stage of their life; thus, finals are not their top priority.

The stress of preparing for their finals is more than they have to deal with at that moment and is unnecessary for seniors.

BLS believes that giving seniors many projects, assignments and tests will better prepare them for their coming college years. While bad habits can form in the last few months of high school, college is an entirely different experience. Relaxing a little in May and June will not hurt seniors' start to college, as many of them will only have a few classes a day in college.

BLS Environmental Science teacher Mr. Timothy Gay remarks, "The end of senior year is a time for students to reflect and celebrate on the time they have put into BLS, all of the great things you have all accomplished and look forward to the next chapter and challenges you have in life."

Only when BLS acknowledges the pressure placed on the seniors can steps be taken to help students alleviate this stress. While some teachers are working to assist seniors with this, many students have admitted that it is not enough. The last few months of their high school career should be spent taking the time to relax and cherish accomplishments, rather than dealing with work that prolongs burnout.

Boston's Policies Are Not Stopping Homelessness



Public works employees bulldoze Mass and Cass residences.

By **Selina Tang (II)**

Staff Writer

At the physical intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard lies the intersection of Boston's homeless, gentrification and substance abuse problems. On January 12, the City of Boston conducted a "sweep" of Mass and Cass, tearing down temporary encampments of the homeless, threatening to issue arrests on people staying behind and relocating approximately 150 people. The effort reflects Boston's desire to address homelessness and its failures. To achieve long-term success, Boston needs to confront the root causes of homelessness: gentrification, substance abuse and the criminalization of homelessness itself.

Boston, like many cities, is guilty of counterproductive, anti-homeless policies that ban loitering, sleeping in public spaces and until 2020, begging, essentially incrim-

inating the entire existence of homeless people. As a result, one in eight Bostonians arrested in 2019 was homeless, according to an investigation conducted by the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism. Homeless people comprise about two percent of Boston's population. Critically, criminalizing the homeless hinders access to employment and education, draws stigma and reduces the income of ex-convicts, all of which hurts their ability to keep stable housing. Repealing and reforming these anti-homeless laws could play a powerful and necessary role in allowing homeless folks to accumulate savings and obtain housing, thus alleviating the city's need to provide shelter.

The cost of housing across Boston has soared by over ten percent in the past year, in tandem with rising costs of living. This unprecedented growth is heavily driven by developers, who infiltrate low- and middle-income areas and convert afford-

able housing into upscale condos, displacing local residents in a process known as gentrification.

BLS history teacher Mr. Dominic Rinaldi, a lifelong resident of East Boston, says, "The local government [is] allowing the developers to do so. They grant all sorts of variances and exceptions for developments to get around conventional rules, etc., and in return, donations get made to campaigns. [...] It forces one to have to make difficult decisions [...] if you are lucky enough to have the options. For many others the difficult decisions get made for them," and they are forced out of their city and possibly onto the streets. Instead of implementing dubious solutions to problems they are causing themselves, Boston's government is better off focusing on preventing homelessness in the first place by combating gentrification, which would save time, money and lives.

Another serious and prominent cause of homelessness is addiction. Rates of substance abuse have accelerated in recent years, leading to a dangerous cycle. Aidan Ormsby (III) explains, "Because of our draconian drug laws, people are afraid to receive help in fear of being punished for possession." Those struggling with substance abuse also experience higher rates of mental illnesses. This causes difficulties retaining employment and consequently health insurance, further decreasing access to treatment and stable income. The mess of problems turns into a positive feedback loop, where those battling addiction and mental illnesses enter a downward spiral, pushed further away from safe and secure housing. Without increasing access to treatment, more people will be forced onto the streets and become the city's responsibility.

The recent sweep of Mass and Cass is one of the multiple instances where Boston has attempted to remove its homeless community over the past few years. Nonethe-

less, the homeless population keeps returning because the factors that cause them to lose their homes still exist and are only getting worse, on top of the poor conditions of public shelters. Although the city provided supportive housing to the 150 people they relocated, no resources were available to the individuals that were not present at the time of the sweep. While appearing to solve the city's "health hazard," the clear-out actually made it harder for people seeking temporary housing. *WGBH News* reported that at least 100 people have been left without shelter.

The current model ultimately fails as a long-term solution in part because of the deep stigma associated with substance abuse, mental illness and, consequently, homelessness, as well as the external factors that produce such conditions. The long-running and insulting misconception that one loses their home due to their own laziness or stupidity remains an obstacle to gaining public support for effective policy too. Placing the blame on homeless individuals, rather than the root causes, absolves society of any guilt and obligation to solve the more complex problems, many of which are the direct fault of Boston's policies.

Sophia Ahearn (I), who has been studying perceptions around homelessness for her Senior Capstone project, adds, "Another important part about changing the perception around homelessness is that it will allow people to recognize that homelessness can fall upon anyone. And this is likely to compel people to think 'this could easily happen to me too, and if this were me I would need the support.' The perception surrounding homelessness right now makes us numb to the simple fact that individuals experiencing homelessness are human beings. Sharing stories of homelessness creates a sense of empathy, and from empathy comes [an] urgency to act."

Self-Studying for APs Is Worth It

By **Jessie Wang (III)**

& **Denis Cunniffe (III)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

For many students, self-studying for AP tests is the only way to explore subjects that they otherwise would not be able to take. This convenient strategy should be supported by Boston Latin School administration, which prides itself on college readiness. Although students may choose to learn the AP content outside of the classroom, the school is still responsible for providing for their education and preparing them for success by assisting students in self-studying.

The concept of self-learning material is one that BLS students are well-acquainted with, especially popularized after the pandemic and challenging virtual schooling. It is, however, still a demanding and stressful process that can lead to increased burnout and anxiety.

Many students choose to prepare for AP tests individually for a variety of reasons despite the tough workload, some of which are due to school-related restrictions like class overflows, scheduling complications or just the fact that a certain AP course is not offered at BLS. The limit on the number of AP classes students can take also causes overachieving students to prepare for exams outside of school.

A passing score on an AP exam is an impressive addition to one's college application. Many will self-study for APs to look more attractive to competitive colleges and demonstrate their academic prowess. AP exams may also provide college credit, helping students graduate earlier.

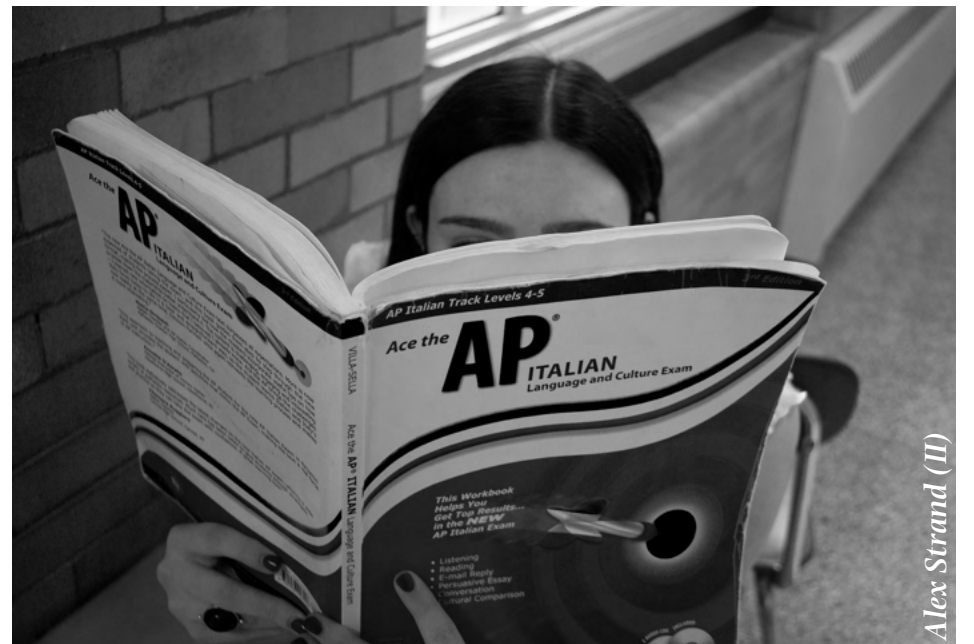
Self-studying is no easy task; students are less likely to enjoy the subject they are learning when they self-study because they miss out on the classroom experience, leading to frustration and a sense of isolation. They also do not receive a GPA boost as a reward for their efforts outside of school.

There is no doubt that self-studying is tougher than taking an AP course in school. Salman Uddin (III) says, "I would feel somewhat comfortable [self-studying], but there are definitely advantages to being taught and many people would not be capable of learning by themselves."

BLS AP Environmental Science teacher Mr. Timothy Gay states, "I think the hardest part is preparing for the breadth and depth of the courses. Students are required to become experts on the topic and capable of answering on a variety of topics. Recently, the College Board changed the exams to make them more challenging and require more problem-solving."

Self-studying, therefore, could negatively affect one's mental health if done completely independently. BLS, being a school that focuses on college readiness, can ease such a burden by supporting students who choose to self-study. Assistance from the school could come in many forms, from merely approving request forms to hosting study groups. Creighton Banitt (III) believes he "would not feel comfortable passing [the exam]" if he had zero guidance while self-studying.

