



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

Superintendent Cassellius Signs Off

By **Darren Seto (II)**
& **Ross Wilson (V)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

After marking her third year as the district's chief executive, Boston Public Schools Superintendent Brenda Cassellius will step down from her role at the end of the current school year.

On February 7, Superintendent Cassellius, Mayor Michelle Wu and Boston School Committee Chair Jeri Robinson sent out three letters to the BPS community acknowledging the superintendent's impending departure, which was described as a "mutual decision" in Wu's letter.

"We all made an agreement that I could stay until June so that Mayor Wu could build her own team," says Superintendent Cassellius.

Superintendent Cassellius's departure will be the fourth departure of a BPS superintendent in the past decade which includes two permanent and two interim superintendents.

Wu and the Boston School Committee have officially started searching for a new superintendent. On March 2, Wu and Committee Chair Robinson announced there will be a nine-person panel to select Cassellius's replacement. The committee, which includes BPS students, faculty, parents and community members, will host a series of public hearings and gather community feedback as well as review and interview candidates privately before public vetting begins. In June, the committee will make a recommendation to the School



Craig F. Walker

After serving for three years, Superintendent Cassellius is resigning.

Committee, who will ultimately vote on the best candidate.

In regards to the selection of a new candidate, Mayor's Youth Council Education Committee Co-Director Khadija Raza (I) says, "I can see how someone who is Boston-based and knows the BPS system well is at an advantage. They might have a better understanding of the challenges in our system [...], and they might have a better vision right at the beginning."

Raza, however, is skeptical of whether there will be enough time for input from students, teachers and educators on the hiring process of the new superintendent, saying, "I don't think four months to find a new

superintendent will be feasible [...] given the short timing we have."

The impact that Superintendent Cassellius's departure will have on Boston Latin School and the rest of the district's high schools remains unclear. The recent exam school admissions policy passed in July 2021, which considers applicants' socioeconomic backgrounds as well as academic performances, could change under a new superintendent, who may approach equity within exam school admissions differently.

"What the new superintendent feels about exam schools in our portfolio of [BPS] high schools is something that we will have to wait

and see in the coming months," says Head of School Rachel Skerritt.

In addition to overhauling BPS exam school admissions to increase equity, Superintendent Cassellius implemented many more opportunities for students across the district's high schools.

Policies to increase equity include adjusting graduation requirements to better align with the state's recommended program of study, MassCore, providing access to the Seal of Biliteracy and shifting the approach to attendance and grade-level retention to eliminate unfair barriers. Superintendent Cassellius also guided investments toward a school quality guarantee through the allocation of nurses, counselors, psychologists, social workers and family liaisons across the district's schools, ensuring a full range of support for every student.

Superintendent Cassellius hopes that there will continue to be more opportunities for all of the district's high schools to receive similar attention and access to a rigorous, qualitative and culturally responsive education.

Superintendent Cassellius says her work as superintendent would not have been possible without her team, as well as parents and students across the BPS community: "I hope students will continue to carry on their passions as they were the ones who spoke out about the changes with the exam school admissions. [...] I'm so proud of the students here and their voice and the way they step up and advocate for their education."

BPS Educator of the Year Award Goes to...

By **Sofia Daffin (II)**
& **Caitlin Donovan (II)**

Contributing Writers

In January, Boston Latin School history teacher Ms. Cheralyn Pinchem received the 2021 Boston Public Schools Educator of the Year Award.

Ms. Pinchem has taught AP World History and African American Studies at BLS for nine years. As one of six teachers to receive this honor, Ms. Pinchem recalls, "I didn't [even] know I was nominated. I got an email from [Boston Public School Superintendent] Dr. Cassellius saying congratulations. I forwarded the email to [Head of School] Skerritt, and she said she had nothing to do with it. I found out in January that [history teacher] Mr. [Brian] Smith had nominated me."

The BPS Educator of the Year Award is an annual recognition for exceptional teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, librarians and other support staff. The winners are initially nominated by any person — educators, families, students and community members.

The nominations were supplemented with evidence of each educator's work, student work samples, letters of support, conduct history and a confidential vetting process.

This year's award also included candidates from nominations made in 2020 due to the postponements accompanying the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a competitive pool of 400 nominations.

These nominations were narrowed down to 12 winners: six teachers, two paraprofessionals, two nurses and two related service providers.

Mr. Thomas Kennelly, Head of the BLS History Department, says, "Ms. Pinchem is a great teacher for a number of reasons. She does a great job of engaging and getting to know her students. It's a very supportive classroom atmosphere. She clearly puts a significant amount of time into developing and refining her lessons."

25 years of teaching was not Ms. Pinchem's original career goal. She started college as a political science major with the goal of going to law school. She realized early on, however, that the path was not for her. Ms. Pinchem says, "I worked at a day-care center, and that made me realize, 'Wow, I'm really doing something that's going to impact this little person for the rest of their life.'"

Ms. Pinchem's students feel this impact through her lessons and personal interactions. Caitlin McDonough (III) says, "My favorite part is that she's



Mary Bosch (II)

Congratulations to Ms. Pinchem on winning BPS Educator of the Year!

really energetic and vibrant. [...] She also does current events on Fridays, which I really enjoy. It's just [...] more of a sense of what the world is, and that's something that I haven't done in any classes this year."

When asked about her teaching philosophies, Ms. Pinchem replies, "You teach who you are." This phrase, which she learned early on in her ca-

reer, reflects that authenticity is the most important part of being a teacher.

Ms. Pinchem's favorite part of teaching is the students. Even though a new roster of students arrive every year, she believes that the limited time makes each class special.

She concludes, "Once the 180 days are over, they move on. I have to make sure all those days count."

EDITORS' NOTE



With Term 2 having concluded and February break in the rearview mirror, we have officially arrived at the most dreaded period of each school year: the grueling, unrelenting, spirit-breaking stretch of seven consecutive weeks in March and early April separating us from our next break.

Each year, without fail, it seems that our early-year drive completely abandons us by this stretch. March always marks the beginning of that point in the school year when we hit "Snooze" a little more often, wear sweatpants a lot more often and procrastinate as often as we possibly can.

But, as upperclassmen who have, in fact, survived this stretch before, we can testify that it's not ALL bad. With the weather getting warmer and COVID-19 cases plummeting (for now), there is some silver lining to be found!

In the meantime, please enjoy this March Issue of the *Argo*, brought to you by our fantastic editors, writers and associates. We hope that you'll peruse these pages during a study, homeroom or a particularly boring class (just kidding!), with each page filled with captivating subjects about our school community and beyond.

A few highlights from each section: News recaps recent school happenings, including our very own Ms. Pinchem winning BPS Educator of the Year, as well as the history of our school. Forum delves into topical controversies, such as the recent removal of Google Chat from our BPS email accounts, along with more thoughtful pieces regarding the historical role of our nation overseas. Arts & Entertainment returns with yet another album review — this time, on Mitski's *Laurel Hell!* Also, check out this issue's Fun Page, where the *Argo* crossword makes its grand return! Last, but certainly not least, Sports spotlights several star student-athletes and provides commentary on athletes at the recent Winter Olympics.

Hang in there, everyone! Spring is right around the corner!

Cheers,
Aidan & Elizabeth

Issue Correction:

The article "Antonio Brown's CTE Sparks Outburst" [Jan. Issue] was misleading in its headline. Antonio Brown and his recent series of outbursts have not been diagnosed nor attributed to Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE). The cause of his behavior is unknown. All claims made regarding the cause of his behavior are hypothetical. A more apt headline for this article is "Antonio Brown's Outburst Sparks Discussion on CTE."

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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Black is Beautiful: Make Black Inescapable

By Ailin Sha (IV)
& Jenny Chen (III)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Throughout February, Boston Latin School Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge (B.L.A.C.K.) celebrated Black History Month with a variety of activities.

Celebrated annually during February, Black History Month was formerly a week-long celebration started by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History in 1926. In 1976, the United States government officially recognized Black History Month.

One of the most notable events was Spirit Week, which revolved around the theme “Black is Beautiful: Make Black Inescapable.” Students were encouraged to dress up according to a different theme every day from February 7 to 11: “Dress for Success Day,” “Heroic Day,” “Black is Beautiful Day,” “Hip Hop Icon Day” and “Diaspora Day.”

Students showed an overwhelmingly positive response to Spirit Week, with over 100 participants in total. A common misconception, however, was that some students believed that they had to be Black to participate, which was not true.

Mizuki Takano-Cunningham (II), president of BLS B.L.A.C.K., explains, “The goal of Spirit Week was to have a visual representation of people celebrating Black history. [...] We wanted to truly ‘make Black inescapable,’ so students will all know what or when Black History Month is.”

Many participants agreed that their favorite day of the week was “Diaspora Day.” Students dressed up in the colors of their flag or carried one with them to show off their heritage.

Ms. Rose Delorme-Metayer, a faculty advisor of BLS B.L.A.C.K., remarks, “‘Diaspora Day’ broke the narrative that ‘we aren’t present as people of color at BLS.’ I felt proud to be a BLS teacher and alum [...] seeing people with the Haitian flag.”

The club also held a movie screening of *Black Panther* on February 11 in the Seevak Room. The blockbuster movie has a predominantly Black cast and director; “The representation,” Takano-Cunningham notes, “feels like a celebration of who we are.”

Hoping to strengthen students’ connections with the Black community in Boston, the club adver-



BLS B.L.A.C.K. poses for a photo on “Black is Beautiful Day.”

tised a list of activities that students could complete during February break to support Black-owned businesses. Teachers could also decorate their classroom doors as a competition, of which there were ten entries.

The Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Assembly, originally scheduled to take place on January 14, was postponed to March 25 due to the surge of the Omicron variant.

The planning committee decided on the new date for three reasons. First, it is around the time Dr. King met Malcolm X to witness the Senate debate on the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. The march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama also took place during the week of March 17, 1965. Lastly, Dr. King led a group of protesters on March 28, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, a week before his assassination.

At the MLK Assembly, BLS B.L.A.C.K. will present a spoken-word poem written by its members, an

excerpt of which the school viewed in January. Each stanza of the poem reflects one of the letters of the BLS Core Values, T.H.R.I.V.E.

“We thought it would be nice to connect BLS to MLK Day and Black History Month by incorporating [...] our own core values into the poem,” states BLS B.L.A.C.K. publicist Oriana Dunker (IV).

Ultimately, the goal of the various festivities during Black History Month was to highlight the rich contributions Black people have made throughout American history.

This is because, Dunker notes, school curricula tend to revolve solely around slavery and oppression when discussing Black history, often overlooking their plethora of successes and achievements. She concludes, “It’s really important, especially for Black students, to not have to hear incredibly sad and depressing stories every time we hear about us in history.”

Mayor Michelle Wu: 100-Day Check-In



Mayor Wu hands a Boston resident a flyer for the new bus program.

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

Contributing Writers

Since being sworn in just over 100 days ago, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu has carried out her policy agenda, addressing issues ranging from free transportation to affordable housing.

Wu’s first executive order in office requires the City of Boston to divest from fossil fuel, tobacco and private prison industries by the end of 2025. The order is part of Wu’s commitment to

reducing carbon emissions as part of her City Green New Deal. Thus far, Boston has divested 65 million dollars in city investments from companies that source more than 15 percent of production from global warming contributors.

Adina Habib (II), an officer of Boston Latin School Women in Politics, says, “I honestly think that it is necessary. [...] It’s something that we should be investing in, and obviously 65 million dollars is not a small amount of money, but putting that investment toward renewable energy is extremely important for the future of not just Boston, but the whole entire world.”

To combat the continuing spread of COVID-19, Mayor Wu implemented a vaccine mandate in January, which required city employees and people in indoor spaces, such as restaurants and gyms, to be vaccinated.

After the mandate was announced, many anti-vaccine protesters gathered at Wu’s house, occasionally early in the morning. Despite these protests, there was a noticeable increase in vaccination rates days after the mandate took effect. In February, however, a judge blocked the employee mandate, which is now being appealed by the Wu administration.

Also in February, Wu decided to lift the vaccine mandate for businesses. Wu identified three data points on which to base rolling back the vaccine mandate, all situated on a seven-day average. Those metrics include a community positivity rate below five percent, less than 95 percent of Intensive Care Unit beds occupied at Boston hospitals and fewer than 200 COVID-19 related hospitalizations per day.

Boston has already met two of the requirements, and data from wastewater in Boston shows that virus levels are back to where they were before the Omicron variant.

On February 9, Wu announced a fare-free Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority bus program on routes 23, 28 and 29. It began on March 1, 2022 and will last two years. The Wu administration selected the routes based on their popularity and

rider diversity in order to support and boost ridership.

In the coming years, Wu plans to transition to a larger scale of free public transportation. “We need it to be reliable [and] convenient to get people to where they need to go, and it has to be affordable,” Wu explains in an interview with *Boston 25 News*.

Wu also invested 40 million dollars into over 700 housing units all around Boston, provided by the Mayor’s Office of Housing, the Neighborhood Housing Trust and the Community Preservation Fund. Income-restricted housing units were prioritized to help accommodate those who needed it, such as seniors and families.

Mayor’s Youth Council Ambassador Zach Chen (III) reflects, “I think the housing policy will make it cheaper for Bostonians to live, allowing them to free up expenses and lessen the burden on their shoulders.”

Wu is the first woman and person of color to be elected as the mayor of Boston. Prior to her mayoral campaign, she served as the president of the Boston City Council after seven years’ experience as a councilor. Her campaign platform appealed to a wide range of voters, which led to success in her campaign.

