



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

Pride Prevails: LGBTQ+ Community at BLS

By **Lena Thai (III)**
Staff Writer

Amid the heightened negativity surrounding the LGBTQ+ community throughout the country, students are advocating for a more inclusive environment within Boston Latin School.

In December, the Topol Fellows for Peace and Nonviolence and BLS Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) united members of the LGBTQ+ community and its allies, creating a space for them to share their feelings thoughtfully.

Topol Fellow Ethan Nguyen (I) shares the Topols' reasons for holding this discussion: "The Topol Fellows, in alliance with GSA, wanted to begin the conversation surrounding the recent rhetoric surrounding LGBTQ+ rights. [...] We felt the initiative to shed light on the recent tragedies in the news. When we close our eyes to the violence that others face every day because it doesn't pertain to us, we perpetuate the hate of the perpetrators. Many don't realize the true power of just listening."

During this event, the Topol Fellows presented a slideshow including statistics on recent hate crimes across the United States. Students attended to share and discuss their reactions and experiences as LGBTQ+ individuals and allies in Boston, with the use of "I" statements encouraged to avoid generalizations and to welcome different perspectives.

The rise in censorship and disruption regarding LGBTQ+ expression has left community members distraught. GSA club advisor Ms. Danielle Murray underscores the importance of representation: "It's going to take a toll on you to realize that your very identity, your very being, is being debated miles away. You know, that's a scary feeling. [...] I want my son to be able to go into books and find in libraries and find books about his family."

Ms. Murray says this in reference to the recent attacks on LGBTQ+ literature around Massachusetts. This past summer, a drag queen story hour took place at Jamai-



BLS Topol Fellows present about current LGBTQ+ issues.

ca Plain's Loring Greenough House when neo-Nazis disrupted the meeting and taunted its participants. A few months later, books on LGBTQ+ youth were under controversy at Old Rochester Regional High School, located just 60 miles from BLS. These books, though they represented diverse queer youth, received backlash for simply being displayed on the shelves.

Still, Ms. Murray observes significant progress in increasing visibility for LGBTQ+ students throughout the time she has worked at BLS. She specifically appreciates the displays made in the library and the awareness celebrations at BLS, such as National Coming Out Day and Pride Month, created with significant efforts from GSA.

In addition, GSA's newly-opened LGBTQ+ Study Space is tailored towards queer students who are looking to create friendships and complete work with the help of tutors and staff they relate to. It takes place in the Electronic Classroom on Wednesdays after school.

Emilia Saldaña (I), president of GSA, expresses, "When I was in middle school, [...] I felt isolated because of who I was. And

I hope that that's changed for younger students. But I think having a space that was just a space for LGBTQ+ people every week where I could ask them questions, whether it was about homework or life. It would have been beneficial to me so I hope to provide that for younger students."

While there has been significant support for the LGBTQ+ community among the student body and various extracurricular activities, members feel that the curriculum and administration could do more to extend their allyship.

"BLS does a good job at creating inclusivity for LGBTQ+ students. [...] GSA and the Lesbian Empowerment Society only exemplify that. Curriculum-wise, however, I think it varies [from] class to class. Facing History and Ourselves does a good job at educating students on LGBTQ+ topics, but [...] English and History classes simply do not address the topics much," shares a student whose name is removed for privacy reasons.

This student adds that the first time they encountered LGBTQ+ representation in the school curriculum was in tenth grade, over halfway through a student's typical six-

year BLS career. They find this worrisome since younger students may miss the chance to learn about themselves or their peers.

In addition to the poor representation in the school curriculum, students assert that teachers are not doing enough to make their classrooms safe spaces.

Before this school year, faculty were provided with practices to implement in their classrooms to foster an open environment. Students report that teachers, however, did not uphold these new standards.

"Something seemingly small, but actually big, [is] pronouns and preferred names because I have friends who have different names they go by and then teachers won't remember or just won't try using them and it's not good. It's hurtful," states Nandini Chikalapati (III).

She believes that a good way to showcase students' pronouns is through a letter to the teacher, in which students can explicitly state which pronouns to use for them in class and with parents.

Saldaña also notes that some teachers choose not to display or have peeled off their "Safe Space" sticker, meant to indicate allyship, from their classroom doors.

She adds, "A small thing is just keeping those stickers and just helping students understand that every single classroom is supposed to be a safe space. [...] Teachers who don't need to face some sort of retribution or education to understand why that [is the case] isn't acceptable."

Although some LGBTQ+ community members feel comfortable expressing their sexuality and gender at BLS, everyone can agree that there remains a long path ahead. Nguyen explains that the entire community needs to work against prejudices faced by minority groups.

"The cycle of oppression must be broken, and that process begins with us. We need to remember that the way someone acts, what they choose to embrace, how they dress, how they speak, none of it determines who they are and who they love. That's how we can begin fostering a more inclusive and welcoming community," concludes Nguyen.

The History of LGTBQ+ in BLS and Beyond



1937
Playland Café, Boston's first gay bar, opens in Charlestown. According to historian Neil Miller, it attracts a diverse clientele, where "blue-collar truck drivers mingled with Harvard students."



1971
Boston holds its first Pride Parade, accompanied by a week of workshops to celebrate and raise awareness for the queer community.

1994

BLS GSA (then Gay-Straight Alliance) is founded, six years after the first GSA was created at a high school in Concord, Massachusetts. It is among the first in the country.



2003

Massachusetts becomes the first state in the U.S. to legalize gay marriage through a Supreme Judicial Court case. The Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders sued the Massachusetts Department of Health on behalf of seven same-sex couples who were denied marriage licenses.

2015

In a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court legalizes same-sex marriage in all 50 states in *Obergefell v. Hodges* under the 14th Amendment. The ruling also requires states to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.



2017

BLS GSA and BLS Theatre collaborate to direct *The Laramie Project*, a play on reactions to the hate crime that resulted in the murder of Matthew Shepherd, a gay University of Wyoming student.

2022

President Joe Biden signs the Respect for Marriage Act, which requires the federal government and U.S. states to recognize same-sex marriage and interracial marriage, enshrining the ruling of *Obergefell* into law. This Act was in response to concerns that the court may overrule *Obergefell* in the future after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.



2021

BLS GSA celebrates Coming Out Day, raising visibility for the BLS queer community through the wearing of rainbow and lavender masks, and hosting a safe space to share coming out stories.

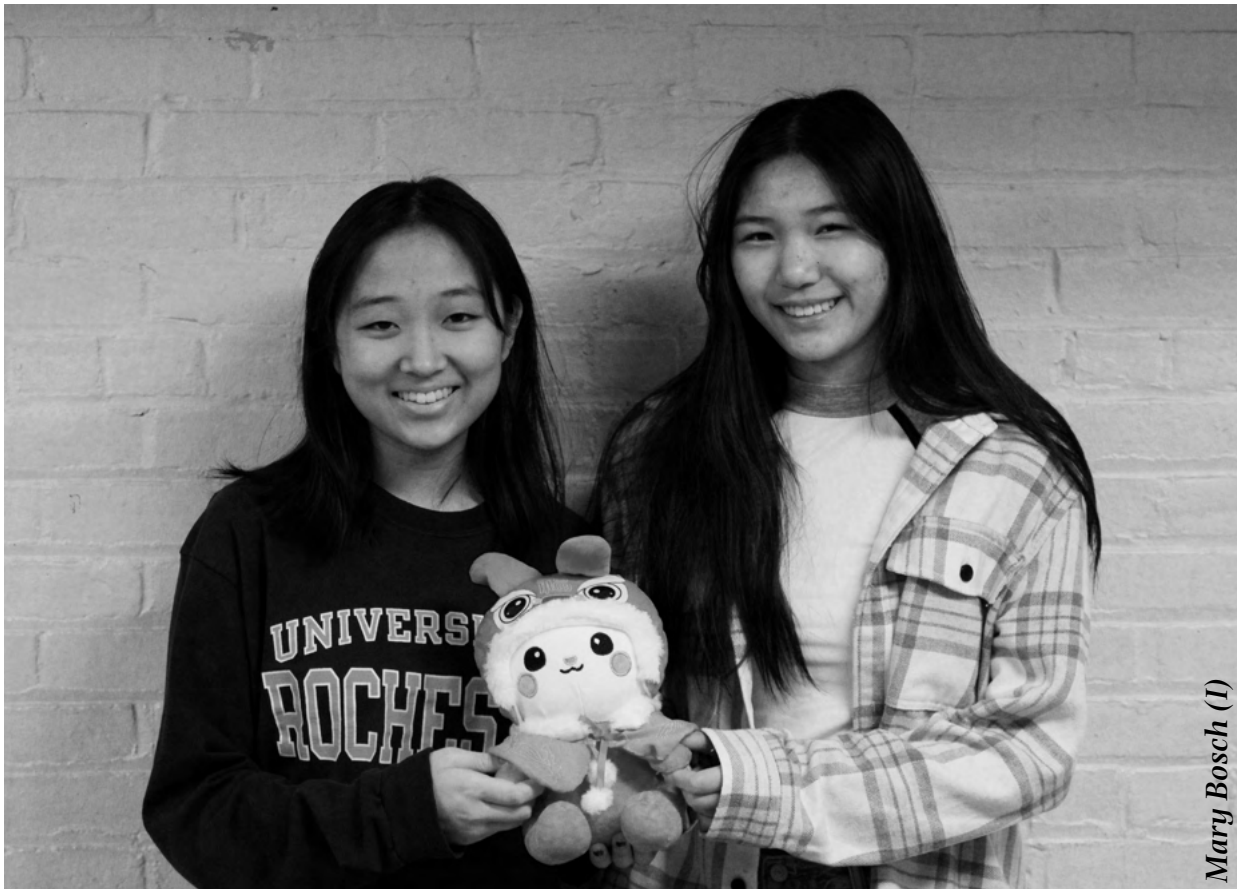
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1969

Fed up with years of police raids and attacks on the queer community, protestors organize outside Stonewall Inn in New York City on June 28. The Stonewall Uprising is largely credited as the catalyst for the collective queer rights movement.