Many lower-income students also cannot afford the ample resources required to study for a course on their own time. Students who heavily rely on in-



A student reads an AP textbook in preparation for their exam.

struction from the school are stuck with the three-AP limit, while those who can afford to purchase textbooks can self-study more courses much more easily.

This disparity contributes to an inflexible imbalance of success between students with differing financial situations. To make sure that all students can self-study and reach their full academic potential, the school should provide sufficient materials to assist those who choose to study on their own. Academic resources from the school can help close this gap, as seen with the advantages AP classes already provide.

This support, however, should not be prioritized over the courses provided in school. As much as it is necessary for self-studying students, it should not rival the support BLS provides for the students

preparing during school hours. Doing so may encourage taking too many AP courses, thereby contradicting the very reason behind the initial limit.

The school should instead seek a compromise with what resources it offers. Inclusive opportunities like the administration of practice exams, AP-specific tutoring or study groups after school or during W block would be extremely beneficial.

These programs should focus on studying and reviewing for the exams instead of just re-teaching the course's content. Such resources provided by the school would not only give appropriate support to students who need it, but also take their mental well-being into consideration.

Why Japan Made Its “Cute Culture” Such a Hit

By Catherine Wang (II)

Staff Writer

From Honda to Nikon, or Sanrio to Nintendo, Japanese brands are ubiquitous in America with a reputation for quality and reliability, producing and exporting tons of consumer goods every year. In addition to upholding an image of quality finish, Japanese products have also harnessed the industry of “cute,” a product of the surge in popularity of the anime and character-licensing industry. The 2000s surge in consumption of Japanese products can be attributed to several factors; the most important is certainly Japan’s former need to revitalize and rebrand itself in the period following World War II. Was the rebirth of Japan a deliberate plan to sweep aside its sinister past?

As Japan rapidly grew into a pop-cultural giant, it certainly took time and the right blend of conditions — economic and perhaps social conditions — to reinvent Japan’s global image.

Throughout history, Japan has been considered an incredibly fierce country, especially in the eyes of Americans. In the past, they were depicted as a militaristic aggressor that committed heinous war crimes, including the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the invasion of China.

Since World War II, Japan has promoted anime and *kawaii* culture, which refers to the culture of cuteness, using popular materials like anime, manga and games. They rebrand themselves into a culture that, to the average Americans, would seem non-threatening.

During this post-war era, most Americans loathed buying Japanese products not only because of their history of conflict and trauma, but because the goods that ended up on American shelves were often shoddy and cheap, in contrast to perceptions today. It was only during the post-war economic boom that Japan emerged as a fantasyland of *kawaii* culture, manga, Nintendo video games and *Pokémon*.

As for entering the market post-WWII, Japan had an impressive militaristic legacy, as their weapons in WWII were in high demand by American soldiers and often coveted by Japanese soldiers. Japan, nonetheless, did not want to sell military technology as it would further their image

as a menacing and brutal force, furthering Americans’ pervasive apprehension towards them and their products.

Japan, instead, chose to utilize its innovative technology on higher-quality products. On top of rebranding, Japan was motivated to combat the racial stereotypes plaguing the United States at the time. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, various forms of propaganda circulated to embody the entire Japanese nation as a ruthless and animalistic enemy that needed to be defeated. As a response to Japanese attacks, the U.S. halted negotiations with Japanese diplomats, instituting a full embargo on exports to Japan and freezing Japanese assets in U.S. banks.

According to a 2012 *New York Daily News* article, “Japan’s Pursuit of Cute Spawns \$30 Billion Industry,” a small segment of the total *kawaii* industry, Japan’s character-licensing industry, led Japan to quickly become a global force in the economy. In the process, it completely took the U.S. by storm with its lovable characters and artistic manga and anime.

Japanese artist Takashi Murakami, however, offers a different perspective. He describes Japan as the world’s first post-apocalyptic society, believing Japanese creators turned to manga, anime and other forms of pop culture to grapple with and express their anxieties following Japan’s lost history. This underscores just how potent pop culture can be in shaping national identity on the global stage. It is difficult, however, to ignore the exigent role of Japan’s government in promoting its unique culture on a more global scale.

In 1997, the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs supported the exhibition of anime, manga, video games and character-licensing to penetrate the American market. According to Douglas McGray in *Foreign Policy*, “Commercial trends and products, and a country’s knack for spawning them, can serve political and economic ends.” Japan’s intent is evidenced in its emphasis on its prominent lovable and cute products, taking consumers by storm all over the world.

Today, the country’s exports of TVs, movies and toys stand as one of the world’s premier examples of soft power, or the ability to influence and attract international cooperation through persua-



At Tao’s, Sanrio products fill the shelves.

sive means, such as culture, rather than by direct payment or force. Boston Latin School history teacher Mr. Andy Zou reflects, “So much of art movement is human movement socially.”

As the *Smithsonian Magazine* states, “Something as seemingly frivolous as a *Pokémon* obsession can blossom into ‘a sympathetic response to Japanese people as a whole.’” In its transition from marketing as a stronger, hostile force to a non-threatening, cute one, Japan revitalized itself under a new name. Its global influence is evident as other countries attempt to rebrand themselves under the same name.

The article continues, explaining that “other countries have jumped on the brand wagon, adopting slogans such as ‘Incredible India’ and ‘Drink Finland.’ By marketing cultural exports, nations hope to tap a vast global market. And nation-branding can be a form of ‘soft power,’ a way of gaining back-door influence in the international community.”

Another obstacle Japan had to overcome was the deep resentment of many older generations of East Asian descent, which carry over to the younger generation of East Asian students who may now revere Japanese culture and consider Japan’s devastating effects on much of East Asia in history. Each year, more and more Chinese students are choosing to study

abroad in Japan. Seeing Japan in a positive light despite older generations’ trauma from WWII is the cause of much frustration among such older generations; however, as important as it is to honor a country’s long-running history, it is also crucial to learn from the past and to move forward.

Yuta Kaneko (II) remarks, “It is undeniable that J-pop is a major industry in the world, with it attracting many people around the world to travel to Japan. This is because the younger generation is more open to Japan, putting aside war. The older generation tends to still hold grudges, and although I believe that history should be upheld and honored, it is important to not hold anger towards anyone.”

Still, many Japanese students remain ignorant of Japan’s past actions. In Japan, Anne Frank’s narrative is a prevalent one. Students emphathize with the European Jews who can share this “kinship of victims,” thinking of themselves as victims of the U.S. atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, rather than the perpetrators in WWII.

Mr. Zou emphasizes, “Japan in the modern day doesn’t teach about the atrocities, especially the textbooks, unlike China and even Europe, which vilify the Japanese in some ways. [...] It’s all about teaching the younger generations the raw history.”

The Groovier Way to Grow

By Amy Cui (III)

& Neil Jin (III)

Contributing Writers

Every day, Boston Latin School students are welcomed by the large Freight Farm shipping container in the BLS schoolyard, but only a handful know about the vast potential that this urban farming container holds. In recent months, Boston’s newest elected mayor, Michelle Wu, has expressed interests in increasing climate awareness and justice by expanding urban agriculture. Combined with recent city-wide actions, urban farming proves to be a solid solution for communities like Boston as a better alternative to commercial farming.

Urban farming shines in its economic sustainability compared to the current agriculture industry. Although the current model of globalized trade is beneficial in some circumstances, it also leaves people vulnerable to food shortages due to international episodes over which they have no control nor connection to. For example, *USA Today* finds that Russia and Ukraine export 30 percent of the world’s wheat supply, and it is predicted that in February that the war between them could increase

food prices by 20 percent.

Urban farming decreases reliance on foreign countries and builds resilience against food shocks. Since urban agriculture is farming for the community, the prices of urban-farmed foods are often cheaper. Not only are transportation costs lower, but urban farms do not have the same profit-driven incentives as big commercial companies.

When it comes to our food source, most people think of acres of green fields with crops in the countryside. This picturesque image, however, is simply not accurate. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, the commercial food industry emits 698 million tons of carbon dioxide each year, the equivalent of 151 million cars. A lot of these emissions accumulate from “food miles,” in which food has to travel hundreds of miles to end up on your plate.

Luckily, urban farming solves this problem. Because food is grown right where it is eaten, urban farming significantly reduces carbon emissions as there is no need for international or national transportation.

Climate change will also decrease the amount of arable land in the future, so it is

crucial for large cities or communities, like Boston, to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change as much as possible.

It is, moreover, healthier for people to grow their own food. BLS band director Mr. Dennison Blackett, who has professional experience with urban farming, explains, “The benefit [of urban farming] is knowing the source [...] and having an idea of what goes in the soil.” Large-scale farms often spray a lot of synthetic pesticides over their fields to kill insects and weeds. Urban farms, on the other hand, control pests and weeds more effectively as they are often located indoors. Overall, the reduced reliance on harmful and toxic substances prevents health damage to our bodies.

Some may argue that urban farming is too costly or too time-consuming, but increasing urban farming activity does not necessitate a complete conversion to full-scale urban farms. There are many options and even small changes that can be effective. For example, implementing hydroponic systems in homes and schools is an affordable option to growing plants like leafy greens in nutrient-rich water. Urban farming provides an opportunity for communities to grow closer and for cur-

rent and future generations to learn more about pressing environmental issues.