Chen concludes, “She’s used her voice to stand for her beliefs and to empower people around Boston to help join that process. And even with a lot of barriers, like hate on social media, she’s stood strong and progressed forward.”

BLS Rings in Lunar New Year With a Roar



Alex Strand (II)

BLS Dance shows their moves at *Tet* Festival.

By **Lena Thai (IV)**
& **Mary Deng (V)**

Contributing Writers

Boston Latin School rang in the Year of the Tiger with an array of Lunar New Year festivities, including a lion dance performance and the Vietnamese Student Society's (VSS) *Tet* Festival.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, BLS observed Lunar New Year virtually last year. With students back in school again, the BLS community commenced celebrations in person with a roar.

Every year, Bostonians gather at the

entrance of the school to view a stunning show of the lion dance, given by students from the Wah Lum Kung Fu Academy. This year, the performance took place on January 31.

The lion dance is a traditional dance where performers dress in colorful costumes symbolizing good luck and fortune. Accompanying the showcase are firecrackers and drums, whose loud and resounding sound are meant to scare the evil spirits away.

Since requests for these performances often come up around the New Year, students of the Wah Lum Kung Fu Academy were already familiar with perform-

ing it. Along with weekend training and watching others dance, students gained experience by performing in other places such as Malden, Quincy and Chinatown.

"I have been doing Kung Fu and lion dancing for 16 years now, so it is definitely a passion for me. As for the specific dance at BLS, I did spend four years there, so I am happy to be blessing the school," says Thomas Tran ('21), a lion dance performer.

To oversee logistics and preparations, BLS Director of Operations Ms. Jesse Kwan was involved in the organizing of the lion dance and assisting with decorations and props.

Another celebration was VSS's *Tet* Festival, which took place on February 18. The multi-level event not only reflected Vietnamese customs celebrated during Lunar New Year, but also provided an enjoyable place to hang out with friends.

The festival started with games including paintball, cup fan and mini-golf. The dining hall was ornamented with gold and red decorations, which symbolize happiness, wealth and joy. Another glowing aspect of the festival was the performing arts, ranging from individual singers to the school's notable dance troupes, including BLS Dance, BLS Breakers and KOREO.

The event usually concludes with a dinner in the dining hall, but due to the pandemic, VSS shifted to take-home dinners. The dinner containers were filled with a variety of Asian foods such as fried rice, *lo mein* (stirred noodles), *banh bot loc* (tapi-

oca encased shrimp and pork wrapped in banana leaf), egg rolls and a refreshment of one's choice.

Preparation for the event began last December, when VSS split into committees with different responsibilities: finding sponsorships, holding auditions for the show lineup and setting up the show and games.

Adam Lin (V), who attended the festival, says, "It was great to see that BLS students are still able to continue these traditions that have been around even with COVID-19 precautions. The experience was enjoyable and safe due to everyone wearing their masks. The performances were amazing and the students did an amazing job making the event feel as normal as possible."

Both the lion dance and *Tet* Festival demonstrate the school's regard for representation of Asian heritage and the beginning of the Lunar New Year. For many, Lunar New Year is a cultural celebration of togetherness that allows them to be with their families.

Echoing this sentiment, Assistant Head of School Steven Chen reflects, "Growing up, Lunar New Year was a much bigger deal than Christmas or New Year's Day or July 4, like the big holiday in my family where we would get special cakes. My dad would spend hours making a really special meal for us [...] and the time of the year that culturally is really important. I think that's the importance of why it's to be recognized."

Lost in the Halls: Class V Scavenger Hunt

By **Alex Strand (II)**
& **Sylvia O'Hearn (III)**

Contributing Writers

On March 4, Boston Latin School tour guides hosted a scavenger hunt to help Class V students become more familiar with the school building and their classmates.

With COVID-19 in full force last year, eighth graders did not have in-person orientations and social events; instead, most of them attended their first year of BLS online. Without the typical sixie year events and in-person classes, students, teachers and parents felt that the eighth grade class had become socially disconnected.

Assistant to the Head of School and faculty advisor for tour guides, Ms. Martha Pierce says, "Class V students, like all students, have missed out on shared experiences over the last two years."

During the scavenger hunt, eighth

graders met in the dining hall first, then searched the building for clues in the form of QR codes, each of which led to the next clue and gave an activity to do at each station.

The hope was that through this fun activity, students would be able to familiarize themselves with each other and the building. Many eighth graders find that they have trouble navigating parts of the building that are foreign to them. Thus, many clues were located in areas or rooms that eighth graders do not visit often.

Ms. Pierce adds, "Class V students know how to get to their classes easily by now but may not know how to access some of the less frequented spaces."

In addition to addressing the impacts on navigation in the school building due to COVID-19, the scavenger hunt was intended to encourage social connection between students through participating in teams.

Caroline Butler (V) attended mainly



Alanna Quirk (I)

Tour guides utilize *Zoom* to plan their Class V Scavenger Hunt.

for the aspect of making connections. She says, "I enjoy social activities and would like to get more involved in after school events and activities."

Organizers hoped for a large turnout for the event. They advertised with various marketing methods, such as post-

ing flyers throughout the hallway and an announcement in the Daily Bulletin with a sign-up form to attend.

Henry Poynter (I), one of the organizers of the event, concludes, "I feel like [the eighth graders] would want to do a fun game."

School Store Spreads Spirit



Alex Strand (II)

Get your own merch to show off school spirit!

By **Kristiana Dycaj (II)**
& **Andrea Pineda (VI)**

Contributing Writers

As the only authorized distributor of Boston Latin School spirit wear and logo products, the School Store sells hundreds of designs and variations of clothing, supplies and BLS spirit gear to incorporate Wolfpack spirit into student lives.

Students find that companies such as Champion, Nike and Under Armour are appealing for the quality and overall comfort of their products.

With a managing staff of manager Ilene DeAngelo along with eight parents, the School Store has prioritized convenience and the promotion of BLS items.

The store has increased in popularity within the school and sells a variety of items, such as sweatshirts, hats and sportsmen gear.

Furthermore, the School Store aims to assist new students in adapting to BLS with school supply packages, which is an efficient way for students to access required materials.

Accompanying a growth in interest, DeAngelo notes the increase of product quality and quantity since she took on the position: "[When I started], a total of only twelve items were available," contrasting greatly with the

numerous items sold today.

Brooke Ryan (VI) says, "[The School Store]'s very helpful, and I think that it is a good cause for the money to go to."

Student sales peak during days most celebrated by the Wolfpack, such as Valentine's Day, Spirit Day and Senior Nights. BLS hockey player Seamus Reardon (II) finds, "Beads, bandanas and stickers from the store are exciting items that can be shown off in a fun way." When hockey players dress formally on game days, purple ties are available for purchase to allow for extra Wolfpack spirit.

As of 2022, the previous gross annual income of roughly 3,000 dollars funds student agendas; over the years, the School Store has amassed 35,000 dollars to students and staff. This is partly due to the creation of a website — an idea that sparked from DeAngelo's concern that alumni would not be able to buy spirited products throughout the year. It has now allowed for orders to be shipped by United Parcel Service for a small fee.

Regular hours for student pickups and drop-ins are on Fridays during the lunch periods.

BLS Archivist Highlights History of the Oldest School

By Elyssa Cabey (II)
& Olivia Chen (VI)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

The expanding Boston Latin School Archives, which contain extensive information about the school's history, have recently made progress in digitizing their materials.

Formally called the BLS Archives and Special Collections in the Harry V. Keefe Library, the purpose of the archives is "to collect, preserve and make available school records of permanent historic and research value." Included in the archives are letters from former students, sports posters and memorabilia, various student publications, photographs, directories and curricula extending across the school's nearly 400-year history.

Alumni and faculty often use the archives for anniversary celebrations, reunions and other events, as well as special research projects. School archivist Ms. Valerie Uber says, "As the oldest public school in the nation, [BLS] occupies a unique place

in American education and the archives are a valuable resource to help understand this rich history."

According to Ms. Uber, physical archived items are available to interested people mainly through email requests. Archived materials have been digitally available on the BLS website since 2016.

Ms. Uber has been managing the archives since 2010, taking over from the previous archivist Ms. Cynthia Curtner. "I found the work fascinating and fun," says Ms. Uber. "The chance to learn about the school's history and the 'detective work' of aspects of answering research questions really appealed to me."

BLS began the process of converting archived materials digitally in 2014. The artifacts were digitized through the Boston Public Library program, Library for the Commonwealth, which helps small Massachusetts organizations digitize their archival collections.

The archived collections are held in the Internet Archive, a digital nonprofit library that provides free access to millions of

e-books, movies and websites. It also allows the public to upload and download materials to its vast collection of resources.

Along with Ms. Uber, the advisory committee that facilitated the digitization of the archives included representatives from the BLS History Department, president of the Boston Latin School Association Mr. Peter G. Kelly ('83) and BLS Director of Technology Mr. Patrick Hourigan.

The BLS Archive has digitized copies of the *Liber Actorum*, or the yearbook, of every graduating class from 1933 to 2006. Yearbooks published after 2006 are excluded to protect the privacy of more recent graduates. The BLS Archive has also digitized Issues of the *Register*, the *Argo* and other student publications, dating back as far as the mid-1800s.

The digital archives contain a small number of photographs, prepared with the help of student volunteers Joshua Emokpae (I) and Joseph Pucillo (I).

Digitizing the yearbooks has been particularly useful for alumni returning to celebrate their class reunions at BLS Alumni

Weekend. "Whatever club you were involved in, you can search for your name and see the pages that you're on," says BLS Keefe Librarian Ms. Deeth Ellis. "It really does open up access tremendously for people."

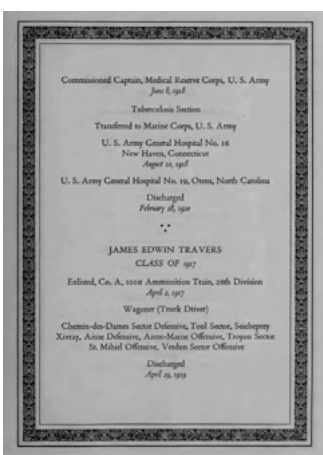
According to Ms. Ellis, the next step for the digital archives is to incorporate the materials into the Digital Commonwealth. Founded in 2006 by the Boston Public Library, the Digital Commonwealth provides access to digitized documents from Massachusetts libraries, museums and other institutions and also works to help organizations create and manage their cultural heritage materials. Items in the Digital Commonwealth can be easily found via Google search.

As the archives continue to grow and modernize — they provide BLS students and faculty, past and present — with the ability to learn about and connect with their school's history. William Liyuan (IV), president of BLS History Club, concludes, "The BLS Archives represent the proud tradition of Boston Latin School's publications and distinctions. Looking back onto the past is essential to growing in the future."

A PRESENTATION OF THE PAST

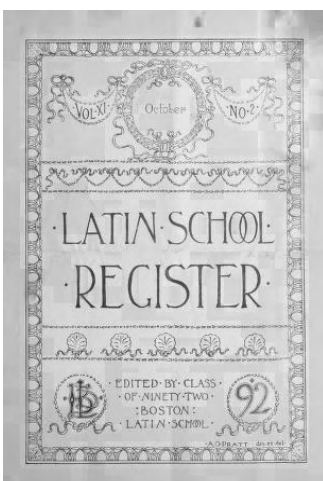


WWI MEMORIAL BOOK



Published in 1925, *The Public Latin School of Boston in the World War: A Roll of Honor* is a commemoration of all BLS students and graduates who served in World War I, listing their full military record in simple terms. The memorial book was placed in the digital archives collection in 2018, and it includes a foreword by Mr. Henry Pennypacker, who was the Head of School from 1910 to 1920. The archives' digitized photograph collection contains memorial photos of John Andrew Doherty (Class of 1912) and Richard Fossett Metcalf (Class of 1917), who both died in battle in 1918. During World War I, 480 BLS alumni and graduates enlisted in the U.S. army and navy.

THE REGISTER



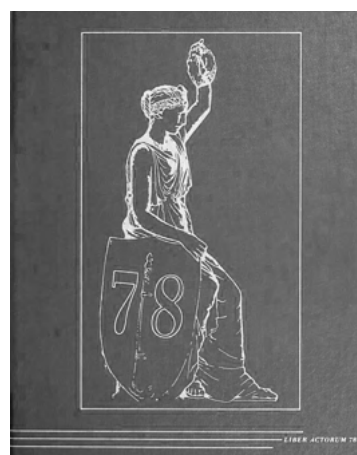
The *Register* is a BLS publication showcasing visual art and poetry made by BLS students. The *Register* got its name from its earliest issues in the late 1800s, which registered news and events related to the school, and included student contributions as well as the editors' articles. The first issue was published in 1881 and featured sports news, a military drill column, various advertisements, poems and a parody of Vergil's *Aeneid*. The *Register* began to focus mainly on student submissions in the 1950s and 1960s. George Santayana (Class of 1882), the famous Spanish-American philosopher and essayist, was a founding member of the *Register*.

DEVELOPING A BLACK MERITOCRACY



Recently digitized, *Developing a Black Meritocracy: A History of Black Graduates of the Boston Latin School* is a book published in 1985 that notes the lack of documentation of the experiences of Black students and reflects upon the hardships and adventures that Black students encounter in Boston schools, specifically at BLS. Despite facing racism generated by the people around him, Parker Bailey (Class of 1877) became the first Black person to ever graduate from BLS. The book follows the journeys of Black students at BLS starting in the late nineteenth century, including Clement Morgan (Class of 1886), who went onto Harvard College, where he befriended American sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois. It also features the history of a lack of acceptance of Black students at BLS, their accomplishments and a list of careers they aspire to take on after attending Latin School and concludes with a record of Black students from 1877 to 1984.