EDITORS' NOTE



Happy Year of the Rabbit and Cat!

You may be surprised to learn that rabbits don't hibernate. Neither does the *Argo*! As we hop toward February break, we're proud to present another 24-carrot gold issue full of stories in the school and beyond.

In News, we have tails about Boston Latin School's new positivity board outside of the guidance office and *ChatGPT*'s influence on education. Don't miss these ear-resistable reports!

This issue also includes purr-suasive Forum pieces debating the length and frequency of school breaks and whether colleges should offer early decision admittance. You'll want to hare about this!

A&E features the very first corner with advice from Mary and Emilia, our new creative consultants, and highlights the Senior Districts Mew-sic Festival hosted at BLS. We're paws-itive that you will enjoy pages 10 to 14.

Over in the Sports section, read about our fast and furry hockey teams as they took on Frozen Fenway, as well as our wrestling team's successful season. Nibble on these articles!

As always, we would like to thank our amazing pride/pack/clowder of editors, writers and associates. No bunny can compare to them, especially considering their ability to sit through our attempt at listening to all 302 songs in the *Argo* playlist without paws (Tail-or's Version) (just kidding, she's banned in our humble burrow of Lab 016). No amount of lettuce can compensate you fur your hard work.

One last thing: the *Argo* will return with its Valentine's Day carnations on February 6. More information is available on Page 7.

We hope your year is lucky even if you don't have a rabbit's foot on hand!

Love,
Selizabunny & Lunar Bunny (named Baonny)

P.S. What does the rabbit say?

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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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W for Women: Fifty Years of a Co-Ed BLS

By **Jenny Chen (II)**
& **Mary Deng (IV)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

With this year marking the 50th anniversary since young women first entered Boston Latin School as students, the School has commenced celebrations to honor this milestone for the female community.

On November 19, 2022, the school commemorated the occasion at the BLS Alumni Celebration with a video. The video highlighted the history leading up to the integration of co-ed classes in Boston Public Schools, as well as the experiences of the first female students.

The fight for co-ed classes at BLS took almost a century. In 1877, the Massachusetts Society for the Education of Women first petitioned the Boston School Committee to allow girls to attend BLS (formerly known as Boys' Latin School). The inclusion of girls at BLS did not begin until 1972, when the Massachusetts Legislature passed a bill banning sex-based discrimination in public schools. In the same year, BLS's sister school, Boston Latin Academy (formerly known as Girls' Latin School), also became co-ed, with ten boys enrolling.

This integration, however, was not met with positivity — instead, heavy controversy surrounded the change.

Jean Sorrentino ('78) reflects, "My two older brothers would take me to school [...] and they made me walk behind them and pretended not to know me because they had been indoctrinated by school administration that when girls come, they would ruin this fine institution."

In addition to the dissent toward incorporating female students to BLS, the School itself was also not prepared for this transition. On the first day, the registrar's office had not

yet created schedules for girls, there was only one girls' restroom and no girls' locker rooms. Girls also made up a small portion of this new class, with only 45 of them in the entering sixie class; as such, each classroom contained only two or three girls.

The general environment at the School was not initially supportive of girls. BLS math teacher Ms. Tracy O'Donnell ('81), who was a member of the School's first co-ed classes, explains, "There was a time where the boys would tease us all the time, and it wasn't discouraged by the teachers."

Female students constantly had to prove that they belonged in the institution because of the School's lack of inclusivity.

Despite the pushbacks, girls would soon find themselves connecting through sports teams. In previous years, cheerleaders from BLA would cheer on BLS's football team, but that was no longer the case. They instead became part of the first girls' volleyball and basketball teams for girls in the School's history. Becoming a part of the school community through these teams and other extracurriculars helped create the tight-knit community this graduating class has held for many years.

Five decades have now passed, with BLS making strides in providing students with a more welcoming environment. The School is now composed of 52-percent female-identifying students, and has hired a more diverse range of teachers, compared with the School having only three female faculty members back in 1972.

Winnie Yuan (I), president of BLS Ladies' Collective says, "There are also a lot of women-teachers at BLS as well [...] and then, with students, I would say, there's a really diverse gender representation at BLS."

In 1998, Cornelia Kelley became the School's first female Head of School. 19 years later, BLS inducted former



Barbara Macniel was BLS's first prom queen.

Head of School Rachel Skerritt ('95) as its first female leader of color. During her term, the dress code, which previously had rigid restrictions on what girls could wear, was modified.

Even with these advancements, students remain hopeful for a future that emphasizes intersectionality.

Sarah Dienta (I), president of BLS Young Women of Color, says, "I also came in as a B-sie. So when it was already hard enough to be integrated, and I feel like it was just also that much harder because I was a woman of color."

Many of these challenges and experiences of discrimination are unique for everyone. Girls of color at BLS may have had a different experience compared with other girls, so it is important to address all perspectives of these narratives.

The significance of the role of girls at BLS throughout the past 50 years should not be ignored. As school nurse Ms. Ellen Moy-Maniekis ('78) concludes, "If you don't celebrate history, that history gets lost."

IN MEMORIAM

Cornelia Kelley

Boston Latin School's 26th Head of School, Cornelia A. Kelley ('98-'07) passed away on January 21, 2023. The former Head of School was the first woman to hold this position, serving as a role model for future female leaders. Kelley

directed the construction of the Harry V. Keefe Library as well as the construction of the music and art wings. The BLS community thanks her for her contributions in paving the way for generations of students to succeed.

Biden Builds Immigration Law

By **Darren Seto (I)**
& **Noehly Esteves (IV)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

President Joe Biden's administration has reversed numerous immigration policies placed by former President Donald Trump and shifted to focus on the root causes of migration from Central America.

Biden recently made his first visit as president to the United States-Mexico border, which is witnessing the passage of historic numbers of illegal immigrants. According to *The New York Times*, "In the 12 months leading up to last October, the Border Patrol encountered 1.7 million migrants trying to cross illegally, the highest number since 1960." Although Biden was not seen interacting with migrants, he met with Texas Governor Greg Abbott on January 8.

Governor Abbott, infamous for deporting over 100 migrants from Texas to Vice President Kamala Harris's residence in Washington, D.C. by bus, was one of the few southern politicians who sent migrants to northern states. Similarly, Ron DeSantis, the Republican governor of Florida, sent undocumented Venezuelan migrants to

Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts via plane with no prior notice, many of whom are currently applying for visas or asylum.

Boston Latin School World History teacher Mr. Andy Zou remarks on the importance of immigration to Boston's history, saying, "The vast majority of Bostonians weren't born and raised in Boston. So, we consistently see the benefits of people coming to our beautiful city and making it the world-class city that it is."

In response to immigration challenges, President Biden increased the number of refugees admitted to the U.S. and created a task force to reunite families that previously separated due to the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy. The Biden administration also discontinued Trump's "Remain in Mexico" policy, which had forced asylum seekers to remain in Mexico.

Unlike former president Barack Obama's immigration policies, Biden's approach focuses on naturalizing undocumented immigrants rather than deportation. AP U.S. Government teacher Ms. Meredith Elliott explains, "Right now, the current policy really advantages people who know someone in the U.S. who can sponsor them and help them through the immigration process."

Some applaud the president's more compassionate

approach toward immigration, while others argue that it may lead to a spike in illegal immigration.

Katherine Martin (II), an officer of the Education for Public Inquiry and International Citizenship club states, "BLS educates all children, no matter immigration status, so this policy would benefit BLS's undocumented students, giving them an improved path to citizenship."

Additionally, President Biden recently attended the North American Leaders' Summit with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. There, he announced an initiative that would allow 30,000 immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela to work in the U.S. for two years. President Biden also emphasized the importance of addressing the underlying causes of migration and committed to working with Canada and Mexico to ensure the protection of rights for asylum-seekers.

Despite the numerous efforts being made, the future of immigration in the U.S. remains uncertain. Martin remarks, "I don't believe substantial legislation is likely with our Congress's current political split — bipartisanship has largely disappeared, and politicians cross the aisle with decreasing frequency, meaning it would be difficult to pass democratic bills in a Republican house."

Pass on the Positivity!

By **Weian Xue (V)**
& **David Wang (VI)**

Contributing Writers

Earlier this year, Boston Latin School guidance faculty members Ms. Samantha Curtis ('08) and Ms. Jennifer Segal launched an interactive bulletin board outside the guidance offices to spread positivity and create a stronger sense of community.

The board has featured several different activities since its debut. The first activity involved coloring a giant mandala, followed by one where students could add a few stickers at a time to complete a larger picture.

The board is now titled "Pass on the Positivity" and offers sticky notes for students and faculty to leave positive messages or drawings of encouragement. So far, it has been a huge success, completely filled with positive post-it notes.