Especially after a year of online school, resuming urban farming at BLS would be a great way to bring the school community back together. BLS civics teacher Ms. Catherine Arnold details that she “really liked the [community service] aspect of the Freight Farm” before it was forced to close due to the pandemic.

Now, with the relatively lower levels of COVID-19 cases, students and other members of the community should have the opportunity to participate in and educate themselves about urban farming. There are also social aspects involved when volunteering at the Freight Farm, providing students a deeper insight into the close connections between social justice and climate issues.

Ms. Arnold concludes, “If we are not teaching the future generations to think in terms of those complex interrelationships, we are not preparing them to face the world that we’re in. [...] A farm can be a way that a school interacts with all of that.” As Ms. Arnold puts it, urban farming is “a groovy way” to increase our awareness about where and how our food is made and leave a positive green footprint.

BLS Theatre's "Clown Show" Is No Joke



Alex Strand (II)

BLS Theatre clowns around in *A Clown Show About Rain*.

**By Rachel Roncka (I)
& Bryanna Upton (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Overalls, camping chairs, sandwiches and... silence? All are vital components of the Boston Latin School Theatre Department's production of *A Clown Show About Rain*. A sharp contrast from their other productions, BLS Theatre's newest piece is silent, with the exception of a monologue towards the end. Despite the new produc-

tion style, the show has been met with appreciation and success both at home in the Black Box and on the road at competition.

A Clown Show About Rain was originally created and staged by Silent Faces, an English theatre company that specializes in using clown and physical theatre in a political context. The idea for a BLS production of *Clown Show* was conceived at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2018. Deeply inspired by the performance, Head of BLS Theatre Department Mr. Joseph Gels ac-

quired an exclusive script from the creators themselves. With some minor adjustments to its duration, BLS Theatre released its own version of the show, making them the second group ever to stage this unique play. "It's a beautiful show," remarks Mr. Gels, "It's really so solid on every level."

After countless hours of hard work, BLS Theatre took the show to competition at the Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild Festival (METG). The group set out for Brockton High School on March 19 to face 84 other schools in a preliminary round. Students and faculty alike were elated to return to the festival in person, and that excitement translated into a stellar performance. They emerged victorious and advanced to the final round, where they were chosen as the METG 2022 regional winners. Co-director Gwen Trueblood (I) reflects, "It was a big, proud moment."

The show delivers a message of the significance of mental health. By the final scene, the struggling characters find the support they need in each other's friendship. Trueblood explains, "I think it's just telling a story about the importance of letting other people into your heart." The play's themes of mental health and friendship strike a chord with the BLS community. Here, conversations on mental health

are no novelty, and the play manages to capture these same struggles that students have in a more hopeful light.

A Clown Show About Rain was such a success that BLS Theatre gave an encore performance on April 1. If you missed the show, a recording of this final show will be available on YouTube.

Although this production is now a wrap, the curtain has yet to close on discussions of mental health at BLS. As the play emphasizes, it is essential to communicate these struggles and foster healing through strong networks of support. Reflecting on the sense of unity she felt among the audience, Mirabelle Berman Reinhardt (II) says, "I realized that even though sometimes it feels like you're the only one feeling something, there's likely more people close to you experiencing the exact same thing. [...] Even though you can't make it magically go away, having other people to lean on will get you through the toughest times."

If you or anyone you know is grappling with mental health difficulties, please don't hesitate to reach out to the people around you and your guidance counselors. While it may seem like a long, lonely road at times, BLS Theatre continues to affirm that even in the darkest moments, the arts never fail to bring us together.

Boston's Banksy Exhibit Prioritizes Profit

**By Mary Bosch (II)
& Hannah Oh (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

What is more important, authenticity or exposure? *The Art of Banksy* certainly favors the latter. This exhibit in Harvard Square features over 100 original Banksy works that are allegedly worth 35 million dollars, all obtained from private collections. Banksy is a pseudonym for an anonymous British street artist known for his public graffiti. Infamously, his works communicate controversial messages regarding war, capitalism and imperialism.

The Banksy exhibit is a walk-through loop; when you head up the escalator, you're first greeted by Banksy's 2020 piece *Welcome Mat*. The entire opening is slightly underwhelming. A timeline of Banksy's important publications and stunts, along with posters and prints from each, is displayed. Although it gives the viewer a better understanding of the artist, it's not terribly interesting. The opening doesn't give enough intriguing information to someone familiar with Banksy, and it also fails to provide enough information to someone new to his body of work.

Then, the exhibit moves on to the original prints of Banksy's famous and lesser-known works, including *Pulp Fiction*, *Love is in the Air* and many others. While there is significance to seeing so many of Banksy's

pieces simultaneously, seeing them in this setting provides little more value than one would get from viewing them online.

There were, nevertheless, some redeeming sections. One of the exhibit's sections, "Street Souvenirs," housed alternate versions of famous pieces and original sketches that had unfinished thoughts on front and back. You cannot experience these aspects of the exhibit online, so they make the experience a bit more worthwhile.

At this point, it should be mentioned that this exhibit was not approved by Banksy. On his website, it states, "Banksy has nothing to do with any of the current or recent exhibitions, and they are nothing like a genuine Banksy show." Boston Latin School art teacher Mr. Joseph Carrigg adds that using Banksy's artwork without permission "isn't right, because, where is the money going? [...] Is it even going to the artist?"

A BLS student echoes Mr. Carrigg's opinion: "A 60-dollar ticket could have gone literally anywhere else, and [people] are going to an exhibit that only benefits art collectors." The profit from this exhibit is substantial, since tickets are 30 dollars minimum and the revenue goes straight to the company, Starvox Entertainment. The CEO, Corey Ross, was also a producer for the *Immersive Van Gogh Exhibit Minneapolis*, so he understands how lucrative it can be to commercialize art. It is disrespectful to emphasize so blatantly that an exhibit is "unauthorized,"



Mary Bosch (II)

The Art of Banksy showcases Banksy's work *Flower Thrower*.

and sensationalizing art in this way sacrifices its real meaning in favor of drawing customers in.

Commercialization can be beneficial as it allows Banksy's art to reach more people. This exhibit, however, is standard. For an artist who has photographed his paintings with monkeys in a zoo and painted an elephant to match the wallpaper, an exhibit like this thoroughly misrepresents the already sensational nature of his work.

BLS art teacher Mr. Stephen Harris, upon hearing about the exhibit's lack of

authenticity, decided to pull a Banksy move of his own. He had made a Banksy-inspired piece with his children on cardboard, and when he attended the exhibit with his family, he posted it in the last room. Upon showing us the picture of his mischievous act, he laughed out, "I just had to do it!"

Sadly enough, one of us, when attending the exhibit, saw no trace of his beautiful artwork, and we wonder how long it took the staff to notice. Bravo to you, Mr. Harris. Banksy would have loved it, definitely more than this exhibit.

Big Band Brings Home a Big Win

By Catherine Cox (IV)

Staff Writer

As annual spring traditions return, Boston Latin School Big Band have picked up right where they left off, performing at the Massachusetts Association for Jazz Education's (MAJE) Cape Cod District Festival. There, they brought home a gold medal and continued their winning streak at the next level of competition. Big Band recently earned a gold medal at the State Finals on March 26.

Big Band is highly regarded for their work, and members note that being part of this music community brings them a sense of pride. Viny Saadieh (I), who won an Outstanding Musician award at State Finals for baritone saxophone, shares, "Being part of Big Band gives you a sense of belonging and achievement. [...] With a lot of hard work comes not only gold medals but success throughout your life."

In addition to their collective success this season, several individual Big Band students received recognition for their performance. At the MAJE Cape Cod Festival, Outstanding Musicianship Awards were presented to Constantine Kotsikonas (I) on trombone, Joe Pucillo (I) on bass, and Josh Zhang (I) on alto saxophone. Zhang also received the festival's MVP Award for Division I. Special recognition continued at the state level, where Kotsikonas, Saadieh, and Zhang all won individual awards.

Big Band members who perform on stage are not the only ones who spend many hours of hard work. Staff members also contribute by helping musicians two days every week — one in a full band and one in sectionals — to ensure all are prepared to perform live. Faculty members, such as after school arts instructor Mr. Paul Pitts, band director Mr. Dennison Blackett, and the section coaches, played a significant role in the band's success.

Zhang provides insight on the work outside of re-

hearsals, saying, "I would say the secret to Big Band's success is additional engagement outside of rehearsals. [...] So many members in the band transcribe jazz pieces, form their bands and work on personal projects out of their interest. I think as long as that kind of passion is there, Big Band will have the talent and drive to succeed."

For many Big Band members, there is no place like home. Performing for fellow students brings great joy both to the band and to audience members. In addition to their win at State Finals, Big Band continued to share their talents at the annual BLS Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Awareness on March 25.

Despite their recent successes, BLS Big Band's journey is far from complete. On May 15, Big Band will take the stage once again, this time at Boston's Hatch Shell on the Charles River Esplanade. The entire BLS community is invited to come out to support Big Band and celebrate their incredible success!

BLS Producers Share Their Music

By **Yongyu Qiu (II)**
& **Harrison Tran (II)**
Contributing Writers

In recent years, music streaming apps have especially spiked in usage, and most users are growing tired of their overplayed songs and dry playlists. Despite the impact of COVID-19, the music industry has grown in the past year as more artists produce music to bring people together.