LIBER ACTORUM - 1978



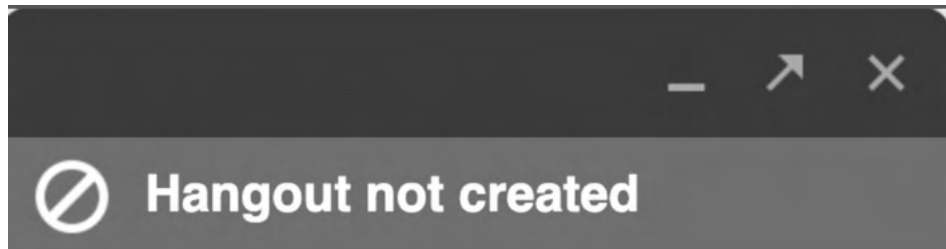
In September 1972, BLS became co-educational, allowing girls to enroll after 337 years of being an all-boys school. The graduating class of 1978 included over 100 female students, such as Laura Soul Brown, the first Black American woman to graduate from BLS. In his departing message on behalf of all the seniors, the class president William Davis wrote, "how far we go depends upon how firmly we have grasped the ideals at BLS and how well we shall put them to use in the furthering of our education. I am sure that the class of 1978 will not let down the school or themselves."

ENGLISH VS. LATIN FOOTBALL POSTER



In 1945, football was one of the only sports offered and the signature sport at BLS. English High became Latin's greatest football rival in 1877, facing off every year on Thanksgiving Day. Due to the academic requirements at BLS, many athletes left the team; some even went to play for English High. In an essay written by John Powers ('66), Tom Bilodeau ('60), a quarterback of the 1958 team, says, "Senior year, seven of the English starters had played for Latin." Thus, the English team knew all of BLS's audibles, or verbal codes used during a game, so it was impossible to win with those. Instead, they called one audible, and played a different one; with this strategy, BLS made an "astounding comeback" that game.

Bring Back Google Chat



You can't create a Hangout with
It may be due to
organization policy settings for Google
Workspace users.

Google

New restrictions prevent students from utilizing Google Chat.

By **Michelle Wang (IV)**
& **Mia White (III)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Frustrations have recently broken out among Boston Latin School students due to an unexpected ban of the Google Chat function in Gmail. Prior to the ban, Google Chat was used by many students as an efficient way to communicate with their peers and teachers before, during and after school.

With countless rumors circulating regarding the ban, Head of School Rachel Skerritt clarifies, "What we saw overwhelmingly was that the Google Chat function was not achieving any academic outcomes but seemed to be the source of significant distraction, as we did look at some Gmail chat exchanges. For various reasons, we saw that a lot of them were happening during the school day during class time [...] and we

didn't find, talking to the faculty, that they were really using that function for any assignment purpose."

Head of School Skerritt highlights a valid claim. High school students, however, should have the right to make decisions on their own account. Removing the platform completely is not fair to students who utilize it maturely and appropriately. If the use of Google Chat distracts a student during class or negatively impacts their academic performance, then they should face their own consequences, whether it be decreasing grades or misdemeanor marks. The whole student body should not have to bear their punishment.

This would also be a good chance for students to get a feel of the "real world." Outside of school, people have the freedom to use resources like Google Chat for good or for ill, but if they overindulge or use them

irresponsibly, people will inevitably face consequences. School is supposed to prepare students for the future. If they are not given the opportunity to learn and grow by self-regulating, then that learning will happen at a time where the stakes may be much higher.

BLS Director of Technology Mr. Patrick Hourigan speaks about another one of the main downsides to Google Chat, saying, "As we strive to provide a safe and welcoming atmosphere for all of our students, there was a small group of students who used [Google Chat] to post content that ran in opposition to these shared community values."

Undoubtedly, we should dedicate all efforts to make the BLS community as safe as possible, as it was only a small portion of students who used the Google Chat function in an irresponsible way. Students who use this function in harmful ways should have this privilege revoked, and others who adhere to community guidelines should still be able to enjoy this privilege.

The majority of the student body views Google Chat as a harmless tool to make communication more accessible among their classmates, especially outside school, where some may not have had other ways to connect with their peers. Everyone has access to a Chromebook, meaning that Google Chat is available to everyone, even outside school.

Although regular email is an option as well, there is a sense of formality that comes with writing and sending emails. Google Chat helped break this formal barrier between students, leading to faster-forming relationships within the community, especially during a time where "some [younger] students are having difficulties forming relationships and being comfortable around

each other," says Tandin Johnson-Ward (I), a peer mentor.

Students who are still unfamiliar with others may not feel comfortable exchanging personal information such as phone numbers. The Google Chat function made it possible for students to effectively communicate about academics without crossing any boundaries.

Furthermore, many students, like Benjamin Davidson (IV), believe that "this ban has sparked a lot of distrust in administration among the student body. Regardless of whether or not we bring Google Chat back, communication between students and administrators should be more transparent. I also wish they would've listened to our opinions first."

Davidson speaks for a lot of students who are frustrated with the current situation. Amid the frustration, however, it is important to keep in mind that there is not one grade that is entirely responsible for the ban. It benefits no one to target rage at a specific group of people, and for the benefit of all, it may have been helpful to disable the function for middle school students who require more monitoring and regulations, but keep it for high school students who deserve more personal freedom.

If Google Chat is brought back with clear usage guidelines as well as repercussions for misuse, the student body will be more than capable of using it in an appropriate and responsible manner. For students who are unable to abide by BLS community values, there should be individual disciplinary action taken. Above all instances of misuse, Google Chat has still proven beneficial to students and the formation of relationships that are the beating heart of our community.

Professionals Make Curricula, Not Parents

By **Selina Tang (II)**
& **Mary Harrington (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

It is not uncommon to hear students complain about their courses and express their displeasure in the school curriculum. Parents have also recently picked up this behavior nationwide as they challenge the content being taught to their children in schools. They have gone as far as to pursue, often successfully, the prohibition of certain material from being taught, such as *The 1619 Project*, a journalistic book that exposes some of the harshest realities and lasting consequences of slavery. Parents should not be given the power to decide school curricula, as they often possess political motivations, do not have the necessary qualifications and drive polarization.

There has been a rise in campaigns against teaching critical race theory (CRT), which covers antiracism and racism's ubiquitous position in our institutions. Similarly, a bill in Florida, which opponents have coined the "Don't Say Gay" bill to limit teachers' ability to discuss sexual orientation and gender identity in the classroom, has become frighteningly popular among parents.

At its core, both of these movements are more complex than dissatisfaction with the material. Dominic Hashem (II) explains that these parents' response is unsurprising as "they are trying to regress the improvements that have been made to history curriculums. [The banning of] CRT and 'Don't Say Gay' bill are both reactionary moves that are another sort of 'white panic moment.'" Many concerned parents are only becoming involved because of the political consequences, rather than a genuine concern about their children's academic future.

Decisions concerning the school curriculum should not be left to parents, as many are not qualified in this field. Most parents have no experience in deciding what should be taught in schools. When they attempt to change the material, it often comes from a place of bias. Their own opinions interfere with what is being taught to their children. Parents should simply support their students as they learn.

Boston Latin School English teacher Ms. Lynn Burke supports this idea, stating that, even as a teacher, her "job as a parent is to make sure my children are safe and respected at school and help them to navigate any challenges that arise."

The people that have and should decide the curriculum are qualified professionals. These experts have earned degrees, received extensive and continuous training and spent immense amounts of time and effort to formulate quality curricula.

Curriculum designs vary among different states and districts, but, ultimately, districts design the curriculum with the assistance of experts. Many experts have years of experience shaping the content they are given, and this is important in the development of material.

Parents may promote not only substandard but also harmful education. The purpose of sending their children to school is not to master trigonometry or Freudian theories, but rather to prepare them to be better citizens for the future. If instructors are forbidden from teaching relevant and critical material, the resulting ignorance will be a significant barrier to the fundamental purpose of school — responsible citizenship.

Teaching children to be mindful citizens is essential among an increasingly polarized nation. Children are not born with prejudices; bigotry and hatred, in



Virginian parents protest against the instruction of critical race theory.

forms such as racism and homophobia, are passed down through community environments, the media and more. As many parents also actively ingrain these problematic mindsets, hatred is accumulated and magnified among each generation. Thus, anti-hate and proper history education are necessary to unlearn these biases. This cannot happen if the people that perpetuate the hatred in the first place are allowed to determine what is taught in schools.

On the other hand, there are still parents who are genuinely interested in changing the curriculum for the better. There must be a balance in which parents do not control the content, but are still included in the discussion. This has been the case for BLS English teacher Mr. Robert Oakes, who explains that "in [my] 25 years of teaching, I have never had a parent interfere with my teaching. To be sure, I've had conversations with parents about the

material, but no one has ever challenged what I am doing in the classroom."

Instead of allowing parents to directly dictate curricula, BLS parents can voice their suggestions in the School Parent Council and School Site Council. For instance, when parents advocated for the return of the eighth-grade science course five years ago, it was initially approved for students to have science class three days out of the six-day rotation. The following year, it was fully incorporated so that they take it every day, allowing them to learn the material more effectively.

Ultimately, the growing retaliation from parents against curriculum being taught in schools is bringing light to the question of whether parents have the right to determine school education. In order to create the most fair and educational material, parents should not be given the reins, but rather, avenues in which they can express their opinions.

Should Students Rely on Caffeine?

Yes, Students Should Rely on Caffeine

By Jolie Bellerand (III)

Contributing Writer

Students across the country understand the exhaustion that comes from a long night of studying, but no one knows it better than Boston Latin School students. With its increasing popularity, caffeine is in just about everything students drink, from their favorite soft drink to a refreshing glass of sweet tea. Due to its effective ability to keep people awake, many have found themselves relying on caffeine to power through their days. Stressed students incorporate caffeine into their schedules as a cruel way to keep their head above water. With the daily stress that BLS places onto its students, caffeinated drinks are, for many, a useful way of navigating school life.

Caffeine is a stimulant that provides much-needed energy boosts. When new students begin to assimilate into BLS life, they quickly learn that not all learning environments are the same. Unfamiliar with the amount of effort and dedication it takes to produce the same quality work they did at their former schools, students feel overworked and tired.

Students who consume caffeine can give themselves more energy to stay up and finish school work to the best of their ability while juggling other activities, like sports or jobs. When they are more energized and productive, their stress levels decrease. Caffeine supplies students with a form of aid that is essential to maintaining good mental health.

BLS students are constantly held to a high standard of academic performance, leading to pressure to perform well. Caffeine combats this draining effect. Since caffeine is performance-enhancing, students feel solace when they have caffeine up their sleeve as a tool for getting by, decreasing the risk of feeling overwhelmed by work. Reducing stress is important when the school environment already produces so much of it.

When asked about how caffeine affects her school life, Carine Badawi (I) recounts, “On days where I have tests, I definitely feel as though my testing performance increases because I’m overall in a better mood.” Many, like Badawi, feel the positive effects that caffeine has to offer and use it to their advantage.

Drinking caffeine improves memory, cognitive thinking, and in turn, productivity. Being able to recall information more easily results in students doing better on tests and quizzes. This increases their grades and overall performance at BLS, because always being on high alert helps to overcome the pressure from school.

The productivity boost provides a way to deal with the massive workload BLS pushes onto its students as enhanced concentration helps assignments get done quicker. “Drink a cup of joe and you’ll remember more things from meetings, solve problems faster and be able to focus on (and complete) tasks more productively throughout the day,” states an article from the *Entrepreneur*.

While reliance on caffeine can cause students to become addicted to the substance, students reap a lot of benefits and can avoid this problem with moderation. Caffeine is a tool; it should clearly not be a lifeboat — overdependence on anything is never good. Students seeking the benefits of caffeine can only do so through mindful use.

Ultimately, caffeine has a lot to offer struggling students. It positively supports people in all aspects of life. Academic life is full of daily stressors, and if students can find a good strategy to shoulder that, it should not be discouraged.



No, Students Should Not Rely on Caffeine

By Catherine Wang (II)

Staff Writer

Caffeine has long been a staple of many Americans’ morning routine. A rich cup of coffee poured into a ceramic mug gives most people the extra burst of energy needed to get out the door in the morning. In addition to the classic cup of coffee, a greater variety of energy beverages came into the marketplace, including 5-hour Energy and Red Bull, as well as an array of specialty coffees, all of which have contributed to the long-running caffeine craze.

With a surge of caffeine addicts over the last century, America is literally “running on Dunkin’” — and so are many Boston Latin School students. Though caffeine is key to many students’ ability to get through the day, the long-term effects are detrimental to one’s health, and the benefits are short-lived.

Caffeine can stunt growth of a maturing adolescent brain, exacerbate feelings of anxiety and even worsen pre-existing medical conditions. It can also cause students to lose much-needed sleep, in turn affecting their overall health. As young adults undergo growth, it is crucial for them to maintain a balanced routine and develop healthy habits. They should not need to rely on their daily dose of caffeine to get through the day.

Teenagers are especially susceptible to caffeine trends; caffeine is an addictive drug that is easy to become dependent on, especially with the now-popularized aesthetic of the beverages in cute plastic cups. A huge factor of why teenagers are drawn to caffeinated beverages is due to the successful marketing of several coffee companies such as Starbucks, whose themed drinks and pretty toppings are especially appealing.