As a BLS alumna, Ms. Curtis understands the pressure current students face. She states, "It's really important for students to remember that there's always something positive to look forward to and that they have a community of support around them."

The board has garnered a considerable amount of support from BLS students and faculty. Many have left notes behind or

reflected on the existing messages. Students greatly appreciate the board, especially as they go through rough times. Winnie Yuan (I) says, "Last week, I saw a post-it on the board that said 'TRY,' and weirdly, it helped motivate me. It made me think that I need to put in some extra effort before the end of Term II in order to get the grades that I want."

Other positivity and mental health initiatives at BLS include the new Mental Health Advisory board and an Awareness Day event that took place earlier this year. Some students, however, believe that even more could be done to make these events accessible.

Benjamin Fortuin (I) adds, "I believe that a more active platform to notify students of events throughout the year, whether with a physical calendar in some prominent place or a central area for flyers and notices, might help galvanize students into finding their interests and doing something meaningful."

Ms. Curtis and Ms. Segal hope to continue the board's success by updating it consistently. For February, the board will focus on self-love and friendship, rather than solely romantic love, which is most often associated with Valentine's Day. Afterwards, the board will display the college stars that appear annually to celebrate the senior class.

City Councilors Call for BPS Metal Detectors

By **Ross Wilson (IV)**

& **Trinity Ngo (IV)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On January 6, four Boston City Councilors proposed to increase the number of police officers and metal detectors in Boston Public Schools.

The city councilors — Frank Baker, Michael Flaherty, Ed Flynn (P '24) and Erin Murphy — signed a letter to Mayor Michelle Wu and Superintendent Mary Skipper outlining changes to BPS's safety measures. They proposed the installation of more metal detectors to identify weapons in the school and an increase in police officers to monitor school buildings.

This call for change comes at a time when BPS is struggling to control the rise of violence in schools. According to the city councilors, 440 incidents of bullying and 744 sexual assaults were reported in BPS schools during the 2021-2022 school year.

The councilors believe that “non-invasive technology such as metal detectors, and having police officers present in our schools” are the best methods to address the violence.

Currently, not all BPS schools use metal detectors. According to Superintendent Skipper, a number of schools have recently requested their installation, but those decisions are made on a school-by-school basis.

Boston Latin School currently has no plans to implement metal detectors or increase police presence. If the district were to mandate the use of either measures the councilors have suggested, BLS would be required to comply.

There is debate surrounding whether these measures are the correct course of action. BLS Director of Operations Ms. Jesse Kwan states, “I think some students will feel a sense of security, but some will also feel a threat of anxiety, so there are pros and cons.”

Although safety is a valid concern, some students at BLS believe that metal detectors can be intimidating and inconvenient. Even though they are common in today's world, students may still feel anxious about having to pass through them every day to enter school. Furthermore, others believe that they needlessly hinder students from performing their daily tasks. Erika Monteiro Tavares (IV) remarks, “[Metal detectors] pose a major distraction and really just start the day off slower.”

She also shares that, while not intended to cause harm, this proposal is not the right move and could result in negative altercations between police and students. Instead, Tavares believes that investigating and addressing the sources of violence may prove to be more effective than simply installing measures in hopes of counteracting it.

This dilemma concerning school safety is not exclusive to Boston. New York City's school district has now implemented a similar policy to that of BPS, where decisions to install metal detectors are facilitated by schools' requests. Some New Yorkers have called for an increase in random screenings across all schools, similarly to community organizations in Boston.

These community organizations, like Boston Safety of Our Schools (SOS), advocate not only for stricter security measures to stop the violence, but also for early intervention strategies to prevent that violence from occurring. They also believe that people should emphasize the safety of the communities surrounding schools.

As the founder of Boston SOS, Reverend David Searles concludes, “It's not just violence in schools; it's violence all across the city. So we need to look at the community and the school at the same time.”

Bostonians *Embrace* New Memorial



Visit the memorial at the Boston Commons!

By **Halima Mohamed (I)**

& **Amanda Adjini (III)**

Contributing Writers

On January 13, the City of Boston unveiled a memorial in the Boston Common called *The Embrace*, dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his wife, Coretta Scott King.

Designed by artist Hank Willis Thomas in collaboration with MASS Design Group, the bronze statue depicts the hug the Kings shared after Dr. King won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. It stands in the center of the 1965 Freedom Plaza, which honors the names of local Bostonian civil rights leaders from the '50s to the '70s.

Standing 20 feet tall and 40 feet wide, the full monument is the first memorial built on Boston Common in 60 years and the first to honor Black Americans.

Non-profit organization Embrace Boston launched the project in 2017 in partnership with the City of Boston. Embrace Boston's mission is to dismantle structural racism and create a more equitable city through the arts, culture, research and policy. They raised close to 10 million dollars to fund the construction of the monument.

Boston Latin School African American Studies students had the opportunity to attend the monument's unveiling ceremony as one of the class's many field trips to historic sites that pertain to the Black experience in America. The ceremony featured speeches and performances from various community figures and artists. Max Smith-Stern (I) and MiAsia Stokes Haith (I) were selected to present the names of the 1965 Freedom Plaza honorees.

Smith-Stern was grateful to represent BLS at the event and thought the message behind the statue could inspire collective action. “We need more love and support, and that's such an integral thing to human rights and fighting for change,” he says.

The Embrace is intended to symbolize the love between Dr. King and Mrs. Scott King and the impact that has on us. In the image that the sculpture was inspired by, Dr. King's weight is on her as he wraps his arms around her, and his wife holds him up. This represents how Mrs. Scott King physically and metaphorically supported Dr. King and how the civil rights movement extends beyond one figure.

“It is a big testament of not only Dr. King and what he stood for, but that this city is openly embracing of the African American culture, Black experience, Black people, and I think this city still needs more visible signs of that,” says African American Studies and World History

teacher Mr. Brian Smith.

The Kings had an extensive history here in Boston. Dr. King and Mrs. Scott King met for the first time in Boston when Dr. King was studying for his PhD at Boston University's School of Theology and Mrs. Scott King had a fellowship at the New England Conservatory of Music. The two had their first date at Boston Common. On April 23, 1965, Dr. King returned to Boston to lead the 1965 Freedom Rally, a march from Roxbury to the Boston Common, and gave a speech in front of 22,000 people.

Mr. Smith reflects on why it was notable that BLS students attended the event, saying, “Dr. King was Boston Latin. The best education that a public institution could offer to all students, no matter race, creed or color. Based on their ability, based on their merit. That's what Dr. King was all about, right?”

The art piece has been met with mixed reviews, including critiques on its confusing shape. Sofia Francisco (I), an African American Studies student who attended the unveiling, however, thinks that if discussion solely surrounds the memorial's appearance, people will miss the message that the statue is supposed to send.

“Everyone should just look up, try to research and understand what Embrace Boston is trying to do and why the statue was put there in the first place,” she says.

Hundreds have already gathered to celebrate the statue and honor Dr. King's legacy, which has encouraged further discussion in the continued work and challenges Boston has ahead.

Francisco concludes, “Most of us have lived here our entire lives, and for a lot of us we will continue to be part of this city and continue to build it, and grow the culture in Boston. So it's good for us to see the history of it, and how it can be even better in the future.”

The Struggle for Democracy Spreads to Brazil

By **Rachel Starr (III)**

& **Thomas Blanchet (IV)**

Contributing Writers

On January 8, supporters of Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro stormed government buildings in Brasília to protest newly-elected President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's inauguration.

Right-wing politician Bolsonaro is well known for his “inflammatory attacks on women, Black people, gay people, foreigners and indigenous communities,” according to *The Guardian*, and has dismantled various climate-oriented cabinets in the Brazilian government. He is also a close ally of former United States President Donald Trump.

Bolsonaro lost the October 2 re-election to left-wing candidate Lula da Silva. In a tight race, the new president received 50.9 percent of the vote, while Bolsonaro received the other 49.1 percent. The government

also reported 5,700,443 blank or null votes, which could have modified the outcome of the election.

Over the course of three hours, protestors committed arson and vandalized the property of the Supreme Court, congressional and presidential buildings. They also physically attacked journalists and police officers. Experts have remarked that the brutality is no surprise considering Bolsonaro's history of inflammatory declarations and actions. Other government officials, including the governor of Brasília, Ibaneis Rocha, are being investigated for their roles in the insurrection.

Boston Latin School students have noticed that the attack was not discussed much in the classroom. Mina Breen (I) shares: “It unfortunately doesn't surprise me that it happened in Brazil, but I think it's just strange how we only paid attention when it happened in our country.”

These riots strongly parallel those of

the January 6 Capitol attack in Washington, D.C. almost exactly two years prior. While almost 1,000 trials of those who participated in the U.S.'s attack continue, around 1,500 people have been arrested in Brazil. In both cases former presidents had convinced their supporters to protest the “fraudulent” election processes.

“My initial feelings were fear that the patterns we've seen in the U.S. have spread to other countries,” adds BLS AP U.S. History teacher Ms. Ashley Balbian.

Though many believe these riots are undemocratic, the rioters themselves believe they were fighting for their own vision of democracy, driven by misinformation about the government.

When discussing policies to ensure less violence in the future, people often accuse political parties or ideologies, which may actually be what causes radical uprisings in the first place.