Diverse platforms have increased creative opportunities to share, create, and release music. Stephen Snekvik (I) and James Testa (I) are among the many who have taken the initiative to transform their passion for music into reality.

Previously, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many people being confined to activities within their homes. Snekvik and Testa were no exception. During a COVID-19 lockdown, they found more opportunities to explore a new project — making music. What started as a hobby became something serious as they developed their skills over quarantine. Both produce some of their music digitally, using *FL Studio* and *GarageBand*. When asked about the muses for their music, both students said that they were inspired by their favorite artists and genres, which were mainly hip-hop and rap.

Snekvik, who released an album earlier this year, has always had a musical background. He is a part of the jazz band and plays the trombone at BLS. During the pandemic, Snekvik taught himself the drums and started

building beats in *GarageBand*, a beginner-friendly digital music production program.

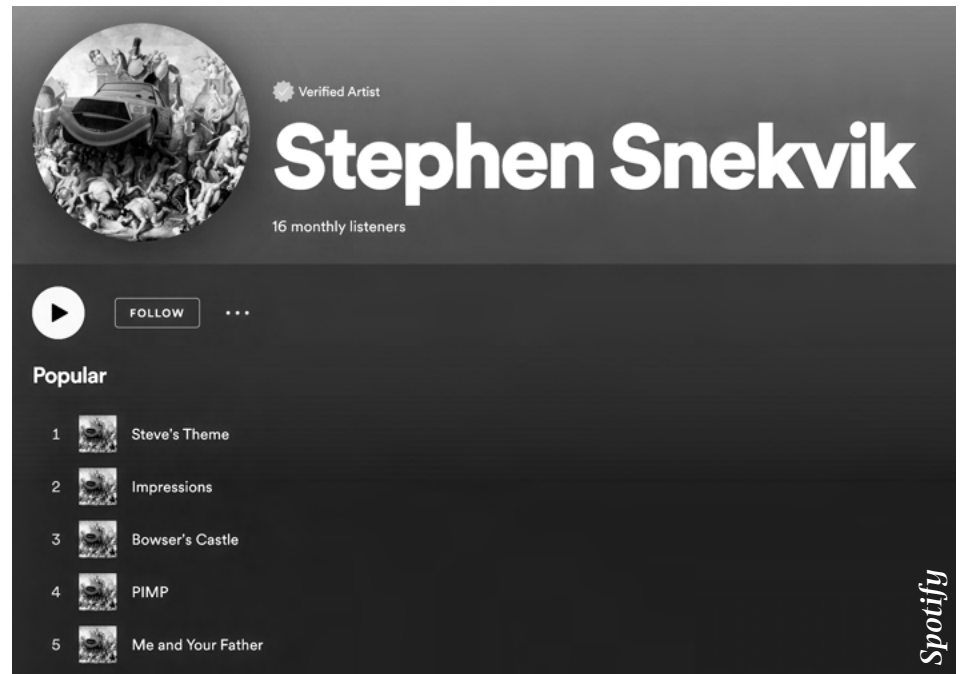
When making his album, Snekvik used both live recordings and digital sound. Snekvik says of his work, “I wanted it [to be] a collection of what I’ve been doing but not like any serious album, like a concept album or something like that.” That speaks for the creative album cover and song names such as “Me and Your Father” and “Steve’s Theme,” which turn out to be his favorites too.

Snekvik’s brother, Mark Snekvik (IV), helped Snekvik produce the album. He describes the process: “First, he gets an idea for a ‘vibe’ he wants his next project to have, whether it be a genre, a rhythmic pattern to follow or a melody that gets stuck in his head. He then creates a basic structure of the song and decides which different instruments to feature.”

On the other hand, Testa, the president of BLS Electronic Music Production (EMP), would have never imagined making it as far as he had by doing what he feels passionate about.

Music has given Testa a sense of passion and purpose that he felt was lacking previously. This allowed him to find his sense of direction and produce music with well-known hip-hop artists including Polo G, 21 Savage, NLE Choppa and more. Having been inspired by artists he was listening to at the time, Testa embarked on his process of creating music by first learning to play the piano.

Over time, Testa started building his own sounds and experimenting



Students create and release music on streaming platforms.

with more genres through *FL Studio*. He proceeded to work on what is his current favorite piece of music, “Unapologetic,” by Polo G and NLE Choppa, which ended up changing his life. Testa explains, “It [ended up] getting me my first Platinum Record, Billboard No. 1 Charting album and also helped me to build a lot of connections in the music industry as well.”

Behind this success was a lot of hard work, especially when Testa was first starting out. He not only had to produce good music but also network with others in the music industry. Testa’s talent is impressive indeed, considering how much he has accomplished in a short period of time.

All musicians have to start some-

where. Both Snekvik and Testa want to emphasize the importance of patience and persistence. It takes time to see progress, but this should be expected. To those who want to produce music, Snekvik says, “Don’t worry about being the greatest musician or producer because everyone has something new that they could bring to the table.” He advises that one should instead try to have fun creating music and using it as a creative outlet.

You can find Snekvik on *Spotify* and *Apple Music* under his name, Stephen Snekvik. He plans to release another album in May or June. You can find Testa on *Instagram* @prod_twizz or at his club, BLS EMP, in the music wing’s computer lab every W block.

Kuchen Cook-Off Makes a Comeback

By **Maddie Murphy (I)**
Contributing Writer

Who: German Club
What: Annual *Kuchen* Cook-Off
Where: Dining Hall
When: March 21, 2022



A cream cheese-frosted carrot cake swooped in to steal second place. A joint submission from BLS Classics teacher Mr. Dustin Brownell and student teacher Ms. Varvara Troitski, this cake was their first *Kuchen* Cook-Off attempt. Ms. Troitski, whom Mr. Brownell credited as being the chef-in-chief, did not envision her cake ending up on the podium: “I was in it for the love of baking. I was really quite honored.” She also comments on her elation of seeing her student, Currier, placing first and receiving the recognition she deserves.



The winner of this year’s German *Kuchen* Cook-Off (*Konditormeister*) was Brigitte Currier (VI), who entered the competition with a chocolate cake in one hand and a love of baking in the other. The prized cake was a chocolate concoction dressed in vanilla frosting and topped with hand-piped flowers. The recipe, moreover, is a Currier family favorite, and Currier’s personal favorite cake. As a baking enthusiast, Currier says, “I love competition and at home, I try to get my family to do bake-offs with me.”

Upon hearing of her victory, Currier was surprised. She did not expect to be crowned this year’s *Konditormeister*. The win, nevertheless, has spurred her love of baking further, and “Currier creations” will surely appear at future baking events.

Congratulations to the winners for their amazing cakes!

PHOTO CREDIT:
Juan Arteaga Osorio (I)



Third place went to a frog-themed cake, crafted by Lauren Dong (VI) and Sophia Fortuin (VI). The circular cake is decorated with two hand-holding frogs, mushrooms and piped flowers. The expertly adorned cake certainly earned all of the admiration it has garnered. When asked about their performance, Fortuin notes that she is pleased that all of the effort paid off. She adds, “I plan on doing this bake-off with Lauren in the future [...] we can learn from our mistakes and try to make it better.”

An honorable mention for cake design went to Gabriel Vidalis (IV) for their *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* inspired cake, which featured Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Terminator design and the Austrian flag. Upon the first announcement of the *Kuchen* Cook-Off, Vidalis, a fan of old action movies, immediately began considering themes for their cake. This included a Sylvester Stallone cake filled with rocky road toppings, a Keanu Reeves’s *Point Cake* and Liam Neeson’s *Caken*. For Vidalis, the cook-off was nerve-wracking, since the other bakers’ wealth of cake-decorating knowledge made Vidalis doubt their own accomplishments. They comment, “I honestly thought about throwing my cake away after seeing the rest of the amazing edible creations, but I am glad I stuck with it. I still cannot believe I got an honorable mention looking back at the amazing other cakes that were made.” Though this year’s *Kuchen* Cook-Off was their first, Vidalis explains that they look forward to participating again in the coming years.

As with every competition, a prize is sure to motivate participants to put their best foot — or best cake — forward. All winners will receive a gift card, but Currier will get a special first place prize: a personal Zoom baking session with German-trained pastry chef Mark Floerke.

Most importantly, every baker deserves a congratulations for their culinary accomplishments in this year’s *Kuchen* Cook-Off. German Club officer Tandin Johnson Ward (I) encourages more students and faculty to either enter the competition with a cake or stop by to participate in the tasting of next year’s cook-off. She concludes, “The *Kuchen* Cook-Off is a better entertainment than *Cupcake Wars*.”

2

MR. DUSTIN BROWNELL
AND
MS. VARVARA TROITSKI

1

BRIGITTE
CURRIER (VI)

3

LAUREN DONG (VI)
AND
SOPHIA FORTUIN (VI)



What do you do if someone from a previous school suddenly texted you and you don't remember who they are? - Jeremy

Hello there Jeremy,

Well, don't you know that they're someone from your old school?

If you don't remember their name, we recommend that you just ask. Or if you want to take a long-winded route, you could guess common names until you pick the right one. You could try Ryan, Debby, Kyle, Barbara, etc.