Though caffeine has risen to popularity around the world, Americans tend to abuse the substance. According to healthresearchfunding.org, 68 million Americans drink at least three cups of coffee every day. About 75 percent of Americans who regularly consume caffeine are addicted, meaning that they will experience withdrawals from the substance if they do not get their daily intake. This is not healthy, and as most of those who consume it will likely admit, they’d be better off trying to maintain a strong sleep schedule and other self-care steps.

The drug confuses the body’s chemical balance by blocking adenosine receptors in the brain, which prevents one from falling asleep. Caffeine also impacts our circadian rhythm by affecting melatonin, which confuses our biological clock. For students with developing bodies, this is detrimental as it may cause us to lag behind in our daily responsibilities and cause the body to slowly deteriorate. It is important, therefore, to maintain a balance, because it grounds us in reality and allows us to be the most productive, healthy version of ourselves.

Caffeine also causes a jittery sensation, making its consumer anxious and sweaty by activating the fight-or-flight response in the body, known as the sympathetic nervous system. In the long-term, the sensation can increase baseline anxiety and the likelihood of panic attacks.

A long-term caffeine addiction will ultimately result in an immunity to its benefits, rendering it ineffective over a longer span of time and leaving an addict with all of the health perils and none of the short-term energy boosts.

Caffeine, like most things, should be taken in moderation. At times, caffeine can give you energy when you need it most, but a habitual caffeine addiction will eventually lead to severe health impacts. It is important to know your body and remain aware of your consumption habits, making for a healthier and more ethical body and world. Instead of reaching for a Red Bull next time you’re thinking about pulling an all-nighter, students should consider caffeine’s potential adverse effects.

Media Monopolies Manipulate Their Users

By Hannah Stoll (IV)

& Thomas Oakes (IV)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

The emergence of powerful media monoliths such as *Facebook* and *Spotify* has proved to be a threat to consumers. These monopolies will always have an excess of influence over consumers. When a single company controls so many crucial media sites without sufficient regulation, it has the full and unrestrained power to manipulate user information and curate the content which users consume, shaping their ideas and values.

Maya Nelson (II) echoes these concerns, saying, “when a media company has so much power, they can drown out other perspectives and use their immense power to perpetuate one particular narrative.”

An example of this is *Facebook*, recently rebranded as *Meta*. *Meta* has infamously acquired *Instagram*, *WhatsApp* and *Oculus*, platforms that cover social media, private messaging and video game headsets, respectively. There are 2.8 billion

people who use *Facebook* each month, and many rely on this platform as well as *Instagram* and *WhatsApp* to receive essential information on a daily basis. According to a study from the Pew Research Center 2021, about 69 percent of adults in the United States use *Facebook*, and seven out of ten of those people log in on a daily basis for news.

Facebook also has full control over the algorithms that determine which news stories get buried and which ones are amplified onto page after page of almost all social media sites. This puts Americans who get their information mainly from *Facebook* and all of its associated social media sites at the mercy of the company alone to determine what news stories they can access easily.

In some ways, new technologies have lessened media monopolies. Platforms such as *Twitter*, *TikTok*, *Discord* and *Telegram* provide competition in the social media market. The growth of streaming platforms such as *Netflix*, *Disney+*, *Hulu* and *HBO Max* has ended the reign of powerful television giants, making communication and the consumption of content

and news far more accessible.

Despite this, large companies have sought to constantly expand, forming new business contracts and merging with other popular entities. This leaves many with no other option than to subscribe to them. Moreover, it inspires the concern that when entrusted with too much power, the companies will focus on monetary gain at the expense of quality information and games.

Spotify is another company eyeing expansion, looking to completely dominate music, podcasts and audiobooks. In response to their refusal to end their 100 million dollar contract with Joe Rogan, a popular podcaster who used racial slurs and was accused of spreading misinformation, some say having complete control will decrease quality. Vivian Hamwey (IV) explains, “when there’s no other competition, that means they’ll have no incentive to make the experience better for users or improve at all because they’ll already be on top. There’s no accountability.”

Recently, *The New York Times* (NYT) acquired *Wordle*, a wildly popular online game that prompts players to guess a new

five-letter word every day. This immediately led to an outcry of concerns that *Wordle* would go behind a paywall in an attempt to drive up subscriptions and business for the company. “If they put it behind a paywall, the fact that people would have to subscribe shows how effective a strategy it is,” says Sydney Quimby (IV), a student who regularly plays *Wordle*.

Acquiring *Wordle* is part of the NYT’s bigger plan to become a crucial subscription for people to interact with the world. A single company becoming the only way for millions of people to get the information they need and play games they love, however, is a troubling prospect.

For years, it has been an accepted orthodoxy that competition drives innovation, which is certainly correct, as it motivates companies to improve. Media monopolies are antithetical to that value and cannot be trusted with the power they currently possess. Media companies should not seek to expand or dominate, but instead recognize that the media climate is best for all involved when there is competition and a multitude of options.

A Reckoning on America Abroad



Vietnam Veterans protest the very war they fought in.

By Jack Trapanick (I)

Head Editor

In the past half-century, the once-fringe movements that demanded reckoning with ugly parts of domestic American history have steadily become more mainstream. Though still in progress and met with significant backlash, the process of painting a more accurate picture of American history has helped millions of students grow conscious of the sickening injustices their government has committed — within its borders, at least — and in turn face the descendants of those injustices today.

America's historical reckoning, though unfinished and much challenged, has come and this time it is here to stay within the national consciousness. Problem is, there has long been a gaping hole in this new and more critical portrait of America: the crimes of its empire abroad.

History courses and mainstream liberal culture have rightfully put domestic injustices like Jim Crow into focus, and eagerly discuss those global atrocities unconnected to the United States, like the Gulags of Soviet Russia. At the same time, our foreign abuses go almost entirely neglected.

The narrative prevails that, while the U.S. has sometimes engaged in questionable enterprises abroad, it has ultimately served as a force for democracy and good. More well-known instances in which this has not been the case, such as the U.S.-orchestrated coups in Latin America, are always seen as deviations — *not* the norm — even if they actually comprise the majority of American interventions. America's great enemies, from Russia to China and Iran, are painted as the real evil-doers; since America is opposed to them, it in turn, must be the virtuous one.

In fact, a simple look at American dealings abroad shows that the U.S. has often been one of the greatest forces *against* democracy around the world, particularly during the Cold War era from 1946 to 1991.

The following countries have had democratically elected leaders overthrown as a result of American intervention: Mexico, Iran, Guatemala, Republic of Congo, Brazil, Indonesia, Chile and Argentina.

Autocrats directly supported by the American government ruled the following countries: Cuba (1950s), Greece, South Korea, South Vietnam, Bolivia (1970s), Chad, Saudi Arabia, Nicaragua (early 1900s), Iraq (1980s) and Cambodia — in addition to every country on the list just above.

The Central Intelligence Agency has targeted the following countries in an attempt to overthrow or assassinate their leaders: Syria (1950s), Cuba (1958-present), Nicaragua (1980s) and occupied Palestine. Remember, these lists are incomplete.

While few Americans are educated on these gross injustices, the global population largely recognizes the threat America has historically and often continues to pose toward them. The Alliance for Democracy, which runs what it describes as “the world's largest annual study on how people perceive democracy,” found that among what people worldwide perceive as the greatest threat to democracy in 2021, “U.S. influence” ranked

number five, surpassing both Russia and China, with a 44 percent consensus that it poses a threat.

Though completely contrary to the narrative Americans generally subscribe to, this perception is rooted in the U.S.' hegemonic presence over the international arena. Even if the U.S.' foreign policy has better moral foundations than those of its adversaries, namely Russia and China (which cannot be taken for granted; either way, no interpretation of the facts could support an assessment of U.S. foreign policy as fundamentally moral), the sheer influence and power the U.S. has to unilaterally assert and advance its own interests easily explains the feeling of mistrust many evidently feel.

When the U.S. is unhappy with the policy of less developed countries, it only needs to draw on its immense financial power to coerce them in a more pro-American direction. It often issues wide-ranging, unilateral sanctions against such states, cutting them off from the international economy with the goal of pushing the common people into such misery and distress that the ruling regime will be forced to comply with America's wishes.

Of course, it is important to note that sanctions can be used ethically: there is a clear difference between targeted sanctions designed to hurt culpable parties and institutions, and broad sanctions specifically engineered to cause pain to the population at large. The U.S. has engaged in both, and sometimes does use them to sincerely deter criminal behavior, for example, the recent ones on Russian leaders. The U.S., however, should limit itself to targeted sanctions that promote human rights and democracy and not military domination and corporate power.

The American public, nonetheless, largely accepts both kinds of sanctions as an unfortunate but necessary tool for bringing democracy, even though forcing economic pain onto innocent people is in reality unethical and unacceptable. The U.S. claims to use sanctions to advance democracy, but often only punishes anti-democratic countries by undermining its people's well-being, usually with the less high-minded goal of punishing disobedience, for instance, with Cuba and Iran. When it is beneficial to its corporations and the military, it zealously partners with anti-democratic countries. Meanwhile, broad and aggressive sanctions breed the extremism the U.S. claims to care so much about preventing and, crucially, use civilian suffering as a tool for pursuing political aims. When our enemies do this, we call it terrorism.

One concerning example of problematic sanctions is Venezuela. While a recent study by the Sanctions and Security Project demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of the Venezuelan people align with

the U.S. in their disapproval of the dictatorial president Nicolás Maduro, they soundly reject the broad American sanctions levied against their country, intended to punish and end Maduro's reign.

An estimate of 76 percent of Venezuelans oppose them, and 62 percent say the sanctions have had direct negative impacts on them. And we can only sympathize with their opposition. The sanctions were widened in 2019 in ways that observers like Amnesty International warned would sabotage an already abysmal humanitarian situation, which has caused the flight of millions of refugees and massive inflation. Over three quarters of the population lives in extreme poverty, according to the Council on Foreign Relations. Sanctions like these are not just.

The U.S. dominates the world even more in the military arena. It spends vastly more on its military than any other nation — more than the next 11 countries *combined* — and has over 700 military bases stationed around the world (as compared with Russia, with fewer than 20, and China, which only established its first military base abroad in 2017). The U.S. holds a long history of invading countries that posed no genuine threat to the safety of its people — for example, Vietnam, Panama, Grenada, Iraq, Cambodia and the Dominican Republic, in just the last 70 years.

Today the U.S. still plays a crucial role in lending political support, international legitimacy and massive amounts of arms to autocracies around the globe, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey (only nominally democratic), the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Pakistan and Morocco. The U.S. further lends such crucial support to countries with grim human rights records, like Israel (which is guilty of violating international law on multiple occasions ranging from an apartheid system to illegal settlements), the Philippines (whose president is currently under investigation for crimes against humanity), Honduras and Colombia. Mainstream liberals who bewail former President Donald Trump's penchant for cruel dictators remain utterly silent on the critical monetary and weapons support that Trump, Joe Biden, Barack Obama, George W. Bush and other presidents give to other abusive regimes. This amounts to far more than whatever rash praise Trump heaps on accepted American enemies. Perhaps such critics should clarify that Trump's mistake is liking the *wrong* dictators — that is, ones who do not promote

“In fact, a simple look at American dealings abroad shows that the U.S. has often been one of the greatest forces *against* democracy around the world.”

American military and corporate interests. With other dictators, there is apparently no problem.

The Biden administration, of course, continuing longstanding practices, has resisted various calls to condemn those countries' abuses, cease support for them or at the very least, to condition support on improvements in their upkeep of human rights. Do these actions point to the U.S. as a force for democracy, or indeed, as something else?

It is perhaps the unmatched power of the U.S.

to advance its own strategic interests over the interest of general human welfare that has led so many to take on a perception of our country as threatening global democracy, more so than the American-designated villains of the world stage, Russia and China. To be sure, those countries' governments are immoral, and without a doubt they execute policies that cause serious, hideous suffering within their borders and in many places around the world, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We should condemn and oppose their evildoings however we can.

Americans, nonetheless, should also take into account that neither of those countries comes close to rivaling the power the U.S. currently has in many different parts of the international realm. If the U.S. frequently uses its immense international power in ways that also cause serious suffering, we are morally bound to acknowledge this and call its abuses to account. It is wrong to commit more energy to opposing the crimes of foreign countries than those of the one country we have the greatest power of all to influence: our own. Real moral authority does not come from looking on our own evils with mere unease while passionately decrying the evils of “those people over there.”

Lock Down Loot Boxes

By Neil Jin (III)
Contributing Writer

Even if you have not played video games themselves, you have probably heard of the loot boxes within them. Disguised as crates, pulls or chests, people spend up to thousands of dollars for the chance of getting unique characters or weapons in a video game. Although loot boxes are a good monetization strategy for video game companies, they should be banned because of the dangers they pose to players.

Some games implement loot boxes as a way to stay free-to-play on the surface, while still reining in profits from players. Many games with loot boxes are free and do not require money to play for a short amount of time, but eventually there will be a wall where it will be almost impossible to progress without buying a loot box. In-game tools and other mechanics that make the game a lot easier are locked behind these expensive loot boxes. For many who have already spent countless hours playing the game, they would buy the loot box. With each update of the game, more items are added to the loot boxes, continuing this cycle.

These loot boxes, however, have become detrimental to people's mental health. Similar to gambling, when gamers buy them and lose (that is, by not getting the rewards they hoped for), they feel that they have lost something valuable. A feedback loop is created as they want to continue gambling or buying more loot boxes until they get their desired outcome.