“These events are symptoms of ex-

treme political polarization,” says Brendan Nolan (III). “When people are drawn to power-hungry politicians, they become pawns for radical agendas.”

Like Nolan, some find that bridging the ever-increasing gap between political parties may be the only way to maintain democracy. Since social media platforms constantly draw people into echo chambers, or spaces where their strong opinions are enforced, moderation becomes harder to attain. Nolan believes that electing officials who aim to lead, instead of just to gain power, and are more willing to listen to different perspectives could be the answer.

The growing uncertainty about the ability of our nation and others to govern properly has stoked fear and made it easier for radical politicians to gain support in high-stakes elections. This event marks the second time a large-scale insurrection has taken place in a major global power since the start of the decade.

10 Things BLS Students Carry

By Xintong Guo (IV)
& Andrea Pineda (V)
Contributing Writers

Glimmers of individuality are apparent in a hallway full of students through the items in their backpacks, purses and tote bags. Whether tangible or abstract, the things Boston Latin School students carry reflect a wide range of experiences, hobbies and backgrounds.

Tim O'Brien's 1990 novel *The Things They Carried* inspired this article. Read in tenth grade at BLS, the book focuses on the fictionalized but genuine memoirs of American soldiers who served in the Vietnam War. Teachers modify the concept of writing about memories by assigning a "true school story," allowing students to reflect on the experiences that every BLS student shares.

A few students share the items they can't live without as *discipuli Bostoniensis Scholae Latinae*.

1. The Digital Artist's Go-To

While some artistic students carry sketchbooks with them, Laila Hollins (I) says that her most important item is her iPad. As a digital artist, she says, "It's very important for drawing." She enjoys creating comic strips and short animations because to her, art is "a universal story everyone can enjoy."

2. A Grandmother's Ice

Students such as Tiana Nguyen (V) carry physical reminders of their family. Nguyen wears a pair of diamond earrings, with diamonds from a necklace belonging to her grandmother.

3. The Literary Grind Never Stops

Students can be seen reading books in the dining hall as they eat their lunch or on the bus ride home. Lana Nguyen (VI) is currently reading *Dragonwings* by Laurence Yep for her Humanities class. She enjoys reading it because she empathizes with the challenges the characters face. Besides that, her favorite book series is *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins.

4. Crystal Magic

While some students turn to chemistry to learn about energy, others harness it through crystals. Isabel Vallentine (I), who always carries crystals with her, says, "Each of them have meanings and I'll remind myself throughout the day with them [that] this is my purpose for today." Her collection comes from local businesses in Salem, and every once in a while, she and her mom will go on a day trip to find crystals. Vallentine's favorite crystals are unakite for balance, carnelian for confidence and fluorite for positivity.

5. Ballin' at Clemente

Many students at BLS are sports enthusiasts. There is serious commitment from students like Rezart Comeau (II), who is always seen with a basketball on hand. He explains, "When I'm carrying it around, it's usually preparing for a game or practice or whatever it is. Even before I started playing with BLS, I went to Clemente [Field] with my friend almost every day."

6. Sol, A Needle Pulling Thread

BLS students can also embrace their creativity by joining the BLS Fiber Arts club. Greta Gorman (V) explains, "I carry crochet stuff in my bag for when I get bored." She is currently in the process of making a cardigan, but has previously crocheted scarves, hats and even stuffed animals. Gorman says her go-to teacher for crocheting is *YouTube*.

7. MBTA? More Like Skateboard

While most students walk, get driven or take the MBTA, one particular student brings an electric longboard, because he "doesn't want to walk to school." For some time, Albert Lin (I) toted his longboard, which he equipped with LED lights for safety, around the hallways of the School. The longboard now resides in his homeroom throughout the day before he hops on it to get back to his neighborhood in West Roxbury.

8. Headphones On, World Off

As headphones around the neck are quickly becoming a 2023 fashion trend, music enjoyers at BLS often don these wondrous noise machines to listen to their favorite tunes. Lin wears his Bose QuietComfort 45 headphones everywhere, "not because [he] liked Bose, but because [he] just wanted headphones and these were 100 dollars off." To him, "it was an Asian-level deal." His current favorite song is "Shelter" by Porter Robinson.

9. Chains That Are Key

The universal souvenirs: keychains. Students carry all kinds of keychains on their bags, some with tourist places like "Florida" printed on them and others with a stuffed animal or *Among Us* plushie. Their significance often undermined, they can serve as reminders of the places one has been and the memories that accompany them.

10. Most Important Of All...

Beyond physical items, intangible connections like friendship are valued by students. BLS English teacher Mr. Richard Beyer notices this common thread among his students' assignments: "The camaraderie, the friendships that they do make, [and the] support amongst each other is always something. [...] That kind of vibe echoes throughout [the student responses]."

ChatGPT Did Not Write This Article (But It May Soon)

By Sylvia O'Hearn (II)
& Olivia Chen (V)
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On November 30, 2022, developer OpenAI released its new software *ChatGPT*, which simulates human writing and conversation through artificial intelligence.

ChatGPT is a chatbot program that generates ideas or gives information in response to users' prompts. To teach the chatbot the patterns of human writing and ideas, programmers train it with pre-existing material.

Unlike past artificial intelligence softwares, *ChatGPT* predicts each word in a sentence instead of selecting a sentence from a predefined set of responses. Thus, the conversations it creates are distinctively natural-sounding, and it can answer almost any question a user asks.

ChatGPT can create code that can be used as a template to structure complex websites. AP Computer Science teacher Dr. Long Nguyen says, "This is a huge breakthrough. [...] I did test it when it came out and made all the news and it's amazing what it can do [...] I think it'll allow people to magnify what they can do in a short amount of time."

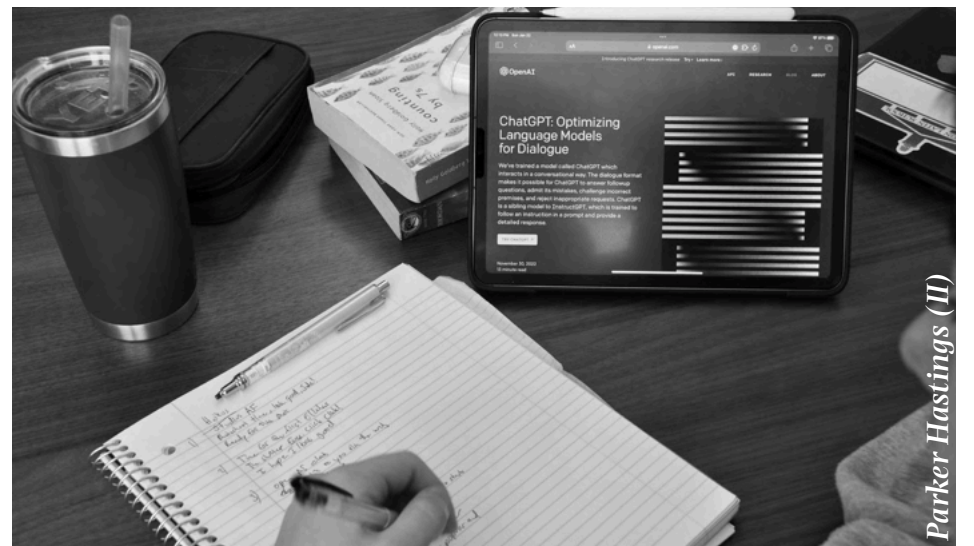
Another notable aspect of *ChatGPT* is its availability to the public. Currently, any-

one with an internet connection can access the program for free, though OpenAI has indicated that it plans to monetize *ChatGPT* in the future. Other companies like Google have been using artificial intelligence in some of their services for years, but the technology has mostly been behind the scenes.

Many believe that *ChatGPT* can have positive uses in education. It can generate assignment ideas, discussion topics or useful examples. Veronique Knobel (I) says, "It is very good at giving people examples of something that they may be trying to write, especially in a non-academic setting; if you just want to write a generic email but you don't want to make a fool of yourself."

Concerningly, the program can also output complex essays that are virtually indistinguishable from that which a real person might produce. Its advanced writing abilities and wide accessibility have raised concerns about academic integrity. Ms. Blake Barich, who teaches English 12 and AP Language and Composition, says, "I'm definitely concerned that students will use that [for assignments] because already, cheating and plagiarism [are issues]."

Despite her concerns, Ms. Barich thinks that cheating with the tool is still detectable. She adds, "Teachers are familiar with how students write in general. [So when their writ-



Students can use *ChatGPT* to complete work.

ing] seems so different, that's going to be a red flag."

Many schools and universities have already changed their policies in response to *ChatGPT*'s debut. *The New York Times* reports that some college professors have replaced typed assignments with oral or group projects. The website has also been blocked on some public school networks.

Education, however, may eventually adapt to the use of *ChatGPT*. Students could improve their writing skills by reviewing the

feedback it provides; educators may create more creative and complex assignments to prevent responses made by artificial intelligence. Teachers could also save time lesson-planning if *ChatGPT* could provide them with a template or generate data analyses.

Some students are concerned, however, about the potential consequences that *ChatGPT* may bring. Knobel remarks, "People won't really be able to develop their writing skills as well, because they already have this tool that will write perfect essays for them."

Chatting With ChatGPT

We decided to ask ChatGPT some questions and commands to test its strengths and limitations. Read on to see the responses that the AI language model provided. No edits were made to ChatGPT's answers.

Argo: Tell us something about the universe.