If you can't remember how you know them, maybe reliving your cringey elementary/middle school life will bring back those memories. We recommend reminiscing about possible neon-colored athletic wear phases, dabbing, bottle flipping, the Harlem shake and *Musical.ly*.

If after all of this you STILL cannot place who this person is, perhaps they never really went to your old school at all. In this case, stay safe Jeremy; you might want to block that number.

Doors or wheels? - kermitTHEfrog

Hi-ho kermitTHEfrog,
Wheels.

How do I decide where to go for college? - Anon

Howdy Anon,

Congrats on all your acceptances. We think this problem is a pretty easy one to solve: try a good, old-fashioned, Rory Gilmore-style pros and cons list.

At the top of your list should obviously be a full comparison of dining plans. In our professional opinions, we think it is essential to know the menus of all the locations you are looking at. Omelet station? Pro. Long lines to get to said omelet station? Con. We think you'll be able to narrow down your options very quickly.

Another important thing to consider is your school mascot. If the mascot happens to be your favorite animal, that's obviously a win. If it's one of those weird pilgrims that run around the football field... not so much.

Last, but certainly not least, you must consider your school's merch. You're going to be here for the next four years, and it would be a crime not to get a good sweatshirt out of it.

Of course, there are a few additional factors that might be handy to consider, like financial aid, location and available majors. Although your guidance counselor might disagree, we think the ones we've discussed are far more important.

Greetings, omniscient Kelsey and Maggie,

Recently, there's been a debate as to what color math is. I mean, **OBVIOUSLY** math is red, but some **IMBECILES** think that it's blue, or even green or yellow. Can you believe that?? Unfortunately, the great lord Google can't decide (seriously, look up "what color is math" and you'll see) - so please, I beg of you, use your great sage powers to solve this predicament once and for all!

Thanks,
Cat Food

Meow's it going, Cat Food,

The two of us have had a bit of a disagreement over this topic, so to avoid any further discourse, we have decided that math is white. Red is too aggressive a color to be used to represent any class. Choosing red would simply be a CAT-astrophe (see what we did there?). Blue is taken, green is for science and yellow is for history. With purple for Latin, math can only be represented by white.

We are having a little bit of a dispute, however, with the other *Argo* editors. You have caused a big argument. But, it is final. Math is white.

This is of course a touchy subject, so to be diplomatic, perhaps the only right answer is the color decided by your sixie year math teacher.

APRIL CROSSWORD

ACROSS:

1. Orchestra after Repertory and before Concert
11. Armless cartwheel
12. Medical wish for a dying patient (abbr.)
13. Annual Classics exam (abbr.)
14. Introduces a clarification (abbr.)
15. You know the answer. (abbr.)
17. 2 down, 3 to the right of 20 Across
18. Measurement of strength in gaming (abbr.)
20. Iron symbol
21. "Respect" singer's initials
23. Top-selling Italian car
24. All-boys BLS competitor (abbr.)
25. Public university founded by Thomas Jefferson (abbr.)

27. Third person singular "to be"
28. Could be x or y or z
30. Album *Stranger in the ___*
31. *Night ___ the Museum*
32. Hospital wing dedicated to babies (abbr.)
33. ___ facto
35. Radio counterpart of FM
36. Horn of plenty
41. Forbidden fruit eater
42. TV streaming add-on, or *Avatar* character
43. The science guy
45. Pasta shape
47. The T in SATB
49. Literature clichés
50. "Wherefore art ___ Romeo?"

DOWN:

1. 7-down transforms into a red ___
2. Opposite of hurtful
3. Angers
4. 51
5. Icy precipitation
6. Ginger soft drink
7. *Turning Red* protagonist
8. South Dakota's neighbor (abbr.)
9. Where human life originated (2 words)
10. Hit song from Taylor Swift's album *Lover*
16. Newest Supreme Court justice's first name
19. Confused for

22. Bowl of a sink
23. Complete disaster
26. President's running mate (abbr.)
29. ___ Jinping
30. Colleges either ___, waitlist or reject applicants
34. Blended fruit or vegetables
37. Black and white and read all ___
38. City in Nevada
39. Play mini golf
40. The A in A.D.
44. Hit show starring Penn Badgley and Victoria Pedretti
46. YW (abbr.)
48. Canadian utterance

By Caitlin Donovan (II)
& Alex Strand (II)

Contributing Writers

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Artist Spotlight: Bailey Wright (I)

By **Mai Babila-Weigmann (II)**
& **Eliza Duff-Wender (II)**

Contributing Writers

Bailey Wright (I) is no stranger to the arts. She has been a part of Boston Latin School's Theatre program since 2018 and has participated in many theatrical performances, including the 2020 play, *My Love Lies Frozen in the Ice*, which holds a special place in Wright's heart. The show won preliminaries at its Massachusetts Educational Theatre Guild (METG) performance, but unfortunately, BLS Theatre could not perform in the semifinals due to COVID-19. Despite this disappointing setback, Wright's artistic abilities have thrived throughout the year with the return of in-person school.

This year, Wright helped direct *A Clown Show About Rain*, BLS Theatre's most recent production. The play is almost entirely silent, so the actors rely on physical movement and facial expressions to communicate. On April 2, *A Clown Show About Rain* received a Regional Winner award at METG's 2022 High School Regionals. In addition, Wright won a student recognition award for student directing. For Wright, "Seeing a show out on the stage and knowing that you helped put that out there [is] a priceless feeling."

Wright's talents reach far beyond the realm of theatre. She has been writing her whole life and has been working with fan fiction since fourth grade. Her writing has changed quite a bit in the years since, but she still loves it and is currently working on the first draft of her novel for her Senior Capstone project. The novel, *Skinwalker*, draws from her own life and personal experiences to create a psychological fantasy that discuss-



es the effects of mental illness. This is the longest piece of prose Wright has ventured into writing. Although juggling the writing process with the difficulties of senior year has been challenging, Wright says that it has been easier as the novel is a school assignment and therefore has fixed requirements. BLS English teachers Ms. Sophia Campot and Mr. Jeff Mikalaitis have also supported her in the editing process of the novel.

Despite her focus on writing and theatre, Wright is always looking to explore new art forms. She has worked with visual arts, music, filmmaking and hopes to get into drawing as well. Her extensive experiences with writing and theatre may be able to lend her some help in the process, although she acknowledges that "a massive part of [learning how to

draw] is just accepting that it's gonna be pretty bad at first." All art requires time and dedication, and Wright has become well acquainted with this practice over the years.

Wright's biggest inspiration is a seemingly simple one: living. She is most inspired by life itself because she has found that "the beautiful thing about humanity is that none of our challenges are truly unique to any of us." She has used writing and theatre to relieve stress and cope with difficult emotions, and she hopes that others can gain insight from her work. In the process, she has discovered that her "twin loves are writing and theatre." The arts have been an outlet for Wright to express her feelings, and she hopes that creating something that many can relate to will help people feel that they are not alone.

Turning Red and the Trials of Growing Up



Watch *Turning Red!*

By **Zoe Colimon (III)**
& **Parker Hastings (III)**

Contributing Writers

Pixar's *Turning Red* is taking the world by storm with its raw, unfiltered depiction of growing up. The film follows Meilin "Mei" Lee, a dorky, bold 13-year-old voiced by Rosalie Chiang. Shortly after an embarrassing encounter by her mother, Mei wakes up as a red panda due to a family "inconvenience" passed down from Mei's mother, which transforms Mei every time she feels a strong emotion. The red panda is essen-

tially a parallel to puberty and its effects on young teens.

Having to live life with a giant panda on your mind and the desire to see your favorite band, 4*Town (which mom doesn't approve of), only adds pressure to the seemingly perfect life you're expected to live. This is the problem Mei faces, so she weighs her options and chooses the most reasonable choice of all: going behind her parents' back and secretly raising 800 dollars for concert tickets! Finally feeling a sense of freedom for the first time in 13 years is new and refreshing.

Living life with the panda isn't easy for Mei, and it becomes hard for her to balance "panda-Mei" and "Mei-Mei." By the end of the movie, Mei finds balance between two aspects of her identity. The panda represents freedom and security within herself and her own identity, which is an important message to spread to younger audiences. It has become so normalized to alter your character in order to blend into your community, so it is refreshing when the film reminds us that we are at our best when living authentically.

The relationship between mother and daughter plays a major role in the plot of the film. Mei changes from an obedient child to a bold, daring young woman. She realizes she can't always glue herself to her mom, so she eases back with the help of her friends. Sophia Carter (III) says, "I thought it was important to look at the mother-daughter relationship between Mei and her mom.

It is a very relevant example of most mother-daughter relationships today, and it was something that I personally never thought Disney would touch on."

Perhaps life won't be the same, but Mei reminds us that maturing comes with new experiences and that, eventually, we have to break down barriers to grow. Mei finds balance not just within herself, but with her mother too.

Though many people view the movie as problematic due to its unafraid approach toward maturing, *Turning Red* is an incredibly inclusive film. People from all walks of life are featured in the movie. Inclusivity is so important in media targeted at younger audiences because a lack of representation can lead to today's youth feeling ostracized. Tegan Trueblood (III) comments, "It was really good to see so many groups of people in the movie; it feels like Hollywood is finally catching up to our cosmopolitan society." The film has also been praised for its AAPI representation, with Mei and her family being Chinese Canadian.