In fact, *ScienceDaily* has found that gambling activates the same areas of the brain that drugs and alcohol does. Aidan Ormsby (III), a member of the Boston Latin School Video Game Club, recounts, "In a [*Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*] loot box, you can open items that are worth real money because you can trade them with other users. Some of the rarest things in boxes can literally be worth thousands of dollars." In this way, video games aggressively encourage their players to buy loot boxes in the hope that they will win an imaginary lottery to make an abundance of money.

The fact that there are no age restrictions on most video games worsens the impacts of loot boxes. Often, children are not mature enough to make good financial decisions. When coupled with the suggestive nature of these games to buy more loot crates for rare things, many children give in and spend hundreds of dollars on these games. This starts the cycle of gambling and becomes even more problematic as these same games are being marketed to children with friendly cartoon characters.

It's no surprise that many video game companies are using loot boxes as a way to earn money. According to *Statista*, video game companies made 15 billion dollars from loot boxes in 2020 alone, and it is projected to grow to 20 billion dollars by 2025. William Liyuan (IV) notes that loot boxes are able to "compensate the creators while providing added benefits to players in game."

Some argue that video game



Loot boxes in *Overwatch* entice players to gamble for new skins.

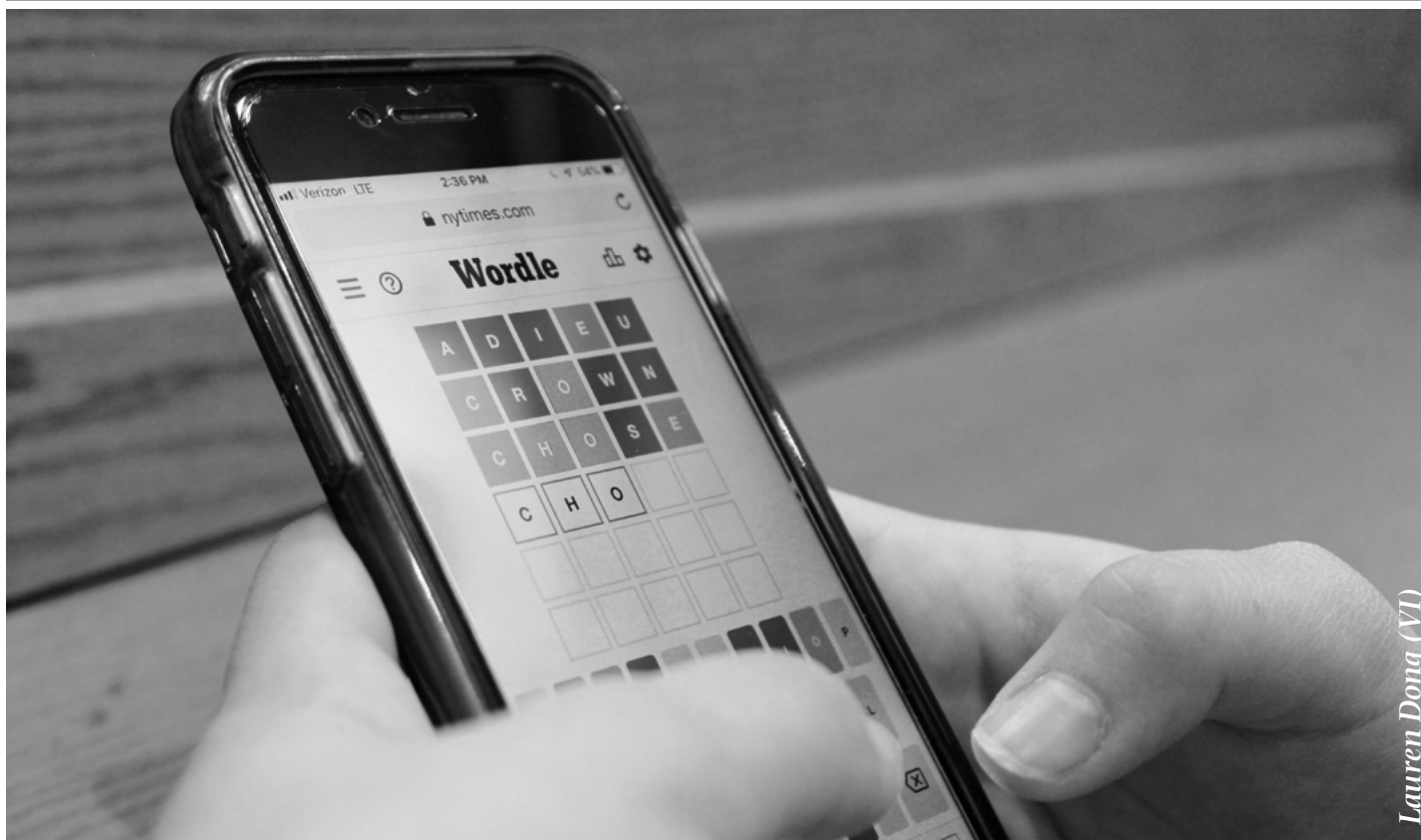
companies can try to regulate loot boxes by putting up age restrictions, the same way that casinos are age-restricted. Regulation, however, is almost impossible online since people can easily fabricate their birthday or ID. Without being able to effectively identify people's age, these age restrictions are useless.

Video game companies, however, still need to make money in order to stay afloat. Many already use advertisements. Instead of making the user pay for rewards, other companies pay the video game developers to put advertisements in their game. While ads can become menacing and create a negative reputation for the game when they become excessive and unable to be skipped, they are still necessary for video games to continue being available to all consumers.

In place of the functions offered by these loot boxes, users can get paid DLCs, or downloadable content. DLCs are extra content available to players, but more importantly, they aren't needed. DLCs can be anything from an original soundtrack to extra game missions. Bryan Ferreira (III) suggests that companies could consider adopting "skins and other [cosmetics]" that do not affect [gameplay mechanics]. Cosmetics ensure that nothing is locked behind a paywall and things bought don't provide any advantage that would "force" people into buying loot boxes.

Video games, a major source of entertainment among today's youth, should remain a fun and accessible activity. Video game companies do not need to turn a carefree pastime into another pro-profit tactic.

Hop on the *Wordle* Bandwagon



Students are able to enjoy *Wordle* on their phones and computers every day.

By Fiona Yuan (III)
& Amy Cui (III)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

The rules of the game are simple: six guesses, five letters, one word. *Wordle*, first launched in October 2021 by Josh Wardle, has become an internet sensation with millions of players attempting the daily challenge. With *The New York Times'* recent acquisition of the game and its growing popularity among people of all ages, *Wordle's* success suggests that people should implement more cognitive games into their daily lives.

Wordle, along with other brain

games, acts as an effective escape and a moment to reset and de-stress while one directs all focus to the simple yet stimulating task at hand. *Wordle's* instantaneous feedback for guesses and its "sense of scarcity," with only one puzzle per day, keeps players coming back for more, leading to habitual playing. Boston Latin School Classics teacher Mr. Salvatore Bartoloma explains, "*Wordle* has become part of my morning routine. Once I feel like my brain is awake, it's time to play. I have been playing in English, Italian and Latin, and each requires me to change gears and adapt to the patterns of each language. It is a fantastic way to start

my cognitive day."

Despite its low-key character, *Wordle* continues to be highly interactive accessible common ground. Mr. Bartoloma continues, "[*Wordle*] has created some new text threads with family and friends." Social interaction has increased as teachers and students are able to connect over the daily *Wordle*.

According to Dr. Douglas Scharre, a neurologist and director of the Center for Cognitive and Memory Disorders at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, puzzles and games involving new and original parts stimulate key parts of the brain

such as logical reasoning, language and attention spans. Playing cognitive games also improves memory and recall, as well as promotes a better way to utilize time instead of mindlessly scrolling through social media. The more one stimulates one's brain, the more opportunities the brain has to create new pathways to develop.

If you are looking for something more time-consuming or rigorous, consider trying out other cognitive games such as chess or Sudoku on top of the daily *Wordle*. Although Sudoku deals with numbers and chess with battle strategy, both cognitive games are great to challenge and exercise your brain. These games rely heavily on memory, problem-solving and strategic thinking.

Zach Chen (III), an avid chess player, explains, "*Wordle* players should consider chess because not only does it have the logical component of *Wordle*, but also has multifaceted strategies, a time component and a player base you can connect with." Playing chess also comes with its own community and websites, similar to *Wordle's* large social media base.

Through predicting the opponent's moves and considering one's own moves, learning chess fosters greater self-awareness and empathy. One is constantly predicting future moves and how the opponent may react, so they are forced to view the board from both their own and their opponent's perspectives.

Brain games are great for eager thinkers who want a quick pick-me-up. The next time you find yourself with idle time, why not try it? Miss the *Wordle* today — there's always another tomorrow.

BLS Musicians Impress in Noteworthy Scholars Contest



The Boston Saxophone Quartet appears with the Noteworthy Scholar Finalists.

By **Eliza Duff-Wender (II)**
& **Bryanna Upton (II)**
Contributing Writers

One of Boston Latin School's most recent musical triumphs came from three students' performances at the Noteworthy Scholars Competition. This music composition contest ended with a showcase of the finalists' pieces by the Boston Saxophone Quartet (BSQ), who then chose a winner to kick off the new year.

The competition, open to all Boston Public Schools students, re-

quired competitors to create an original composition or modify an existing piece, both of which should be able to be performed by BSQ's four saxophonists. Three BLS students, Elliot Bruntrager (I), Lyrik Fulton (I) and Michael Lee (I), were named as finalists after the first elimination round. BSQ then premiered their pieces at Boston First Night 2022 on December 31, 2021. After this final round, Lee was declared winner and awarded a 100-dollar scholarship.

As a classwork assignment, all students in music theory classes at BLS began composing pieces for the

competition and were encouraged to submit their projects. Ultimately, Bruntrager, Fulton and Lee completed their pieces and entered the contest. All three students were selected as finalists and declared 2021 Noteworthy Scholars.

The composers' accomplishments attest to the impressive programs taught by the BLS Music Department. BLS chorus director and music theory teacher Mr. Ryan Snyder reflects, "Unfortunately, not all schools have music composition classes, [and] we are lucky to have two levels of music theory at BLS."

Bruntrager, one of BLS's finalists in the competition, taught himself the guitar and piano around 2019 and is taking AP Music Theory, where he learned about the contest. He discusses the difficulty of the competition, saying, "It definitely wasn't as easy as I thought it would be. [...] My piece was not an original piece; it was a medley of two pre-existing pieces, and it was still really difficult to get all of the timing right." The medley was a combination of two *Pokémon* songs, which younger audiences can be enthusiastic about. "There was a lot of nostalgia and childhood memories associated with those songs," adds Bruntrager.

Lee, who won the competition, also arranged a song derived from popular media. He chose to modify the theme song of the anime series *My Hero Academia*, which he had just finished watching when he began his project. Lee has long been involved in BLS's music program, and he began playing the trombone in seventh grade. He has taught himself to play other instruments as well and although he was reluctant to participate with first, Lee completed the project at the encouragement of Mr. Snyder and fellow competitors. He says, "The most challenging thing might have been writing music parts for instruments I had never played in a clef I had just learned." Despite these difficulties, Lee's dedication and musical past enabled him to arrange a prize-winning piece.

The talent of these young musicians exhibits that BLS, although known primarily for academic prestige, also values and fosters artistic creativity. BLS is host to many visual and performing art classes and programs, and like the three Noteworthy Scholar Competition finalists, students are encouraged to explore these opportunities.

Napoleon Jones-Henderson Honors Black History in Art

By **Rachel Roncka (I)**
& **Yongyu Qiu (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Contemporary art provides opportunities to reflect on the complex issues that shape our world and society. Many contemporary artists also tend to explore their cultural and personal identity through their works, and Roxbury's Napoleon Jones-Henderson is no exception.

On February 17, Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) unveiled Jones-Henderson's latest exhibit, *Napoleon Jones-Henderson: I Am As I Am — A Man*. The ICA allows the public to appreciate contemporary art through such exhibitions and gain insight into the artist's creative process. On display until July 24, Jones-Henderson's exhibition showcases the vibrancy of Black culture by embracing themes of Pan-Africanism and racial justice.

Jones-Henderson's experience in the arts is truly global. After attending the Sorbonne Student Continuum Student and Artists Center in Paris, Jones-Henderson continued to develop his artistic abilities at universities in Chicago and Maryland. His creative education, however, could not be contained by classroom walls. As he continued to pursue traditional instruction, he also immersed himself in the Chicago Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and '70s. During this period of artistic and literary innovation, Jones-Henderson and other artists sought to bring change through visual arts and affirm the philosophy of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement.

To this day, Jones-Henderson is a member of the Chicago-based artists' collective, African Com-



Mel Taing

See pieces like *TCB* (1970) above until July 24!

mune of Bad Relevant Artists. The group was founded in 1968 and has since used their art to unify the Black community and garner awareness for serious issues. Jones-Henderson himself has contributed numerous woven tapestries to the organization's collection, some of which are now on display in his new exhibition.

The walls of the *I Am As I Am — A Man* exhibit are adorned in maps, tapestries and mosaics. Various sculptures sit atop pedestals throughout its multicolored rooms. Jones-Henderson's work spans

many different mediums and materials, but the intent behind each piece is the same: to elevate the Black experience as told through his own unique voice. Words are an important component in his artworks and can be seen scattered throughout many of his pieces. Each piece tells a story through different textures and shapes, including a layered sculpture dedicated to esteemed activist and writer James Baldwin. This piece is one installment in a series called *Requiem for Our Ancestors*, which seeks to highlight the revolutionary achievements of African American historical figures.