ChatGPT: The universe is vast and contains an estimated 2 trillion galaxies, each with billions of stars and planets. It is estimated to be around 13.8 billion years old and is still expanding.

A: Can you explain the metaverse as if you were talking casually to a friend in a dorm room?

C: Alright, imagine you and me are hanging out in our virtual dorm room, but suddenly Keanu Reeves walks in with a pack of kittens. But wait, we're not in the real world, we're in the metaverse! It's like the Matrix, but instead of just watching the world go by, you get to be a part of it. You can be a cat person or a dog person, have a virtual job, and even attend virtual concerts. The possibilities are endless, and Keanu and the kittens are just the tip of the iceberg. It's like a massive online world where anything is possible, and you get to be a part of the story. Plus, you get to hang out with Keanu and kittens!

A: Write a Victorian-style short story about two cats falling in love in Paris.

C: In the grand city of Paris, there lived two felines of exceptional grace, their eyes aglow with the fire of love's passion. On a bridge beside the Seine, they chanced to meet, and with a tender mew, their hearts were forever entwined. Their tails twined like ivy, as they whispered sweet nothings, their love as true as the stars above. No greater joy could be found, than the love between these two cats, a love that would endure through time and space, a love as beautiful as the city of lights itself.

A: Can you tell us a pickup line?

C: Sure thing! How about this one: "Are you a magician? Because whenever I look at you, everyone else disappears."

A: Are there more doors or wheels?

C: It is difficult to accurately determine the number of wheels versus doors in the world, as the number of each is constantly changing and varies greatly depending on the context and location. However, it is likely that there are more wheels in the world than doors. This is because wheels are used in a wide variety of products and vehicles, such as cars, buses, trains, bicycles, and even shopping carts. Additionally, wheels are also used in industrial machinery and equipment, such as construction vehicles and farming equipment. Doors, on the other hand, are primarily used in buildings and homes, and while there are many buildings and homes in the world, there are likely fewer of them than there are vehicles and other machines that use wheels.

A Holiday of All Work and No Play



Vivian Nguyen (I)

BLS celebrates Lunar New Year in the dining hall with a lion dance.

By **Mark Snekvik (III)**
& **Annie Dai (IV)**

Contributing Writers

The New Year is associated with relaxation, spending time with family and fresh beginnings. Boston grants everyone a week-long vacation to celebrate New Years with their loved ones and be free from school and work. So why don't the many Asian American students who celebrate Lunar New Year get the same opportunity?

The lunar calendar and observance of the new lunar year originated in China a millennium ago and eventually spread to other Asian countries. It holds extreme cultural significance, not only for a third of Boston Latin School students, but also for one-third of the entire world.

Regarding the personal meaning of Lunar New Year, BLS Chinese teacher Ms. Nancy Yang expresses, "During Spring Festival, I usually see friends and we eat and chat. If I'm

in China I visit my elders and relatives. [...] It is the single most important holiday to Asian people."

Lunar New Year is more than writing down some resolutions — it holds connotations of vanquishing evil, bad luck and poor habits; it eliminates uncleanness and welcomes the arrival of new things. Instead of being swamped with make-up work and impending term finals, Asian students should be given the opportunity to relax and celebrate their culture.

Although Lunar New Year is currently a no-test day, and absences are excused for students who choose to stay home for festivities, many students still decide to attend school to avoid the consequences of missing a day. This setup inherently forces students to choose between their academics and their heritage.

Some argue that students can enjoy the New Year without missing school, but a day off is necessary to prepare for and celebrate the Lunar New Year in full.

Nha Truong (I), co-president of BLS Asian Students in Action, demonstrates how choosing to attend school can

damage Asian students' connection to their culture, saying, "On the day of Lunar New Year, we eat and make sure we spend a lot of time together, [but] kids that choose to go to school don't get to have that. [...] So they're missing out on a big part of their culture, and I think trying to switch up that so it's a holiday for everyone could help. [...] It's a nice way to preserve our culture in the U.S."

Lunar New Year should become an official holiday so Asian students can properly celebrate their culture without perturbation. Many obstacles have prevented this from happening, exposing issues that cultural and religious minorities face in the Boston Public Schools system.

Turning Lunar New Year into a districtwide holiday, however, is a long and arduous process that requires many negotiations with several unions, planning and revisions to the district calendar. It can lead to disagreements on deciding which other holidays are also considered "important" enough. With all these factors, a no-test day has been the best compromise for the district so far.

At the root of these obstacles is a system that, for centuries, has accommodated holidays for people who identify with Christian or Eurocentric culture. It is inconsiderate and frustrating for minority groups because advocating for days off is simply not feasible.

Assistant Head of School Mr. Steven Chen explains, "[Christians and Europeans] were the dominant culture when all of these rules were made. You kind of get grandfathered into a system that you inherited. It's been ingrained in you since you've been in school, whereas Lunar New Year is a brand new way of thinking about this. [...] You have to navigate the cultural inertia of what you've adopted and what you've inherited. [...] It's something that students who are often in the cultural minority, that is something that they kind of have to navigate [...] and it's hard."

With these issues having been neglected for such a tremendous amount of time, progress feels unattainable. Seemingly at a dead end, it is easy to become discouraged, but still, it is important for students to continue to voice their opinions.

Mr. Chen agrees, "There's not no hope for this. [...] You're asking the right questions, you're probing the right issues. [...] It's just not as simple as, 'we should just get Lunar New Year off.' If it was that simple we would've already done it."

Students are strongly encouraged to take a day off for Lunar New Year in future years. It may not seem like much, but it demonstrates how important the holiday is to students — a necessary step toward it eventually becoming a districtwide holiday. With small, accumulating steps, this end goal is by no means impossible.

Celebrities Take on the Beauty Industry

By **Ariel Mura (III)**
& **Tessa Reidy (III)**

Contributing Writers

New celebrity beauty lines are emerging at a dizzying rate. There is Rare Beauty by Selena Gomez, about-face by Halsey, Fenty Beauty by Rihanna, Pleasing by Harry Styles, Barker Wellness by Travis Barker and so many more. Celebrity beauty brands are invading the market by threatening long-standing companies with their powerful fan bases and causing an uproar about the profit interests of celebrities.

These beauty companies are owned by some of the world's most well-known figures, each backed with a fan base of millions of devoted followers. Rather than focusing on the quality of the product, celebrity beauty lines succeed largely "because they have lots of influence on people," remarks Allison Rooney (III).

Boston Latin School history teacher Mr. Patrick Boor explains, "Celebrity endorsements and branding is a way to differentiate your beauty product from someone else's [and] is key in trying to build up brand loyalty in a highly competitive market." Manipulation runs rampant as fans are influenced to support the enterprises of their favorite A-list celebrities to show their fidelity to that public figure.

Consumers are typically swayed by celebrity influence and popularity, without considering the value of their products first. Shriya Chan (III) shares, "A ce-

lebrity-owned makeup brand is certainly more appealing to consumers because it can offer more credibility. Consumers would assume that since celebrities are wealthy, they are able to afford the best team for creating their makeup line."

This, however, is not always the case. Many consumers are more attracted to the personal image of a celebrity they adore compared to another generic, faceless product, regardless of the objective quality of that brand. For instance, Jessica Alba's The Honest Company has been involved in numerous lawsuits over allegations of ineffectiveness, causing skin irritation and using non-natural ingredients, despite being branded as such.

Much of the issue stems from the fact that these celebrities are not just promoting a product, but a lifestyle. By marketing a brand as their own, they create a correlation between their own life and their product, thereby presenting that lifestyle as attainable to their fans.

This mentality has proven to be dangerous on online platforms, as social media showcases illusions of the glamor of others' lives in contrast to one's own. Photo editing and plastic surgery are now common methods to change one's appearance in the public eye. Marketing a celebrity's makeup or skincare line as one that will help fans achieve the same level of unrealistic beauty is simply misleading.

Another example of the power that celebrities hold in creating their own beauty brands is price control. As Mr. Boor explains, because celebrities are able



Addison Rae models for Item Beauty, her makeup brand.

to garner such strong brand loyalty using their widespread influence, "[they] can raise [the price] without losing too many customers." By targeting a customer base that is less sensitive to price changes, many celebrity brands get away with overpricing products and are much less likely to be held accountable for such manipulation.

As a result, many celebrities are often much more interested in generating large profits rather than providing safe, unique products for the general public. This leads to the entrance of countless dangerous and generic products into a sat-

urated market. As more and more famous figures unveil beauty brands, they treat them either as a milestone in their career, or as another way to make as much money off of their impressionable audiences.

Poor-quality products can be limited, however, through reinforced requirements for beauty product testing or support for registered dermatologists and doctors to provide objective criticism. For now, unfortunately, the vicious cycle by which celebrity differentiated products attract new customers in a saturated market means that celebrity beauty products are here to stay.

Should Breaks Be Longer and Less Frequent?

Yes, Breaks Should Be Longer and Less Frequent

By Benjamin Jacobson (III)

Contributing Writer

Students often complain about school breaks being too short. In Massachusetts, there is a requirement of 180 school days per year. With the summer vacation, weekends and holidays, that leaves only a few weeks of break. The current system at Boston Latin School consists of a short Thanksgiving break, then about a week each in December, February and April. It is important, however, to question whether or not this is the most beneficial schedule to maximize the happiness of students and faculty. The BLS community as a whole deserves better; longer and less frequent breaks are what we need.