With the production of more inclusive films similar to *Turning Red*, we can hope to create a more welcoming environment for today's youth. Through this form of media, children are reminded of the importance of learning to accept their individuality and to harness their own inner panda. As Mei graciously reminds us, "Honoring your parents is great, but if you take it too far, you may forget to honor yourself."

SOUND OF SEUL: MAINSTREAM SELLOUT

BY MACHINE GUN KELLY



March 25, 2022
Genre: Pop Punk
Tolerable Songs: "born with horns,"
"ay!," "fake love don't last"
Rating: 0.5/10

By **Ellis Seul (II)**

Head Editor

We may only be a quarter of the way into the year, but with *Mainstream Sellout*, Machine Gun Kelly (MGK) has already released one of the most uninspired and unbearable albums of 2022. With Kelly's grating vocals and vacuous lyrics overlaying generic pop-punk production, the 40-minute listening time could be spent better doing virtually anything else.

To be fair, the album starts off with a hint of quality: opener "born with horns" begins with an instrumental that could have led to something interesting. MGK's subpar singing and cliché lyrics about alienation, however, chip away at this. Though the song is by no means incredible, it still leaves the listener with a glimmer of hope that "this thing can't really be that bad, right?" Wrong.

Following the opening track, the rest of the album teeters between the unoriginal and the downright unlistenable. Collaborations with Lil Wayne and Bring Me the Horizon's Oli Sykes fall flat before a run of arguably the three worst songs on an album full of terrible ones. The title track fails at self-aware defiance of MGK's detractors before an irritating collaboration with Blackbear furthers the decline in quality. And then, of course, there's "emo girl," whose vapid, repetitive chorus and trope-heavy lyrics justify the criticism it has received.

A few songs later in the album demonstrate slight signs of quality, but they do little to save it overall. Although "ay!" relies on a displeasing, pitched-up vocal sample in its chorus, it is at least fresh, with the switch to laidback trap production and a decent Lil Wayne verse providing a pleasant break from Kelly's earlier monotony.

Iann Dior's performance on the following track, "fake love don't last," is also a genuinely interesting one that, combined with a catchy chorus, makes it by far the most tolerable track on *Mainstream Sellout*. This promise, however, does not continue until the end, and MGK's attempt at a ballad on the closer "twin flame" instead becomes a sappy stew of self-loathing that an unnecessary guitar crescendo does little to bolster. After making it through, the listener can finally breathe a sigh of relief.

If there is anything that Kelly deserves credit for, it is his ability to generate attention and sales by appealing to a certain subset of fans while drawing widespread criticism from others. This tactic has certainly paid off as *Mainstream Sellout* debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, proving the age-old adage that no publicity is bad publicity. Don't get drawn in by the drama, though: this album is not worth anyone's time. Until it fades into irrelevancy, *Mainstream Sellout* will remain a stain on 2022's generally positive musical track record.

Women in the Male-Dominated Sports World



BLS Girls' Varsity Basketball makes their mark on the often male-dominated sport.

By Natalie Trapanick (I)

Contributing Writer

March Madness is the pinnacle of college basketball and one of the most anticipated tournaments in the world. In 2021, however, March Madness brought up many questions aside from the usual, “Who’s gonna win it all?” or “How’re your brackets looking?” Many female athletes instead brought attention to two issues that have plagued women’s sports for the entirety of their existence: inequalities and the lack of respect.

Most of us probably remember the viral video posted by University of Oregon women’s basketball player Sedona Prince, on *TikTok*, showing the single set of dumbbells and small “swag bag” provided by the

National Collegiate Athletic Association for the women as opposed to a fully-equipped Olympic-grade weight room and massive swag bags for the men.

This, however, was not the first time that public or major corporations have devalued women in sports — including coaches, trainers, female broadcasters and many others. Not taken as seriously as men in the field, many women are forced to fight stigma when it comes to pursuing such a male-dominated field.

Many female broadcasters struggle with the stereotype that they have chosen their jobs to “get close with” male athletes when in reality many have demonstrated their ability and unique perspectives while reporting on sporting events.

Numerous coaches, athletes and

teams, furthermore, do not garner the same respect as those participating in men’s sports do. Amelia Teta, a Lesley University softball player, states, “The issue is that as girls’ sports are becoming more popular, oftentimes they are seen as easier compared to the male counterpart.” She adds, “There is a large tone in female sports that girls cannot make a sport a big part of their personality.”

While there has certainly been progress in recent years when it comes to respecting women’s sports, women are often discouraged from pursuing sports past middle or high school. Many who go on to become collegiate-level or professional athletes are seen as inherently less feminine.

Female athletes cannot escape criticism. Caught in a double bind, the “female” part of “female athletes” is often weaponized

against women and girls — they are either not strong or good enough because they are female, or not feminine enough because they play sports.

A triathlete for Northeastern University, Ema Noonan (‘20), says, “I feel like many times men don’t see women in sports as their counterparts. Although we work as hard as them and might be just as strong or as fast or as skilled, many times they will see themselves as more athletic.” Times may be changing, but the work should not be left to women and those discriminated against in this field; it must also be done by the men who continue to allow such discrimination to occur.

Paige Fitzgerald (II), a Boston Latin School softball and basketball player, remarks, “Playing sports is a challenge in itself and to have to constantly face these inequalities makes it even harder for females. I’m not advocating for administration to take away attention from male sports, but instead, I want us to be treated equally.”

Equitable treatment of both men’s and women’s sports is essential. Sports provide opportunities for athletes to do what they love but also serve as a safe space or source of income for those who need it.

Throughout their existence, sports have served to be much more than simply athletic events and shows of strength; they have brought people together both physically and figuratively, provided happiness and companionship and helped many young athletes to mature and grow as individuals. With legislation like Title IV and the rise of social media, which has served to be both good and bad, many women have been able to become recognized as the greatest athletes of all time.

The coach of the BLS girls’ varsity swim team, Rosalie Jones, states, “While there is still room for improvement, I am pleased to see so much more investment in women’s and girls’ sports at the youth, high school, collegiate and professional level.”

In order to make further improvements to the world of athletics, any woman participant must be given the same amount of respect and attention as their male counterparts.

Goalies Give It Their All

**By Jessica Li (III)
& Julia Sax (III)**

Contributing Writers

When you ask sports fans who their favorite players are, the answers are typically the top scorers, playmakers or defenders. But what about the goalkeepers? What about these crucial players, the final line of defense, that can drastically influence the outcome of a game?

It is easy to overlook the contributions that goalies make, yet their significance should not go unnoticed. Goalies in major sports like hockey, soccer and lacrosse protect their team’s goal when all else fails. Even so, not everyone understands just how vital these players are.

“I think with goalies, accomplishments are usually seen and recognized by teammates and coaches. [...] But to spectators who do not know the sport that well, accomplishments and well-played games are often overlooked,” says Boston Latin School boys’ varsity hockey team goalie Aidan Fitzgerald (I). It can be discouraging since players draw much of their energy not just from the support of their teammates, but also from the cheers of the crowd.

While these crucial players can be underappreciated by fans, their team is always their biggest supporter. Win or lose, after a period, half or game, teammates

will traditionally rush to their goalie to recognize and thank them for their efforts.

Since goalies largely start their sports career as field players, a huge sacrifice is made on their part. These players often do not want the role or are coerced into committing to the “undesirable” position. Student-athletes including Fitzgerald, Valerie Dam-Nguyen (III) and Caitlin McDonough (III) all state that they came to tryouts wanting different positions. After no one else was willing to play goalie, however, they decided to take on the position.

Fitzgerald says, “[I] only switched to being a goalie because the other goalie on [my] team hated the position so much, so [I] decided [I] would play.” For the girls’ varsity soccer team goalie Dam-Nguyen, they “chose to be a goalie because [their] team needed one.” While many players will try the goalkeeper position at least once during their sports career, few decide to commit to the position, as many find field positions more exhilarating.

With this in mind, players that choose to stay in goal are motivated by external reasons. McDonough explains, “It’s so awesome when someone is confident that they’re going to score but then you stop their shot. [...] It makes you feel good about yourself, and it gives me more confidence.” Other reasons provided by goalies include the attention, the fun that the high pressure brings and the independence from having a separate role than everyone else.



Aidan Fitzgerald (I) plays goalie for the BLS boys’ varsity hockey team.

While goalies do not move as much as field players, being a goalie is still no easy feat. They must be on constant alert to stop any dangerous plays. According to McDonough, to improve their chances of saving the ball or puck, goalies must train their reflexes and agility by doing reaction drills.

Fitzgerald provides further insight: “A lot of the training that comes with being a goalie has to do with agility and hand-eye coordination. Stretching your legs is extremely important as a goalie, as being flexible and agile helps a ton.” Many serious goalies also demonstrate their commit-

ment by training in the offseason, putting their dedication on display. Substantial mental toughness is also required to counter the fast-moving balls or pucks that will frequently fly at them.

There are goalies in different sports from all around the world, but no matter their differences, most of them share common characteristics — they have received less recognition, are reluctant to play the position at the high school level and possess immense skill. So the next time you are asked about your favorite player, don’t forget about the goalies! The game cannot go on without them.