The movements and organizations Jones-Henderson took part in recognized the lack of positive portrayals of Black people in arts and media, and he has dedicated his career to filling this void. In order to achieve this, he sought to use bright and vibrant "Kool-Aid" colors to depict Black people experiencing and creating joy in all its dimensions. Such colors, Jones-Henderson claims, help "people move themselves to a better place."

Boston Latin School student Ada Wu (II) comments, "Jones-Henderson has a powerful message, and he reflects that perfectly through his vibrant soulful artwork. He is an extremely inspirational figure — I am in awe of his art."

Jones-Henderson has been transporting his viewers in this way for years, creating pieces that amplify and celebrate Black culture. In a featurette for the ICA website, he reflects on the decades-long career that led him to open his first exhibit at the museum, commenting, "I get up everyday in the pursuit of making another contribution of a positive image that elevates and affirms the humanity of African people and, by extension, the humanity of all people."

Improv Invigorates With *The People vs. Cameron Elwell*

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

Contributing Writers

On January 28, students and faculty had the opportunity to view Boston Latin School's improvisational theatre group, the Yellow Submarine Improv Troupe, at their winter show, *The People vs. Cameron Elwell*. This performance was directed by Cameron Elwell (I) and Ash Albert (II), who are seasoned members of the BLS theatre community. The troupe presented a performance that drew the audience in from start to finish with witty jokes and interactive experiences.

Differing from the Theatre Department's usual productions of plays and musicals, the troupe performed a series of improvisational games with multiple scenes. Each scene presented comedic scenarios made up on the spot, which created an unconventional acting environment. The co-captains worked in tandem to pull together ideas for the program. Elwell says, "[They] have a lot of fun with it. [...] We try to come up with ideas that are not only funny, but also clever and unique."

The title of the show, *The People vs. Cameron Elwell*, stemmed from an opening skit about Elwell's trial, where he was accused of stealing a train. The co-captains walked out on stage, and after introducing themselves, Albert accused Elwell of stealing a Green Line car and asked the audience whether Elwell deserved to live. He then "died," and the show officially began. The opening skit of each show was different, creating a variety for each performance.

Although improvisors rotate and change games, the shows are structured



Mary Bosch (II)

Yellow Submarine Improv Troupe says, "Yes, and..."

similarly throughout the year. Elwell explains, "For many of the people in the audience, the people on stage are their friends." This allows for a deeper performer-audience relationship. The sense of familiarity that the troupe provides is what makes their shows so interesting to watch.

One of the most enticing games was *Interrupting Monologues*, where improvisors were given monologues to perform, with specific themes chosen by the

audience. The catch is that they interrupt each other, resulting in messy and enjoyable content. With themes ranging from trains to *Fortnite*, anything was fair game.

Later on, a game consisted of improvisors giving advice to audience members. Each improvisor, however, had to connect each piece of advice to a central, wacky theme. Students received interesting advice on various topics, including how to fix a broken backpack and how to reunite their divorced parents. Sarah Huff

(IV) comments, "It was funny, really funny." Audience members from all grades enjoyed these improv games as each brought a new, engaging aspect.

All in all, the troupe did a phenomenal job of capturing the audience's attention with their clever humor and games. They put forth an impressive amount of effort and never failed to gain laughs and applause from the audience. In the words of Carmine Laudato (III), the show was "fast-paced, interactive, banana."

Artist Spotlight: Kento Lind (III)



Lily Huynh (III)

By **Maddie Murphy (I)**
& **Mai Babila-Weigmann (II)**

Contributing Writers

Congratulations to Kento Lind (III) for recently being selected for the Massachusetts Music Educators Association's (MMEA) All-State Music Festival as a viola player! Lind is a member of the BLS Concert String Orchestra and has been playing the viola for nearly ten years. The All-State Music Festival took place on March 5 at the Symphony Hall in Downtown Boston.

The MMEA All-State Music Festi-

val is an event where talented musicians come together to perform. They are selected to participate after auditioning for the spot. Lind is no stranger to these types of auditions, and to prepare, he practices extensively. He was not surprised when he got in, explaining that it was "somewhat expected because when you work really hard and know that you did well in an audition, you're sure that you'll get in. It's more of a shock to not get accepted."

The auditioning process, however, was a challenging experience for Lind. He struggled with balancing his school responsibilities and musical ambitions. Due to the ongoing pandemic, this year's audi-

tions were held virtually, and every musician had to send in a video from home for evaluation. Although COVID-19 has surely taken its toll on musicians, the All-State Music Festival was held in person this year.

Beyond the viola, Lind's devotion to music has manifested in other forms. He is able to play several other instruments including the piano, guitar, ukulele, clarinet and the drums. Lind is also a hip-hop and contemporary dancer, and he believes that the freedom he gets from moving his body has allowed him to open up when playing viola.

Although Lind largely plays for the fun of it, he is also driven by the prospect

of improving himself. As Lind puts it, "I'm also determined to get better as a way to represent myself." A musician's relationship with their music is deeply personal, and different for every player. Lind is mainly self-driven, and his mistakes motivate him to continually improve.

For newcomers in the music world, Lind advises, "Learn as much as you can, and do as much as you can. A teacher can only take you so far, so you need to put in the work to get anything good out of it." Lind believes that music-playing is beneficial and that people should explore it for all that it offers. He also prescribes dedication and patience to those who are just starting out. Too many new musicians fall victim to a lackadaisical practicing schedule, allowing their leniency to reign over their progress. Maintaining passion is especially important after developing a strong technical foundation.

Every seasoned musician experiences a few bumps in their musical journey, and Lind is no exception. Learning an instrument is no easy feat, but he believes in the importance of knowing your boundaries. He thinks that one should decide on their priorities, such as whether they will play music occasionally for amusement or frequently for mastery. Not everyone plays to be perfect, and not everyone plays to be fulfilled. For Lind, the most rewarding aspect of the viola is being able to play it well.

Looking to the future, Lind plans to continue to play his viola. He also hopes to extend his musical capabilities into the jazz realm by learning to play a jazz instrument. Lind has no plans of playing viola professionally, but he is excited for any musical opportunities that may come his way.



How can I convince my parents to get a dog? - Mia & Rose

Buongiorno Mia & Rose.

Convincing your parents to get a dog may seem like a challenge, but we assure you that with our help, you'll have a puppy in no time.

First of all, before you begin any of your plans to convince them, it is essential that you do your research. After deciding which dog you are interested in and taking on its entire personality, we think that the next best course of action would be to pretend as if you are this dog. What better way is there to convince your parents than giving them some hands-on experience?

Show your parents the good life. Fetch the newspaper in the morning (even if it means searching for the news site on a laptop), bark when the mailman arrives and run around the room for no apparent reason.

If all else fails, we think that a rendition of "I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas" with "dog" instead of "hippo" and replacing "Christmas" with your personal choice will do the trick. Hopefully, our sage advice will work for you. Good luck!

Hi Kelsey and Maggie,
I am wondering if you have any advice for sixies who juggle a lot of extracurriculars?
- The Juggler

Aloha The Juggler,
We'd really like to help you, but neither of us knows how to juggle extracurriculars. (We didn't even know they could be physical objects?!)

We can give you some advice, however, for juggling things like oranges and bowling pins!

- Once you throw something, try to catch it as it falls.
- Start with something, like perhaps a sack of rice.
- As you begin to add more objects, make sure you have the time to practice and the space to properly toss your chosen items.
- Finally, wow your friends and family with your incredible juggling skills, but be sure not to let the hobby consume you. Making time for things such as sleep and school is essential.

Juggling can be a difficult task, especially if you are new to the sport. Likewise, as a sixie at Boston Latin School, juggling extracurriculars is difficult, since you must adjust to a new school and grow your time management skills. Our best advice is to love the extracurriculars you participate in, but step back if you feel your load is too heavy. Good luck trying to juggle your extracurriculars, and we hope that this advice comes in handy (haha, get it?).

In the past six years at BLS, I've never felt as swamped with work and unmotivated as I do so far this term. Now that I've gotten in all my college apps, I have no drive to do any of my school work, and Procrastination has become my middle name. HELP! How do I get back to caring about my classes and making each torturous minute of learning engaging and interesting again? - Burnt Out

Hey Burnt Out,

As fellow seniors, we completely understand where you're coming from. After swamping through Terms 1 and 2, it is often difficult to find the motivation to do anything at all, never mind school work. Early-onset senioritis is a real threat, and as time drags on, it only becomes more severe.

Our personal recommendation is to stream "Face Off" by Tech N9ne. More specifically, listen to Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson's lines: "It's about drive, it's about power. We stay hungry, we devour. Put in the work, put in the hours, and take what's ours (ahoo)." This will surely get you motivated again, if not also a little frightened.

After doing this, you could change your middle name to "Productive." You will have the drive, hence, power, and your middle name won't be Procrastination!

We think we hit the nail on the head with our response, but maybe a little visualization is better? It's five months later, the summer break before college. You're at the beach with friends, but deep down, you just wish you had watched that TedX video on statistical analysis. If you work hard now, you'll never have to feel like this.

BLS Argo Presents...

MARCH CROSSWORD



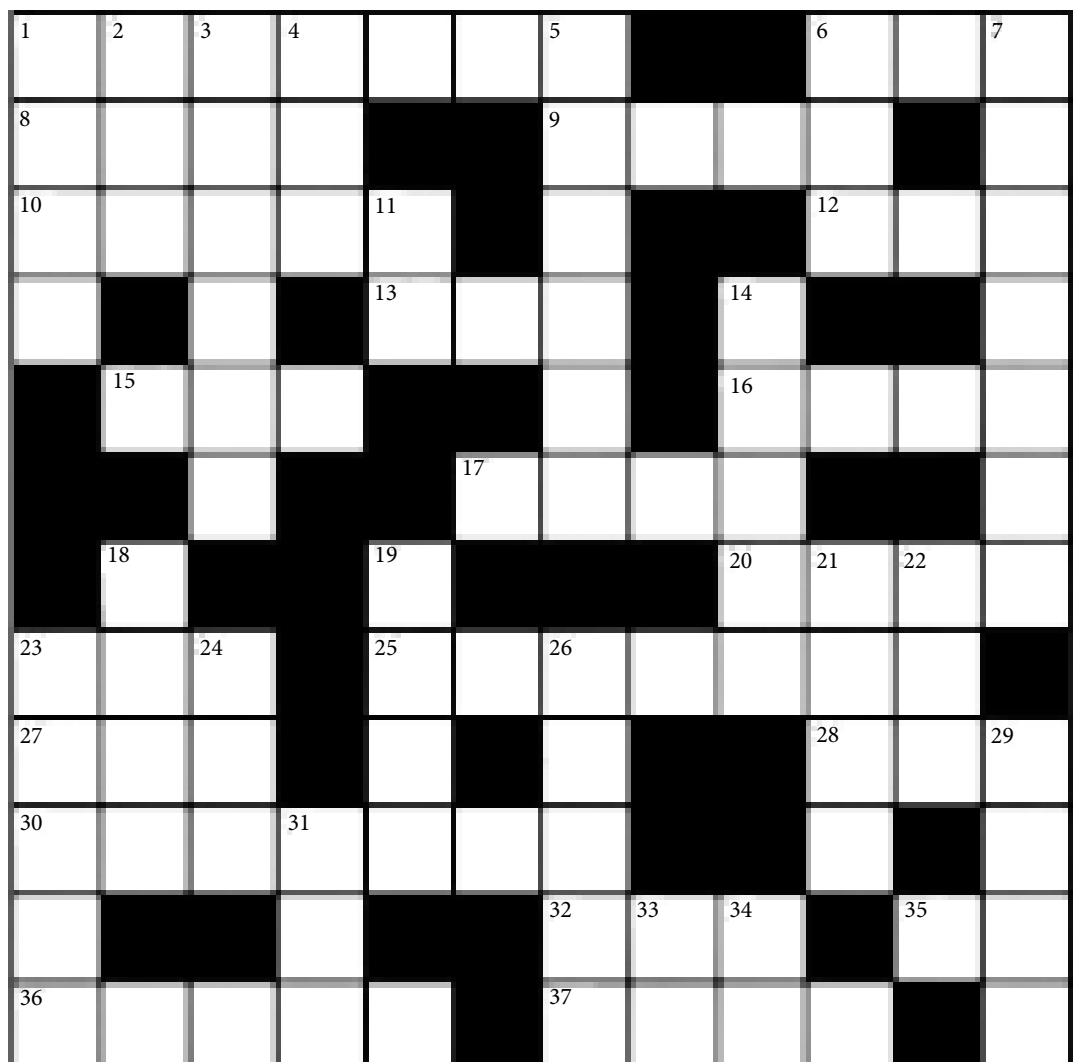
**By Caitlin Donovan (II)
& Alex Strand (II)**
Contributing Writers

ACROSS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. A new class being offered at BLS | 23. Republican Party |
| 6. It may be dry or sparkling | 25. 180/π |
| 8. Lifesaver | 27. Sound of disgust |
| 9. Reeded instrument | 28. Prefix meaning "all" |
| 10. 2020 Taylor Swift and Bon Iver song | 30. BLS Speech and Debate Team's competitor |
| 12. Begins on March 13 (Abbr.) | 32. Agency notorious for its long lines |
| 13. "No, I am your _____" (Slang) | 35. First word of cooked pasta or famous gangster |
| 15. Members of this organization receive gold cords at graduation | 36. Bigfoot's cousins |
| 16. _____, Median, Mode | 37. Caesar's rebuke |
| 17. Indigenous peoples of Peru | |
| 20. Designer Jacobs | |

DOWN:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. God of War | 21. Topic of the Argo's most recent resource graphic *hint: in News* |
| 2. Peace | 22. Single-stranded chain in cells that processes protein |
| 3. COVID-19 vaccine option | 23. Edible worms |
| 4. City in Missouri (Abbr.) | 24. Doctorate degree (Abbr.) |
| 5. _____ Caulfield from <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> | 26. Not I, O, U |
| 6. Pool testing day (Abbr.) | 29. <i>Death on the _____</i> : 2022 movie starring Gal Gadot |
| 7. Movie starring Leonardo DiCaprio | 31. Allergy antidote (Abbr.) |
| 11. Early commitment to college | 33. _____ Everest (Abbr.) |
| 14. Savory taste | 34. Ben and Jerry's home state |
| 18. Bouncy stick toy | |
| 19. The street the Wolf is on | |



*Answer will be posted on blsargo.org next week!