More frequent breaks may appear satisfactory upon first glance, but upon closer inspection, breaks are more valuable when they are longer and less frequent. They create consistency rather than a fluctuation of breaks.

Private and charter schools in the greater Boston area have two-week breaks in March and December but none in February and April. If BLS were to switch to this schedule, it would better allow for students to spend breaks with their friends, family and those who attend other schools.

Frequent breaks mean more time to travel but less time actually relaxing and relieving stress. Traveling comes at a great cost to families. BLS Italian teacher Mr. Freddy Rodriguez-Diaz expresses, "The airport personnel are rude, they lose your baggage, flights are delayed, you have many layovers, you miss a layover. [...] It is not fun traveling."

Longer breaks, on the other hand, allow for more flexibility in regard to traveling and vacationing. People do not have to worry about having jet lag when they return or missing school due to canceled flights.

Some may argue that more breaks provide more opportunities for stress relief, but constant on-and-off breaks from December to April are disruptive to school and club schedules. The current system strips students of their academic mindsets multiple times throughout each school year, while simultaneously preventing them from experiencing the bliss of rest — one week is insufficient to fully relax.

With only one week, students are able neither to fully adjust to a vacation mindset nor to revert back to an academic mindset when it is time to return to school. With two weeks, however, students will be ready to return to school energized after fully relieving their stress.

Short and frequent breaks also add turbulence to the already heavy burden on teachers. It is difficult to anticipate altering due dates for larger assignments around breaks or planning out assessments. For example, returning from December break is met by a hysterical flurry of events, with finals week planned within the following weeks and term grades closing soon after.

There are many ways to implement the break schedule, but students and teachers benefit most from longer, more infrequent breaks. Next school year, Boston Public Schools should change the school schedule by abolishing February and April breaks to create room for two-week breaks.

No, Breaks Shouldn't Be Longer and Less Frequent

By Mia White (II)

Contributing Writer

Breaks from school are a universal joy that every student looks forward to. These periods provide a chance to step back from work and, more importantly, to cherish time with family and friends. Fortunately, the current Boston Public Schools schedule, which allots one-week breaks every few months, gives students perfect opportunities to do so.

While many private schools offer a two-week vacation in March and two-week break in December, it is by no means a superior model. Shorter, more frequent breaks are more beneficial to students' success because they lack the downsides of lost learning time, high stress and disruption to extracurricular activities.

As students prepare for a long break, such as the winter holidays, their anticipation is reflected in the days before. It is difficult to focus and retain the lessons their teachers give as their attention spans slowly wane, so teachers often spend additional time going over content.

While on break, students' schedules are very different from the ones they abide by upon returning to school. As a result, the first few days after break are spent readjusting to their regular routines rather than learning, and students lose valuable learning time.

With a shorter break, however, students are motivated to accomplish much more. Sadie Bornhorst (III) states, "After coming back from [shorter breaks], getting back to school is not very difficult because I know that I will have a short week and or an upcoming break." If students have something short but sweet to look forward to, they will make the most of the time that they have in between.

Getting rid of one-week breaks in February and April, especially in the absence of long weekends, would feel monotonous and exhausting. Before having days off, BLS students would be subject to the stress of two important testing periods over the winter marking period: midyears and Term III midterms. Having time to reset is essential for students to avoid burnout. It also ensures that, when they return to school, they will be in a fresh mindset to learn.

Aside from academics, longer breaks would also affect students involved in sports and other extracurricular activities. Bornhorst remarks, "During the winter season, my coach would always schedule practices and games over breaks, other than holidays, and in the spring I would have two practices a day." In the case of one-week breaks, taking a week off of practice is not nearly as disruptive as two weeks would be and it gives athletes more opportunity to spend time with family and friends.



Ask the Students: Should Breaks Be Longer and Less Frequent?

"Yes, I have a crippling addiction to *Valorant*, and I want a longer break where I can finally win my bronze promos."



Vishnu Eskew (I)

"Yes, I think breaks should be longer so we can forget school exists."



Bill Chen (II)

"No, I like how it is now because if the breaks were too long, I would lose my school habits."



Matthew Hanlon (III)

"No, I think they should have more breaks such as three-day weekends instead of longer breaks happening less frequently."



Charlie Partridge (IV)

"Yes, I think breaks should be longer and more infrequent so our bodies and minds have time to catch up with the stress and we have time to relax!"



Emmy Zamora (V)

"Yes, I think that breaks should be longer and less frequent so we have more time to relax and cool down after all our hard work."



Ryan Unsworth (VI)

The BLS Argo Presents...

Valentine's Day Carnation Sale

BUY FROM ANY ARGO EDITOR

FROM FEB. 6 TO FEB. 11; 1 FLOWER FOR \$1, 6 FLOWERS FOR \$5

Humanizing Humanitarian Aid Organizations



A United Nations hunger campaign displays this image of an affected child.

**By Hannah Stoll (III)
& Kassidi Thompson (I)**
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Advertisements of humanitarian aid organizations, such as the Red Cross or the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), often present a particular image: a person struggling, injured or in need of food or water, perhaps covered in dust or blood. Almost every humanitarian organization popularizes their cause through this pity-driven marketing strategy, and although this method is effective, it is unethical. Today, advertisements published by humanitarian organizations create stereotypes, promote tokenization and broadcast the suffering of marginalized groups.

Humanitarian ads incorporate “shock advertising,” which works specifically to target consumer guilt, resulting in greater fundraising. At their core, humanitarian organizations are funded by the general public's empathy for those “less fortunate,” as well as social norms that promote a responsi-

bility to “give back.” Once these emotions run their course, countries, still in need, are left with warped global perceptions, making them more vulnerable than before.

For most people, consumption of such advertisements does not result in donations, but instead internalization of stereotypes and tokenization of communities that are unable to control the circumstances they live in. Alexandra Lee (III), co-president of Boston Latin School Red Cross, describes how “aid organizations often use pictures of people from continents such as Africa and Asia, which really contributes to the single-story narrative that those areas of the world are defined by being underdeveloped.” These warped perceptions impact how these humanitarian aid organizations reach people in need.

Humanitarian organizations are consistent in their fundraising, but they are quickly outpaced by the trajectory of modern conflicts dealing with disease, climate change and war — arguably the chief reasons for why these organizations exist in the first place. The Global Humanitarian Overview estimates that about 35 billion dollars is necessary to fulfill the

goals of these organizations combined, an amount 18 times the cost projected in the late 1990s.

Not only is this expectation unrealistic for fundraisers, but it is also unsustainable as these numbers only continue to rise. These large numbers, paired with an equally massive disregard for the true needs of targeted communities, illustrate how humanitarian organizations are less influential than they advertise themselves to be.

Over the last decade, the effectiveness of humanitarian organizations has been challenged by stagnant job employment in aided countries, with surveys indicating that few people believe their requests are included in aid provision and people selling their aid for more necessary things. For instance, Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs at the United Nations, conducted a survey in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Somalia and Uganda in 2020, which showed that more than half of these populations believed the aid they received failed to cover their most important needs.

These humanitarian organizations raise such large amounts of money via harmful advertisements, yet their aid is not promoting effective change in the communities they serve. Only the continued perpetuation of stereotypes and tokenization of these communities is gained from manipulative advertisements.

Instead, aid organizations should seek to reallocate funding towards grassroots organizations in the countries where they center their outreach efforts, supporting individuals and communities affected by humanitarian crises around the world.

BLS Facing History and Capstone teacher Ms. Judi Freeman describes several organizations that do this effectively, including Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) and Partners in Health (PIH). She points out their exceptional fundraising model that redirects their narratives away from common promises of humanitarian aid to “save” countries in need, and instead directs them toward helping these countries achieve self-autonomy: “What's great about organizations like PIH and PHR that you'll recognize if you dig deeper in their materials, is that you see that their emphasis isn't actually on bringing ‘savior doctors’ from Europe and the [United States], but they bring in well-trained doctors who come in and train local doctors so that they can take over the care, which they do.”

Other aid organizations should follow these organizations' lead, putting people and their dignity at the core of what they do, including within their advertising and fundraising efforts. A picture of students learning diligently in school could be just as effective as an image of a child in a war-torn country to raise funds, without stripping people of their dignity and using them performatively.

McCarthy's De-no-crazy

By Roan Wilcox (III)
Contributing Writer

Speaker Kevin McCarthy's recent concessions in the House of Representatives, one of the most powerful bodies in the United States government, highlight a dangerous trend for America. The House must relearn how to make thoughtful policies for public appeasement.

Politicians pursue this recently developed modus operandi in the name of “delivering” for voters, grotesquely displayed in the demands made by a vocal Republican faction to secure votes for Kevin McCarthy, a Republican from California, for Speakership, to which McCarthy begrudgingly gave in.

Republicans opposed McCarthy's bid for Speaker — the top leadership position in the House and second in line to the presidency which has considerable power over the legislation that comes to the floor. They could be grouped into two factions: the so-called “never Kevin” crew, whose representatives opposed McCarthy on both a political and personal basis, and members of the Freedom Caucus, a conservative group of Republicans in favor of small government and less spending. While both had different reasons for opposing McCarthy, the Freedom Caucus's stance in particular is cause for meaningful concern.

Led by Charles “Chip” Roy (Republican from Texas), the Freedom Caucus made several key demands of McCarthy, including a required threshold for a vote to oust

the speaker and, most importantly, a pledge to oppose the passage of a bill to raise the debt ceiling without spending cuts.