Spotlight: Teddy Chisholm (I) & John Bijoy Hankwitz (I)

By Kuba Rozwadowski (II)
& Nhat Thai (II)

Contributing Writers

After dominating the Dual County League together for several years, Boston Latin School baseball stars Teddy Chisholm (I) and John Bijoy Hankwitz (I) are headed to Framingham State University (FSU) to continue their baseball career at the collegiate level.

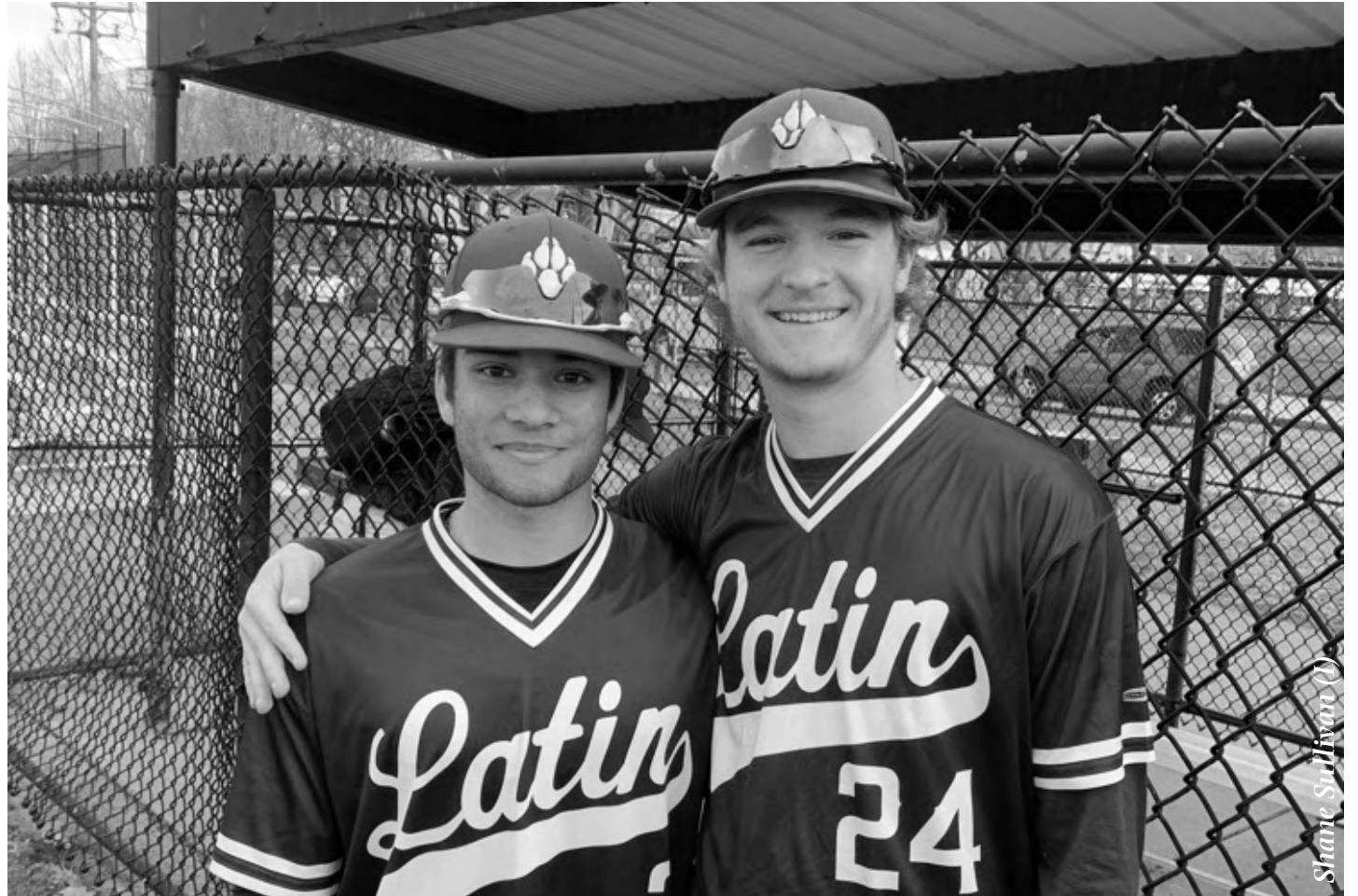
Hailing from Boston, home of the Red Sox these athletes were no strangers to the sport at an early age. "I have been playing baseball my whole life," says Chisholm. "My dad got me into it when I was really young, and since then, it's stuck with me."

Hankwitz had a similar experience, saying, "I became interested in baseball by watching the Red Sox. I started playing when I was about five years old but didn't love the sport until I was ten. I became so interested in it because it is the sport of adjustments. Whenever you mess up or feel yourself off a little, you always have the opportunity to adjust and make up for it."

When asked about the transition to becoming captain of the baseball team, Hankwitz says, "Although the title sounds really cool, I won't change the way I act and am looking forward to leading this team on another run."

As a team player, Chisholm takes it upon himself to be a leader within the group. When Chisholm is not hitting dingers on the field, he is a role model for the underclassmen of the team, helping them "get accustomed to playing at the varsity level."

The careers of these two athletes, however, have not always been smooth sailing. In the past two years, there were countless delays and cancellations of sports due to the pandemic. The spring of 2020 saw the total abandonment of the baseball season, and the following year yielded a much shorter season than usual.



Chisholm acknowledges the ramifications of these events, stating, "[COVID-19] made it tough for us to feel like a real team since we didn't get to travel from school together since we were virtual. I'm glad that feeling is back this year." Even with COVID-19 eliminating both players' sophomore season, — "which is very important in the recruiting and development process," according to Hankwitz — the two have quickly recovered and made the best of the situation.

When describing the duo on and off the field, fellow varsity teammate Max Smith-Stern (II) says, "JB [Hankwitz] and Teddy are both really talented players that

bring energy and leadership every day. I know I speak for the whole team and the coaching staff in saying we are really happy for them and excited to see them play at FSU next year. They will be greatly missed."

Following a heartbreaking defeat in the tournament last year after winning two games, Chisholm and Hankwitz will begin their revenge tour this spring, as BLS baseball kicks off the season with a match against rival Boston Latin Academy. After a heartbreaking defeat in the tournament last year after winning two games, Chisholm and Hankwitz began their revenge tour this spring, defeating rival Boston Latin Academy 6-0 in the first

game of the season. The dynamic duo will turn their childhood dreams into a reality at FSU the following year.

Both stars are confident that their newfound home will be a great match for them. "It just felt right for me to commit," says Chisholm. "My parents were completely on board with the idea and fully supported me since they knew that I wanted to play in college."

Both extend their gratitude to various coaches and peers who have aided them in reaching these points. They are ready to elevate their games to the next level. With these two at the bat, no one is stopping them.

Tom Brady's Return to the Field



Tom Brady shouts in excitement before his "last" Superbowl.

By Terence Xie (II)
& Christopher Choy (VI)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

After a hectic off-season and a brief retirement, Tom Brady has returned to the field. This comes just six weeks after announcing to the world that he was ready to move on to the next phase of his life to prioritize his family and breaking the internet when he failed to mention the Patriot Nation in his infamous speech and posts.

As a seven-time Super Bowl winner, Brady is indisputably one of the greatest football players of all time. With 624 passing touchdowns and over 84,000 passing

yards in his career, Brady has cemented his legacy and will work to add to his already impressive list of accomplishments in this upcoming season.

Announcing his return in a post on *Instagram* and *Twitter*, Brady says that his place "is still on the field and not in the stands." His announcement comes just before the start of the National Football League's (NFL) free agency period, and Brady is reportedly already working to gather up the best team for some "unfinished business."

In the 2021 season, Brady led the NFL in many stats, with 5,316 passing yards, 43 touchdowns, 485 completions and 719 attempts. His team, the Tam-

pa Bay Buccaneers, and he, however, fell short of a Super Bowl appearance, losing to the Los Angeles Rams in the divisional round of playoffs. This loss cast doubt on Brady's ability to perform on the biggest stage, and critics started to wonder whether Brady was finished as a dominant player. As one of the most successful players in NFL history, ending on such a loss would have been unbecoming for Brady.

Sharing a similar sentiment, Wilson Zheng (II), who plays for the Boston Latin School football team, was not at all surprised by Brady's return. According to Zheng, "It was obvious [Brady] wanted another ring," and would only retire when he started to play poorly. Zheng also believes that Brady's return has more significance as it means that the Buccaneers will be able to retain more of last season's players and therefore "are once again title contenders with Brady at quarterback."

Zheng's teammate Eammon Foley (II) agrees with him, saying, "[I] would have been much more surprised if he stayed retired." He continues that it "was a good move" for Brady to continue his career, because until his retirement, Brady hadn't shown any signs of decline in his skills. Foley also believes that Brady's return will be impactful on the NFL, generating strong interest among fans since he is one of the best quarterbacks in the League.

Even though fans believe Brady's return was inevitable, some are disappointed in it because it will intensify the competition. Justin Stephenson (I) explains, "I hate this move because I'm indeed a Panthers fan, so having to ask a defense

like ours to make it difficult for him twice a year is most definitely going to be hard." In contrast to Foley, Stephenson believes Brady will not be extremely impactful for the League but enough "to get the job done (winning another ring), especially with the supporting cast around as well."