Spotify Faces COVID-19 Controversy

By **Mary Bosch (II)**
& **Alice Li (VI)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

When Canadian-American singer Neil Young felt that “lies [were] being sold for money,” he had to act. On January 24, he wrote to Spotify demanding them to remove all of his music content. Although this may seem extreme, Young had strong reasoning for his decision.

It came in response to Dr. Robert Malone’s interview on *The Joe Rogan Experience*, currently the No. 1 podcast on Spotify, which contains numerous pieces of misinformation relating to COVID-19. For example, Malone claims that mRNA vaccines are unsafe and can result in serious side effects, particularly for children. He also goes on to question President Joe Biden’s vaccination status, asking, “Was [what Biden received] really a vaccine?” Malone also spouted retracted statistics about the vaccine’s likelihood of causing myocarditis and claimed that vaccine mandates violate the Nuremberg Code, which is untrue.

With an average of 11 million listeners per podcast episode, Joe Rogan, along with his guests, has the potential to reach a wide audience. With America’s population being 65.1 percent vaccinated, this spread of misinformation should be taken seriously, as it can discourage vaccine use. Young’s letter set the ultimatum that Spotify “[could] have Rogan or Young. Not both.” He believes that “Spotify has a responsibility to mitigate the spread of misinformation on its platform,” and that this responsibility could only be filled if Joe Rogan was deplatformed.

Unsurprisingly, Spotify chose Rogan over Young, and the singer-songwriter’s discography was almost entirely removed on January 26. Compared to Young, Rogan is more important to Spotify’s business. In efforts to secure themselves as the market leader for podcasts, it is reported that in May 2020, Spotify made a 200 million dollar deal with Rogan, establishing him as a priority.

In response to further criticism of Rogan, Spotify has emphasized that they value freedom of speech. According to Spotify’s chief executive and co-founder Daniel Ek, “[They] want creators to create, [...] [and they’re] not looking to play a role in what they should say.” The company, however, has moved to be more transparent with their policies and to add content warnings to podcasts that discuss COVID-19. The exodus of other artists from the platform may have prompted this response. Along with Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Ava DuVernay and India Arie have also separated themselves from the company.

Even students at Boston Latin School are divided as to whether it was Spotify’s responsibility to deplatform Rogan or not. Creighton Banitt (III) says, “They should have removed his platform, [since] he has pretty consistently been spreading misinformation and hateful messaging. [...] Spotify has an obligation to stop that.” In comparison, Oliver Lee (II) “[doesn’t] think [Rogan] is in the wrong for sharing what he thinks to his audience.” Lee adds that since Spotify does not endorse everything Rogan says, “Rogan shouldn’t have had his platform taken from him.” While there are pros and cons to Neil Young’s decision and Spotify’s response, debates such as this will certainly continue in a future heavily impacted by the spread of misinformation.

SOUND OF SEUL: *LAUREL HELL* BY MITSKI



February 4, 2022

Genre: Synthpop, Indie Pop

Highlights: “Working for the Knife,”
“Stay Soft” and “Love Me More”

Rating: 8/10

By **Ellis Seul (II)**

Head Editor

In her new album *Laurel Hell*, Mitski puts a synthpop and new wave spin on her established indie musical style, resulting in a captivating and enjoyable listen throughout all of its 32-minute runtime. Featuring upbeat, electronic-heavy production from longtime collaborator Patrick Hyland and expansive song structures ranging from meandering ballads to soaring choruses, the latest installment in Mitski’s excellent discography is yet another testament to her unmatched songwriting ability.

The album begins with “Valentine, Texas,” which draws the listener in with sparkling synths and keys before “Working for the Knife,” the lead single and an early highlight of *Laurel Hell*, changes up the tone. A scathing critique of capitalism and the struggles of creating art when restricted by it, the track features a grating, industrial synth line which adds to the song’s jaded mood. Following this is “Stay Soft,” another choice cut which juxtaposes groovy bass, shimmering synthesizers and pounding piano with lyrics that tell the story of two hurt lovers opening up to one another.

After the more downtempo reflectiveness of “Everyone,” “Heat Lightning” and new-wave-inspired track “The Only Heartbreaker,” Mitski delivers yet another of the album’s highlights with “Love Me More.” The song starts off with a pulsating synth line before exploding into a chorus backed by catchy keys. Lyrically, it sees Mitski reflect on her decision to become an artist and the difficult cycle it creates of being valued only for one’s ability to please an audience.

The upbeat heights of “Love Me More” are followed up by “There’s Nothing Left for You,” a calmer track in which warm, radiating synths underpin Mitski’s hopeless reflection on a failed relationship. The lyrical narrative of this song continues for the rest of the album, with the dance pop-oriented “Should’ve Been Me” and downbeat ballad “I Guess” touching on themes of jealousy and grief. Closing off the album is “That’s Our Lamp,” in which Mitski perfectly encapsulates the album’s themes as a whole by looking on the bright side toward a more optimistic future.

Though it has generally been met with critical acclaim, some reviewers have accused *Laurel Hell* of lacking the vivid emotional expression of Mitski’s previous work. In the words of *The A.V. Club*’s Gabrielle Sanchez, the album lacks the “urgency, rawness and stark ferocity” of her earlier albums and “seems to cower in fear of making something too bombastically powerful again.” Although *Laurel Hell*’s conveyance of emotions is certainly more polished and less raw than on Mitski’s earlier releases, this presents no detriment to its quality. On the contrary, the more optimistic thematic direction of *Laurel Hell* is perfectly complemented by its lyrics and synth-heavy instrumentation, and the album is yet another wonderful addition to Mitski’s versatile repertoire.

More Changes for Musicians



Some musicians must remove their masks to play their instruments.

By **Catherine Cox (IV)**
& **Penelope Meisel (III)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

As we pass the two-year mark of the COVID-19 pandemic, life at Boston Latin School is starting to return to normal. At the beginning of this school year, students returned to in-person academic classes and music programs. With the number of COVID-19 cases still rising, however, BLS is taking precautions to ensure safety among students and staff participating in music programs.

While mask and vaccine mandates are gradually being relaxed, BLS continues to take safety precautions seriously. The school frequently adjusts its protocols in response to the pandemic. At the beginning of the school year, for example, when case numbers were in decline, it established guidelines such as bell covers on instruments and three-foot social distancing to ensure that band and chorus classes were as safe as possible. After the winter break, however, music programs, with the exception of orchestra, took a complete hiatus in response to a spike in COVID-19 cases due to the Omicron variant.

Upon the recent return of regular programming, the school has instituted a new round of precautions to reduce the potential for new positive cases among musicians. These precautions include double-masking, six-foot distancing and fewer students allowed in practicing spaces.

Students reacted differently in response to the most recent measures, with some in favor and others against them. Like most of their peers, BLS musicians have grown weary of wearing masks, social distancing and regular testing, wishing to return to “normal.”

While all are eager to get back to playing, not everyone is in support of the new rules. Brendan Nolan

(IV) shares his frustrations on the new precautions, saying, “I don’t think [in-person band and chorus programs] should’ve been taken away at all, nor do I think that there should be any more protocols; we should just be able to play.”

Since school-wide COVID-19 precautions have complicated the last few years, students are thankful to be back in the building with the opportunity to do what they love. Many students appreciate the opportunity to play in-person again regardless of the additional protocols that may be required.

Returning to an in-person schedule, however, posed new challenges for musicians who were accustomed to their previous virtual routines. Mark Snekvik (IV) explains, “It’s clear we aren’t in the same spot as pre-COVID[-19] because people haven’t played their instruments as much and aren’t used to important elements of band such as dynamics, blending and accurate tempo that can be fixed by recordings.”

Still, morale remains high among musicians. Reminiscing on last year’s situation, Snekvik says, “The advantages to in-person [classes] are innumerable: we can actually hear others and play in harmony, our teachers can give us feedback, and we don’t have to record. [...] Masking is a trivial inconvenience compared to Zoom.”

COVID-19 has come with a myriad of challenges for everyone, but the return to somewhat normal activities has brightened many spirits, especially students participating in the band and chorus programs.

Islay Shilland (IV) summarizes the feelings of many musicians in the current climate, explaining, “It is incredibly difficult to play a cohesive piece when none of the players are in the same room and [with the] Wi-Fi [...] going in and out. [...] I love playing in-person again, and I hope we never have to return to a virtual model.”

Girls' Fencing Is Victorious at States



The girls' fencing team goes undefeated.

**By Madelyn Taylor (II)
& Christopher Choy (VI)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

For the sixth consecutive year, the Boston Latin School girls' fencing team, led by captains Lucy Yu (I) and Tamsen Peralta-Virtue (II), claimed the title of state champions.

Last year, amidst an abnormal season with COVID-19 and the subsequent cancellation of the state tournament, the team faced several challenges. Due to health concerns from the pandemic,

participation during the 2020-2021 season was minimal. The team struggled to get young members to join while school was taking place online. When the season began this year, the team focused on rebuilding.

Aside from the unusual difficulty of recruiting fencers, the team dealt with a major setback when all Boston Public Schools sports were put on pause from December 24, 2021 until January 18, 2022. Losing over three weeks of the season was not only incredibly disappointing for the athletes, but also put them at a disadvantage. While the BLS

fencers missed their first meet of the season, other teams continued to practice and compete.

Flabia Carbajal (II), a fencer on the team who joined this year, said that the situation was "worrying, as we didn't have much time to practice before states." After returning from the pause, having limited team practices and shortened conditioning due to COVID-19 testing after school, the team was left less prepared as they would have liked for the state championship.

Despite the difficulties that they encountered, the team found great success upon their return. Winning the state championship was an exciting and unforgettable moment. Peralta-Virtue explains, "It's crazy to be state champs so many years in a row. Winning states was an amazing feeling." Earning the title again and fulfilling a desire to prove to past team members that they could win made the team proud of themselves and their accomplishments. Yu, who has been on the team since seventh grade, says, "It felt triumphant [...] [that] what we were doing was validated."

Although being reigning state champions is an incredible feat, it comes with the immense pressure to continue the streak started in 2016. Coming off of five championships, the team experienced a proud moment after earning the sixth. "It was [also] a relief. There's always this pressure [...]

BLS always wins," says Peralta-Virtue.

The team was originally established as a club before it became an official school sport. It is still the only fencing team to exist within BPS. For that reason, Yu feels that "fencing is a sport at BLS that has to be continuously proving ourselves because we had to fight our way into establishing ourselves [...] and so, in a sense, winning states is more than just winning; it's proving that we're an actual team."

On this year's team, there are four graduating seniors, including Yu. It is always difficult when seniors leave, but the captains are confident that next year's team will continue to succeed. The team tries not to be dependent on a few star performers but rather remain a well-rounded team that is consistent throughout the years. Although some new starting fencer roles will need to be filled, there is a lot of young talent and passion on the team. According to Peralta-Virtue, next year will be an opportunity for younger and less experienced fencers "to take on that leadership role and push themselves to be better than they were before."

One team maintaining the title of state champions for six consecutive seasons is an accomplishment that is hardly ever seen in sports, but this year's girls' fencing team demonstrated that it is far from impossible, and they strive to continue this success into the future.

Olympic Athletes Open Up About Mental Health

By Natalie Trapanick (I)

Contributing Writer

One of the most memorable images from the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games is the one of two-time Olympic champion Mikaela Shiffrin, sitting on the ground, head in between her knees, with a look of complete devastation.

Shiffrin, the favorite for combined alpine skiing, did not win medals at this year's Winter Olympics; she mentions that her experience was impacted by the struggles she faced going into the Games, highlighting her battle with mental health.

She is, however, not the first among professional or Olympic athletes to voice concerns about mental health. In the past year, both Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka, two of the greatest athletes in history, withdrew from competition citing a declining mental health state.

Throughout the sports community, the impact of mental health on performance has become a prominent point of discussion and will most likely continue to grow as more athletes decide to speak out.

Within the 2022 Games, Shiffrin was not the only athlete who publicly shared their struggles with mental health. Shaun White, an accomplished American snowboarder and skateboarder, ended his Olympic career this February. The three-time Olympic gold medalist stated in an interview that when he was younger, he viewed any vulnerability or openness surrounding mental health as a "weakness." Upon hearing about famed-swimmer and 23-time Olympic gold medalist Michael Phelps's struggles, White stated that his mindset has shifted. He realized that "it takes so much courage to actually talk about it. It's not a weakness."