The debt ceiling, a popular political point, is a legislatively mandated limit on the amount of debt the United States government may borrow. While the Freedom Caucus's demand to cap debt levels is a reasonable response to an annual federal deficit in excess of one trillion dollars, their way of addressing it is not. It can be likened to a person refusing to increase the amount they borrow for their mortgage, after already agreeing to a certain price that they cannot afford.

It quickly became evident that what McCarthy and fiscal “conservatives” are achieving with this message is destroying American credit, not creating a more financially secure government.

The consequences of an ineffective government are severe, particularly for Speaker McCarthy. Boston Latin School AP Government and Politics teacher Ms. Meredith Elliott states, “It seems like [there's] a lot of instability in the House, where [...] McCarthy doesn't seem to have the capacity to get everyone on board. Instead, he's managing his faction.”

At a time of immense division, it is hardly the time for the Speaker to be more preoccupied appeasing extreme members of his party rather than working for a better America, not to mention the unnecessary burden of forcing an ex post facto addressment of financial commitments that have already been made.



Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) was elected Speaker of the House.

Aidan Zaphiris (II) predicts, “This will also likely serve as a sign of future inconsistency and might not lead to great progress for House Republicans and their agenda.”

To list just a few consequences of inaction, there would be no meaningful legislation over the next two years, the United States would default on its debt, it might cause global financial turmoil and it could completely break down House operations as political parties gridlock against themselves.

There is, however, still hope in regards to the debt ceiling, says Ms. Elliott, as at the end of the day, “you have to look at who

benefits and who is harmed by not raising the debt ceiling. It's hard for me to see a political advantage for doing this.”

Indeed, this line of reasoning applies to much of Washington — the people elect politicians to get results, and provided they believe politicians act in their best interests, utter calamity should be avoided.

As much as one may despise McCarthy for his pandering and classical “politician” maneuvering, as a BLS student, one has to at least respect his perseverance in reaching his lofty goal, which took 15 rounds of voting.

No Lows to Lo-fi

By Neil Jin (II)

& Angelina Wei (IV)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Today, searching “study playlist” on *YouTube* or *Spotify* will yield hundreds of results in less than a second, with many playlists amassing millions of views. High school students should develop study habits that revolve around listening to calming background music, such as lo-fi. One should listen to music while studying and working because it helps one stay attentive.

Trying to study while under stress is counterproductive. Having participated in many Science Olympiad competitions that require countless hours of studying, William Liyuan (III) knows this feeling all too well. He explains, “Music can be really useful for when you need something to help de-stress and keep you awake for work.” Calm music creates a serene environment that limits distractions and makes for a more relaxing experience.

Background music allows people to absorb information faster. The brain creates patterns to help recall, understand and process knowledge. While listening to music in a study session, neural activities mirror the rhythm of the music. For instance, processing slower music makes neurons fire slower, which is beneficial for alleviating stress. On the other side of the spectrum, upbeat music makes neurons

fire faster, keeping people motivated while they study.

Furthermore, music can cause the brain to initiate a synaptic response and release dopamine. This “reward” hormone allows the mind to overcome the difficult and frustrating parts of studying without burning out, helping people push through the obstacles of studying.

Music, however, is not the only way that people can study more effectively. Boston Latin School guidance counselor Ms. Jennifer Segal explains, “Try different strategies to find your best fit. Also, realize that you may need to study differently in different classes as well. [...] Take breaks! Stand up and move around. [...] Taking breaks helps you to refocus your attention and be more efficient.”

Some people may argue that listening to music while studying is distracting, as your brain will pay more attention to the background noise. A study from *Sage Journals* finds that this is only true in some circumstances: typically, only loud music is distracting. In fact, to be considered “loud,” the music had to be as loud as a vacuum cleaner. For people who listen to music at a reasonable volume, there should be no adverse effect on one’s focus.

BLS Math Team Captain Owen Jin (I) says, “I like to listen to instrumental music or more peaceful K-pop songs at a low volume while studying. [...] Music does help me de-stress and relax. If it is



Cleo Barowsky (V) listens to music while doing homework.

not too loud, but somewhat upbeat, it keeps my motivation high.”

Vocal music is more distracting than instrumental music because its lyrics tend to divert one’s attention away from studying and work. Liyuan adds, “When doing heavy sustained work it might be detrimental to listen to music with lyrics.”

There is a multitude of music genres on *YouTube*, *Spotify* and other streaming platforms. The most productive genres, however, are lo-fi and classical, which

kick off a study session with a positive, engaging mood.

Studying is, without a shadow of a doubt, a big part of BLS life, especially as tests become more demanding throughout the school year. While studying, the mind and body can easily become exhausted. Music, however, can be a major tool, relaxing the mind and drowning out the distracting noises of everyday life, in turn helping students focus better, absorb information quickly and gain motivation while studying.

College With a Sprinkle of Classism

By Denis Cunniffe (II)

& Luke Joseph (II)

Contributing Writers

Early Decision (ED) admissions programs are not only unnecessary, but also present a barrier to college applicants who do not come from wealthy backgrounds. ED is an application process utilized by many colleges across the United States that involves applying and committing to attend that institution if accepted. The applicant signs a contract promising to enroll in the institution regardless of the financial aid plan offered and must also immediately rescind any outgoing applications once they are accepted.

It is important to distinguish ED from Early Action (EA). While EA requires students to apply at a similar time as ED applicants, their decisions are non-binding. Statistically, ED programs have higher acceptance rates compared to those of EA and Regular Decision.

ED is heavily biased towards applicants from wealthier families as they are the only ones who can afford paying the full price tag for a private university. In 2023, the total price of a private university approximates to 80,000 dollars a year, which is not financially feasible for most Americans. To compare, the average American household has an annual income of 70,000 dollars.

Aidan McVay (II) points out, “[ED programs] assume we are in an ideal world where financial aid is accessible enough to those who need it, that money wouldn’t make or break anybody’s decision to attend a certain college.” That ideal world, unfortunately, does not exist, and the cost of attending college is a heavy burden on the average household.

ED programs ignore financial realities: they take away applicants’ ability to compare the costs of attending different colleges and evaluate how each would affect them financially, which is one of the most important parts of the selection process.

Those who value financial security are less inclined to apply ED because they must juggle payment options. In some cases, low-income students who apply ED may receive an insufficient financial aid package and become subjected to large amounts of school debt.

It seems, however, that ED programs will not be going away anytime soon. The process is widely popular and incredibly beneficial to top universities at the expense of low-income students. ED allows schools to secure tuition revenue early and lock up recruited athletes, while also allowing them to lower acceptance rates. As a result, the system allows universities to increase their “yield,” or percentage of students who enroll.

Society is becoming increasingly complacent with systems that benefit a few and disadvantage the less-privileged. BLS economics and AP U.S. History teacher Mr. Dominic Rinaldi expresses, “Nothing will change until enough of society decides to stop participating in the process.”

When it comes to ED, applicants essentially put their financial conditions in the hands of a private institution. KC Kirby (I) explains, “With Early Action, I can get my decision earlier, and I get more leeway with choosing my next four years of education. [...] Unlike with Early Decision, you aren’t restricted to that one college and get to think about if that college is the one you really want to go to.” In a country founded upon the basis of liberty, ED strips applicants of their freedom of choice.

Classism has been deeply rooted in our society for centuries. Time and time again, society has barred the lower class from important opportunities. While education is viewed as a tool for social mobility, ED allows colleges to be biased toward applicants of affluent backgrounds, while denying many less affluent applicants the opportunity to climb the social ladder. Those who enter this contract provide top universities, such as Ivy League colleges, millions of dollars while leaving others in thousands of dollars of debt.

Chase Your Dream, Not a Job

By Fiona Yuan (II)

& Brandon Flores (IV)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Children are often told to “follow their dreams.” For impressionable youth, this phrase once represented an excitement to venture into the infinite expanse of career possibilities. For middle- and high-school students, however, the realism of job prospects and the fear of uncertainty may seem all-encompassing. Although income must be a primary factor taken into account when looking into career options, students should prioritize passions in order to achieve personal fulfillment and success.

The job market is constantly changing, and jobs that are inconceivable today might become a legitimate way of maintaining a sustainable lifestyle in the future. Ultimately, the job market is influenced by the demands and interests

of the people, so the economy is naturally dependent on people’s passions. Innovation opens new job opportunities all the time, as seen in the airplane and subsequent air travel industry and the thousands of people who work at airports. As another example, the idea that people could make a living by recording themselves and sharing their lives via the internet may have been mocked 15 or so years ago. Now, content creation has emerged as a new, viable career path.

Over time, goals change. Boston Latin School World History teacher, Mr. Nicholas Fogel, advises, “You can’t script your life.” Planning out everything meticulously might seem like the right thing to do, but it does not always work out, especially in the realm of jobs. Young people often confine themselves to specific pathways, wrongly assuming that if they go down one path and it does not go as planned, it will be too late to do anything about it. This is not always

the case, however, as it is possible to enter a different path at later points in life — many people successfully switch majors in college and even obtain graduate degrees that do not pertain to their initial interests.