The football team's wide receiver Charles Chung (II) opposes Stephenson: "I really liked Brady's return because he's my favorite player." Chung was not surprised by Brady's decision, believing that it was a good move because of how competitive the Buccaneers are and will be with Brady. Fans, whether they support Brady or not, feel that his return will be tremendously impactful for the NFL. Chung says, "His return will be extremely impactful since Bruce Arians retired. This means he will be in full control of his offense."

Other fans, such as BLS AP Biology teacher, Mr. Lawrence Spezzano, have more reservations regarding Brady's return to the game of football. Spezzano explains, "I don't believe it's good for the player, given the inherent risks to his body, the inevitable decline with time and potential impact to his family and time away from [football]." Citing his emotional commitment to the sport, Mr. Spezzano, like many others, believes that a life away from football is difficult for a competitor like Brady.

It comes to nobody's surprise that Brady has returned for his twenty-third season of dominance in the NFL. The start of the 2022 NFL season begins September 8, and the impact of Brady's return to football will be interesting to watch no matter what happens.

The Success of Equal Pay for Equal Play



The USWNT lifts the 2019 World Cup trophy.

By **Romy Li (II)**

Staff Writer

On February 22, an agreement was finally reached between the members of the World Cup-winning United States women's national soccer team (USWNT) and the United States Soccer Federation (U.S. Soccer). This comes six years after a group of five players on the national team filed an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaint about inequality in payment and treatment.

The settlement states that U.S. Soccer will pay men and women at an equal rate for all matches and tournaments, including the World Cup. This group of female athletes will also receive 24 million dollars, with the bulk of that figure being back paid.

The main argument in this lawsuit re-

olved around equitable treatment of female players; these women asserted that they deserved the same working conditions, such as charter flights, as their male counterparts. This lawsuit's conditions are monumental, as they promise to bridge the disparity in pay between male and female national team players.

Silvia Guarnotta (I), captain of the Boston Latin School girls' varsity soccer team, believes this is an amazing accomplishment, saying, "The [USWNT] receiving equal pay is an extremely vital step on the road to achieving this in various aspects of life. I've watched this year's long dispute unfold and the strenuous process the team experienced. This successful fight empowers and inspires all women who struggle with sexism and unfair work environments everywhere."

Sports Spring Into Action

By **Madelyn Taylor (II)**

Staff Writer

After a successful winter sports season that included many Boston Latin School teams making the state tournament and experiencing much success, it is time for warmer weather and spring sports!

Across the board, teams are excited to have their first normal spring season in a long time. After the cancellation of the 2020 season and the 2021 season having been filled with COVID-19 restrictions, student-athletes are happy to get back to business.

Every team this spring is "excited to get back [...] and represent the pack," says Greg Rosenkranz (I). For the seniors who have not had a full season since their freshman year, this is the last season that they will wear a Latin jersey. For those not going on to collegiate athletics, this is the last time they will play their sport. Every athlete has a reason to make this season count!

Baseball

Under new Head Coach Mr. Brian Mylett, boys' baseball returns with a similar roster for the second year in a row, and the anticipation is high. Last year's team made it to the semifinals of Division I North Sectional. Captain Hayden Groh (I) says, "We want to win and get back to playoffs like last year, but our goal is to get better every day and to grow as a team." He acknowledges the passion and drive that all of the players on the team have, saying "[This season], every game is a big game [on] our road to the playoffs. [...] We never take our opportunities for granted."

Boys' Crew

After winning a gold medal at states in the fall, the boys' crew team is hoping for a successful season following months of winter training. Captain Trygve Arestad (I) speaks for many seniors when he says, "It's tough to leave my team behind in a few months, [yet] as my final season begins [...], I couldn't have a better team to experience it with."

Girls' Crew

Girls' crew is already off to the races, taking home the Salvo Cup in their first race of the season against Brookline. The team will be busy in the coming months with races almost every weekend. Captain Olivia Sullivan (I) is looking forward to it, saying, "It's a lot of fun, and we're all super excited to be able to race normally again!"

Boys' Lacrosse

Although they struggled with low numbers due to COVID-19 last year, boys' lacrosse still managed to beat two teams for the first time in program history. Abraham Lester-Baralli (II) says that a big goal this season is to compete with some talented teams that they have not played in a while. He notes that their first game against Milton is one that will be an opportunity to "show the DCL what this team is about."

Girls' Lacrosse

The girls' lacrosse team is, according to captain Isabella Hughes (I), "coming off [of their] best season in program history," which ended with a state tournament run to the semifinals of Division I North Sectional. They are looking forward to even more this year. A large turnout at tryouts and lots of skilled players gives them a good shot.

Guarnotta also thinks this is an important time for women to continue to come together and advocate for the compensation that they deserve.

Drawing the support of many fellow athletes, celebrities and politicians, this settlement brings hope to other female athletes of different sports. The five women who pushed this lawsuit are proud of this domino effect. Previously, it was decided by a federal judge that these equal pay arguments were invalid, stripping them of legal leverage and exonerating U.S. Soccer from this settlement.

Despite the odds being stacked heavily against them, the women were met with an unexpected but well-deserved victory. Discrimination was addressed, the working conditions settlement was pushed for fair and equal treatment, and U.S. Soccer will give equal pay moving forward.

Anya Bergman (II) is happy about this news but also recognizes the need to maximize the momentum created. She mentions, "Hearing arguments people used to make to justify the inequality are really frustrating, and I am really glad that they are invalidated now. I do hope this goes further than just this team. There are several other teams that deserve this and many other individuals."

With positive acknowledgments for their accomplishments, some have argued that this case sets the precedent that women must surpass the achievements of men in order to be treated fairly. The national women's soccer team has won four Fédération Internationale de Football Association Women's World Cup titles since the competition's founding, whereas the men's team placed third in the first World Cup in 1930 and has not come close since.

Such statistics combat the popular arguments supporting different pay rates:

that female athletes are not as good as male athletes, that the women's game is not as exciting as men's or that female games do not attract as large of an audience or as much money. But, for these reasons, some argue that this case only came out favorable for the female soccer players because they are the best in the world at their sport.

Equality is not contingent upon the number of wins, championships, fans, viewers and performances. Female athletes deserve equality regardless of their performance compared to male counterparts on the field. Perhaps this gender-based comparison perpetuates the dynamics by which girls and women experience discrimination in the first place.

Caitlin McDonough (III), midfielder for the varsity girls' soccer team, adds, "While the news of equal pay is an awesome thing for women's soccer, there are some underlying impacts, both positive and negative. Positively, women finally will get the compensation they rightly deserve as they have been very successful throughout the years. For example, Trinity Rodman signed the largest contract in the National Women's Soccer League showing that women's soccer is taking steps in the right direction."

McDonough was also concerned that the focus in most reports was on the amount of money received and not women's ability to play. This is often the case when it comes to women in sports. Even for the best female athletes, their hard work and athletic abilities are unnoticed or underappreciated simply because they are women.

As Guarnotta explains, "This is only the start of a hard fight, but younger female soccer players and athletes everywhere are absorbing this news and gaining motivation to fight for equality in their sport."

Sailing

Last year during a shortened season, the sailing team placed second in the Metro Division of the Mass Bay League Team Racing Championships. This year, the team is already facing difficulties because of structural issues on Pier 4 in Charlestown, where they are based. Although delaying the start of the season is not ideal, the team is still grateful they have a longer one than last year. Johnny Sargent (I) says, "Because we only lost one senior from last year to this year, we should be able to pick up where we left off with only slight changes to our pairings. With more time training and racing together, we will be able to build the team chemistry needed to be even more successful this spring."

Softball

As reigning Dual County League champions for the first time since 2013, members of the softball team are ready for the tough competition they are bound to face this season. They have "some very strong returners but [...] also have some new girls who are ready to step up," according to captain Sydney Hanlon (I). They hope to win the League again and advance further in the playoffs, which will involve working on replacing last season's senior leadership.

Boys' Tennis

Boys' tennis makes its return this year with the same starting lineup. They made it to the second round of states last season with a largely young team. "Many were first-time starters, including two seventh graders, so having a year's worth of experience should definitely help," says Rosenkranz. Like most teams, the goal is to go further in state competitions than last year. He notes that with a low number of matches, "Each will be important but especially against teams like Bedford and Cambridge, who we always are close [in scoring] with."

Girls' Tennis

The girls' tennis team had a limited number of matches last year, but they managed to win the DCL small regular-season title and make it to the semifinals of the Division I North Sectional. Christine Maher (II) is "looking forward to a more competitive environment" this year.

Track and Field

Both girls' and boys' track and field have had a tough two years, with COVID-19 restrictions affecting cross country, indoor and outdoor track. Despite this, athletes have "run personal records and school records. Just this past winter season, Rachel Starr (IV) ran the school record in the two-mile and placed very well at the State Meet. [...] Already this spring season, Louie Belile (I) broke his own school record in the 100-meter dash," says captain Sophie Ahearn (I). Ahearn will be running for the United States Naval Academy next year. As she closes out her final season with BLS, she is "looking forward to the opportunity to get to lead a young team because I can pass on to them the joy, success and lessons that running has offered me."

Boys' Volleyball

This season, the boys' volleyball team is ready to go. They qualified for the state tournament last year and hope to make it further this time around. Like most other BLS teams, they are simply grateful for a longer season.