Moving forward in sports, it is likely that more athletes will continue to speak out about their struggles with mental health and the impact it has had on performance. Many believe this is beneficial to younger athletes in particular.

Girls' basketball team captain Emelia O'Gilvie (I) says, "these pro athletes talking about this makes it easier for me in the future as I continue to play sports to feel comfortable talking about mental health and prioritizing it because these athletes are some of my role models."

A focus on mental health, or healthy mentality in general, could be beneficial for athletes of all ages and skill levels. It points to a healthy balance between



Shocked and devastated, Mikaela Shiffrin sits on the slope.

pushing oneself in sports but also allowing room for mistakes, which is applicable to growing as a person and to simply being human.

In order to perform at their best, one must not only be in the best physical shape possible, but also understand how to use one's body in the right way. When it comes to performance, a healthy mind and mentality are crucial.

Professional athletes advocating for this subject provides not only role models for all other athletes, but also encourages more conversations surrounding mental health among young athletes and coaches.

BLS lacrosse and basketball player Ruby Donovan (III) adds, "I think it's really important for athletes at the celebrity status to talk about [mental health]. It helps destigmatize it, but it also helps people feel less alone."

Although these are struggles everyone faces, not just athletes, hearing influential people with large platforms speak on mental health is encouraging. This

unites people together and helps them understand each other on a more personal level. Mental health is a universal struggle; it is essential to highlight how performance is mentally approached in order to continue a love for the game.

John Bijoy Hankwitz (I), a baseball player at BLS, explains, "I hope it encourages more youth coaches especially to look out for their players. There's no need for kids to be failing mentally when they are playing a sport that they love."

Youth sports can be an important factor of a child's life, as they often shape who they become and how they view the world. Speaking on this topic with such large platforms, athletes like Mikaela Shiffrin and Shaun White work to destigmatize mental health in sports and emphasize the need to further understand how sports can continue to improve. With an emphasis on mental health throughout sports, athletes can continue to love what they do and better understand themselves.

Indoor Track Speeds to Success



There's nothing stopping the *pace* of the BLS track team.

By Terence Xie (II)

Staff Writer

The Boston Latin School indoor track team started off their season with multiple wins at invitationals, and more recently, a strong Dual County League (DCL) meet. Despite their strong start, this season did not come without its fair share of challenges.

Captain Louie Belile (I) acknowledges the struggles that all athletes, including the track team, faced after the shutdown of all Boston Public Schools Athletics teams on December 23, 2021. "Three to four weeks off for a runner is

really hard for us conditioning-wise," he comments.

Even when they were able to compete again, the track team was not without their share of obstacles. Captain Sophie Ahearn (I) explains, "When we returned from this shutdown, our team had dwindled quite a bit due to COVID-19 concerns and injuries."

Even with all the adversity the team faced early in the season, they were able to see success as a result of their hard work with their latest meet at the DCL Championship.

The DCL Championship is the culmination of all the practices and previ-

ous meets that the team had been working on leading up to this moment. They were able to send many runners further to statewide meets.

Among them was Rachel Starr (IV), who recently broke the school record for the two-mile event. Ahearn noted her incredible success, as well as her pride for the entire team. "We had a strong team compete at the DCL Championships; seven athletes competed at the divisionals meet, and [...] Starr competed at the All-State meet," says Ahearn.

Much of the team's success can be attributed to the work they put in during practice as well as the workouts they do in their own time.

Ahearn elaborates, "We always start off with a warmup and drills and then head into the workout. For sprinters this usually means shorter-distance runs, and for distance this can range anywhere from four miles to ten miles on any given day. All of our workouts end with stretching and strength-training in the weight room."

Belile also acknowledges the extra work the team put in to ensure they had as much speed and power as possible. He also mentions the importance of a strong team morale and dynamic, especially when preparing the day before a meet. Practice is crucial to the team's success, as Ahearn believes that "this ensures that we know we are part of a bigger team; we know what the next races are and how we are going to execute plans in those races."

In addition to physical workouts, runners also have to prepare mentally. Starr explains, "I had to set strong goals

for myself, the biggest of which was reaching states and staying in contact with my coach to design workouts specific to my goal times made it easier to keep working hard."

On Saturday, Starr reached her goal, seeing her hard work pay off as she qualified for nationals with a time of 11 minutes and 27 seconds for the two-mile run.

"It does feel great to have qualified after all the chaos of this season, but the most important thing to me is continuing to improve through each meet," Starr says. Prioritizing preparation for the beginning of the outdoor season, Starr and her coach, however, decided to sit out of nationals. "It feels both fulfilling and exciting to be able to keep improving," Starr adds.

With their successes and triumphs over numerous difficulties, the captains are content with how the season has turned out.

"I could not be more proud of the way the team showed up in the face of all of the challenges this season. This season was a building block for the outdoor season, and I am very excited to see what we will accomplish," Ahearn expresses.

Belile agrees with similar sentiments, noting how "many on our team felt like the indoor season was just preparation for the outdoor season considering our strongest events are in the spring season."

With the DCL Championships and All-States in the past, the team is now looking ahead toward the spring season, in good shape and ready to dominate.

Student Athletes Star in State Tournaments

By Lilah Gutlerner (I),

Shane Sullivan (I)

& Lauren Choy (II)

Head Editors and Assistant Editor

As the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association nears the end of its winter season, Boston Latin School still has several notable teams and athletes who have found success in the state tournament or have clinched

playoff berths and are excited for the postseason ahead.

There are individual athletes who have experienced great success. BLS wrestling team captain RJ Petrucelli (I) secured first place at sectionals and finished sixth in the Division I All-State Wrestling Tournament. Another notable winter athlete, Rachel Starr (IV), finished in seventh place in the two-mile at the Massachusetts All-State track meet on February 26, breaking the school re-

cord in the process.

Several teams will also play in the state tournament at the beginning of March. Girls' varsity basketball clinched the 21st seed in Division I with a final record of 12-4. This will be the first time the girls' basketball program has made the state competition in nine years.

Both the boys' and girls' hockey teams also qualified for the state tournament and earned a "bye" in the first

round. They hope to make it far into the tournament and continue to compete for the next few weeks.

Last year, there were no state tournaments for any winter teams, so for many of the athletes, this will be their first time playing in a game with such high stakes. Seniors, on the other hand, missed out on a chance to compete at this level last year and look forward to finishing up this memorable season by making it as far into states as possible.

Spotlight on... Owen Jin (II)

By Romy Li (II)

Staff Writer

Although it receives little recognition, fencing is arguably one of the most difficult sports. It is the only combat sport with no weight classes and is hard to understand without context. To summarize, the objective of the game is to use your weapon — either the foil, épée or saber — to strike your opponent whilst avoiding being hit yourself.

Owen Jin (II) knows quite a bit about the sport, as he has been fencing since seventh grade. Fencing competitively for three years, he has also won multiple regional golds in competitions such as Youth 14, Cadet and Junior. Recently, Jin led his team to a silver medal at the Junior Olympics, a national tournament. Most notable of all, he competed in the International World Cup.

When asked about one person who has helped shape him into the skilled fencer he is today, Jin is quick to respond, saying, "My father. He accompanied me to every competition I have attended since I started. There were times where



Owen Jin (II, left) strikes out competition.

we did not get along, but fencing really drew us closer."

Jin has thoroughly enjoyed his time on the BLS fencing team and has made a lot of lasting memories. "When I just

started fencing at BLS," he reflects, "there were many upperclassmen that continuously helped me." Unfortunately, due to his busy fencing schedule, Jin regrets that he is unable to attend all of the practic-

es, but still remembers his favorite group huddle at the State Championship, right before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

This January, Jin traveled all the way to Bahrain to represent the United States at the fencing World Cup. He recounts, "My trip was extremely exhausting. Not only were all of the opponents tough, but the procedures for traveling to Bahrain were a hassle. After I arrived there, we were immediately sent into isolation while awaiting our COVID-19 results."

The competition itself, however, was more rewarding than he expected. Pitted against a top-eight Olympic finisher, he started off, understandably so, extremely nervous. Although he did have a slight idea of his opponents' fencing styles, there was minimal to no time to adjust to them. As a result, he took two losses out of the six matches during the round-robin stage. He was able to turn it around, however, and made a vitalizing comeback to defeat the bronze medalist of a previous Junior World Cup.

While he believes he has areas to improve upon in terms of performance, Jin is still very grateful for this experience and opportunity. He will definitely continue to be an athlete to watch as he prepares for his senior season with BLS next year.

Spotlight on... RJ Petrucelli (I)



By Anthony Duc Lai (II)
& Nhat Thai (II)
Contributing Writers

After a compromised wrestling season during his junior year, RJ Petrucelli (I) hoped to make the most of his short time left as a wrestler.

Unlike many star athletes who picked up their sports as soon as they could walk, Petrucelli was a late bloomer to wrestling. He recalls, "I did not know anything about wrestling until the eighth grade. Coach [Jeffrey] Gibbons invited everyone in my class to try out, and I ended up falling in love with the sport instantly." As a result of his hard work and dedication, he earned a spot on the Boston Latin School varsity wrestling team.

Being on the team since eighth grade, Petrucelli found the transition from being a member to a captain as natural, saying, "I was greatly influenced by the captains before me and found it easy to guide the team with the help of my fellow captains, coaches and the support of the members of the wrestling team."

Unfortunately for Petrucelli, his experience with his newfound love was cut shorter, as the emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 pushed back the winter sport into the spring. This postponement prevented a full wrestling season, and the Dual County League All-Star was "only able to wrestle eight matches, much less than what [he] usually wrestles in a year."

The following year was no different, as the Omicron variant outbreak shut down the season for a month. More negative news came, as Petrucelli tested positive for COVID-19, forcing him to miss a week of practice and competitions.

The countless setbacks Petrucelli has encountered, however, served as fuel for his desire to dominate the competition, as he finished first place at sectionals and sixth in the Division I All-State Wrestling Tournament. "My postseason run felt amazing. I wrestled hard the entire way and made sure to leave it all out on the mat as a loss could be my last match," he recalls.

When asked to describe him on and off the wrestling mat, fellow varsity captain and close friend Owen Kirkpatrick (I) says, "[Petrucelli] embodies consistency. He's a reliable wrestler, a present leader and a steadfast friend."

Another captain, Theo Sawyers (I), explains that Petrucelli "is a nice and hard-working guy who always brings positive energy and is a great teammate. He is a great leader, and as you can tell from his success this year, an incredible wrestler."

Even after a late introduction to wrestling along with COVID-19 complications, Petrucelli finishes his BLS wrestling career victorious.

Brady's Retirement Ignites Controversy

By Kuba Rozwadowski (II)
& Jessica Li (III)
Contributing Writers

As loyal New Englanders, most consider Tom Brady the greatest football player ever. He led the New England Patriots to six Super Bowl rings and firmly established them as a dynasty unmatched in the sport's history. Brady recently announced his retirement from football on February 1, following a formidable 22 seasons and countless broken records.

"This is difficult to write, but here goes: I am not going to make that competitive commitment anymore," Brady announces in an *Instagram* post. "I have loved my [National Football League] career, and now it is time to focus my time and energy on other things that require my attention." Brady also expressed gratitude to various members of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers franchise, including his teammates, Head Coach Bruce Arians and the Buccaneers fans.

What stands out, however, is his lack of acknowledgment of the New England Patriots, the franchise which housed him for the majority of his career. Also noticeably absent from his statement is Bill Belichick, who coached Brady throughout the quarterback's entire career with the Patriots.

The highly decorated coach and his star player were a remarkable duo that wowed millions for two decades until Brady's departure from the Patriots franchise in March 2020. Several individuals have expressed their dissatisfaction with Brady's apparent disregard of the Patriots and Belichick.

Others point to Brady's March 2020 farewell message to the Patriots, arguing that one statement provides sufficient gratitude for the New England franchise. Boston Latin School varsity football quarterback Douglas



After 22 seasons, Tom Brady retires from the NFL.

George (II) voices his opinion on this matter, saying, "It was weird for him to not mention the Patriots in his retirement post; the beginning of his career was born because the Patriots gave him an opportunity and everybody loved him here for 20 years."

On the flip side, the Patriots organization did not fail to mention their thanks to Tom Brady. "Words cannot describe the feelings I have for Tom Brady, nor adequately express the gratitude my family, the New England Patriots and our fans have for Tom for all he did during his career," writes owner of the Patriots owner Robert Kraft. "I have the greatest respect for Tom personally and always will. [...] I will always feel a close bond to him and will always consider him an extension of my immediate family."

Brady finally recognized the Patriots in response to Kraft's heartfelt statement a few hours later. With a red heart emoji, Brady responds, "Thank you Patriots Nation, I'm beyond grateful. Love you all." His brief but amicable reply soothed some previously

disappointed fans. Yet many fans still felt that the fleeting response was insufficient, given the significance of the Patriots in Brady's career.

While there have been many speculations and heated arguments surrounding Brady's retirement announcement, nonetheless, it is possible that Tom's career is not over just yet. In his podcast shortly after his statement, Brady revealed that he could "never say never" about a potential comeback.

Sparking further speculation, Brady's longtime teammate Rob Gronkowski claimed, "[Brady] can play at any age. [...] If he's 50 years old, he can still come back. I think he's going to come back but in a couple of years. The guy's a beast. He can play anytime." Gronkowski's unfailing loyalty to his longtime friend speaks volumes of Brady's character and presence.

While it is uncertain whether Brady's career has come to a close, his legacy will continue to inspire athletes to never give up, no matter the push-back.

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