Having traveled across the country meeting people of different lifestyles, professions and experiences, Mr. Fogel comments, “The people who I was talking to, who I was most inspired by, were folks who followed an interest and didn’t necessarily know where that was going to take them, but they knew themselves very well.” In the real world, people’s careers are constantly changing; remaining in the same situation for the course of an entire career assumes idealistic conditions where nothing changes, but the reality is otherwise.

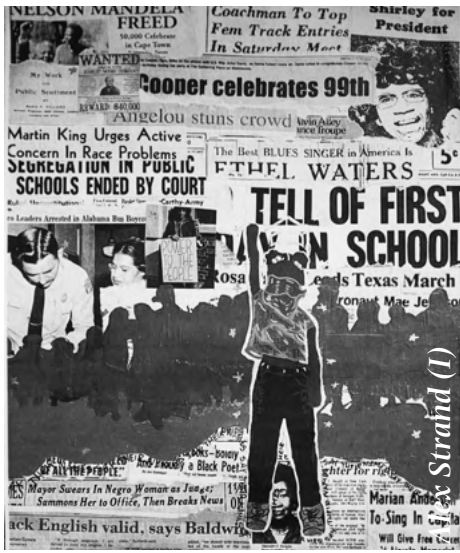
People who explore their passions and have the right mindset for success are able to find happiness even without an ideal income. Luz Marquez (I) adds, “I hope

to learn from people like that because I feel like they have this peace where they’re not always in this state of mind where it’s like, ‘I have to do more, I could have done this.’ Because when you start thinking like that, you start regretting.”

In essence, overambition to achieve a lofty bank account can be damaging. It causes people to look down on themselves and their prior achievements. This is especially true for those who lacked resources growing up, since they feel obligated to secure access to those necessities.

Humans have a natural tendency to be ambitious, constantly seeking the next best thing. This principle applies to individuals throughout their lives, who are always working to do better, to have more and to provide more for other people. Choosing passion over monetary gain allows people to be genuinely satisfied with where they are and live more in the present.

MLK's Vision Begins with Students



Artist: Giani Rodrigues (II).

**By Harrison Tran (I)
& Anneliese Yu (VI)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

The Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Day celebration is one of the most important traditions at Boston Latin School. Not only

do we celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., but we also celebrate our talented peers who seek to make their mark on the world. This year's celebration took place on January 13 and included several dances, musical and spoken word performances from BLS Gospel Choir, Treble Choir, Big Band, BLS Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge and other student groups.

BLS's annual art and essay contest challenged students to consider this year's theme, "Our Stories, Our Dreams, It Begins With Me." Amirah Redwing (II) and Giani Rodrigues (II) rose to the occasion and expressed their artistic visions through prose and art to make this event an MLK day to remember.

Redwing, the winner of the essay contest, felt that "our dreams" were the most inspiring part of this year's theme, sharing, "I have the [hope] and dreams of generations, and you must too." Her dreams motivate her to craft the world that she envisions. When thinking about the future, it is essential to think about the past. Redwing explains, "I wanted to start by acknowledging those who came before me. Those before me whose

words, ideas, courage and resilience have shaped the way I view the world as well as how I wish to shape the future."

Redwing wanted to show the bravery, courage and strength of her ancestors and honor their legacy by continuing their dream of creating a more loving world. She was also inspired by the works of Stan Lee and his superheroes, who maintain that great powers come with great responsibilities. She believes that we must fight for social equity for ourselves, and also for those before and after us.

Rodrigues, this year's art contest winner, wanted to pay tribute to the many recent accomplishments in the Black community, while also acknowledging the major social issues of today.

For Rodrigues, the phrase "It Begins With Me" from this year's theme is most important. She feels that we have a personal responsibility in all of our actions and that "we can give support to what's going on and demand changes."

In describing how her composition conveys these concepts, she explains that her piece "has shadows, darkness and lots of grays, showing past and [present] struggles."

The future is symbolized by a young girl in the foreground, surrounded by stars to "represent younger generations and progress as we strive for equity for the Black community."

Alongside Redwing and Rodrigues, BLS art teacher Mr. Stephen Harris and his students painted a mural that was unveiled at the MLK Day celebration. Nearly 10 years ago, Mr. Harris and his students created a similar mural to commemorate MLK day.

That mural, however, was beginning to age, and Mr. Harris wanted to recreate it. Thus, he ordered a massive canvas in the summer and began a new painting process on January 9. In under a week, Mr. Harris and his group of student volunteers were able to paint a large blue and red portrait of MLK. The project was completed on January 12.

MLK Day is a time to celebrate the life, accomplishments and hopes of Martin Luther King Jr., as well as the dreams that he inspired within subsequent generations. Through their art and writing, the talented artists showcased at the MLK Day festivities have successfully realized these visions.

BLS Theatre Bridges Waters Old and New

**By Alex Strand (I)
& Parker Hastings (II)**

Contributing Writers

Boston Latin School recently had the privilege of seeing *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea*, written by Nathan Alan Davis, at the Black Box Theatre. Produced by Head of BLS Theatre Mr. Joseph Gels and Kayla DePina (I), Davis's powerful and thought-provoking play explores themes of identity, family and self-discovery.

The play recounts the story of Dontrell Jones, a young man who sets out on a journey to reconnect with his roots and discover his true self. It fosters an environment of recognition of the past, forcing viewers to analyze the effects of previous generations on Dontrell.

The writing in this play is truly fascinating. Davis's use of imagery, symbolism and natural dialogue is both poetic and evocative. KC Kirby (I), who played Dontrell, gave an outstanding performance. They brought a depth and nuance to the character that made

Dontrell come alive on stage.

Kirby describes the show as offering an "emotional, heartwarming connection." The supporting cast was excellent, collaborating perfectly to create an immersive world.

The show takes place the summer after Dontrell's graduation from high school, when the young scholar is on track to attend college in just a few weeks. The performance takes a turn as Jones realizes a more important mission: family. The play is relatively new to the theater world, and when asked why viewers should see it, Sarah-Molly Huff (III) says, "It's amazing that we get to put on a show that highlights the Black experience in America, and I am so glad I was a part of it!" The storyline includes romance, fights, laughs and cake, all within an hour and a half.

In addition to the direction and performances, the set design and lighting added even more excitement and emotion to the show. They helped create an atmosphere that enhanced the overall experience. Parker Alva (IV) organized the lights, and he worked especially hard on the scenes involving a pool. He says, "We had to hang a light on the overhead



Dontrell, KC Kirby (I), argues with his father, Zoe Colimon (II).

bar and focus it into a square in order to get it to really feel like a pool, and the end product looked really great."

The costume and props were outstanding as well. With Parker Alva's (IV) exception-

al cake decorating and Isa Gonzalez's (II) costume design, every aspect of the show came together fantastically by BLS students.

Bravo and congratulations to everyone involved!

Musicians Impress at Senior Districts



The senior districts band rehearses before their performance.

**By Mai Babila-Weigmann (I)
& Caitlin Donovan (I)**

Staff Writers

On January 7, 442 students from over 30 high schools in the greater Boston area convened for the Massachusetts Music Educators Association (MMEA) Eastern District Senior Festival at Boston Latin

School. The performers spent two days at BLS, with a rehearsal on January 6 that lasted eight hours and a performance on January 7 that lasted four hours.

26 of the selected students were BLS musicians: 12 vocal, eight winds and percussion, five strings and one jazz. All four voice parts and ten unique instruments from BLS were represented in performances. Additionally, half of the selected

performers from BLS were given All-State recommendations. The All-State Concert will take place on March 4 at Symphony Hall.

BLS has hosted the MMEA Eastern District Festivals since the creation of the Eastern District in the early 2000s. The Eastern District is comprised of multiple cities in the Greater Boston area, including Boston, Cambridge and Brookline.

This festival was the first in-person event hosted by the MMEA Eastern District since 2020. When asked about the pandemic's effect on planning the event, BLS Music Department Program Director Ms. Margaret McKenna says, "It's another layer of precautions that sometimes works and sometimes doesn't."

Even though faculty spent hours carefully planning this event, no one could have anticipated the fire alarm that went off around noon on rehearsal day. Head of School Jason Gallagher later announced that there was no real threat in the building, but the evacuation created unexpected chaos.

Even with hundreds of additional students in the school, Ms. McKenna says, "The students that were here were fantastic." This interruption did not disrupt the motivation of the student performers,

who were able to resume rehearsal soon after re-entering the building.

The gathering of hundreds of passionate musicians created an extremely welcoming atmosphere at BLS. Students were able to collaborate with others who share the same musical talent and passion. Justin Gao (III), a trombone player, expresses, "It was nice playing with different people from different schools."

Performers had to learn multiple pieces for the audition and the festival. Some pieces even had several movements. Cora Maddox (I), a soprano for BLS Concert Choir, remarks, "Our setlist was meticulously chosen to convey a specific message; it was all about pushing through challenges and celebrating our resilience."

Both Gao and Ms. McKenna noted that their favorite performance was "Come Sunday." This piece, written by Omar Thomas, draws inspiration from Southern Black churches and worship. Ms. McKenna says, "It's really joyful and beautiful, and the band played it so well. It sounded amazing."

Despite the tumult caused by an unexpected fire alarm, Senior District participants remained focused and worked together to produce impressive performances.

The Abstract World of *Frank Bowling's Americas*

By **Alice Li (V)**
Contributing Writer

From October 22 to April 9, the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston is hosting an exhibit titled *Frank Bowling's Americas*. The showcase features over 30 paintings from Guyana-born British painter and artist Frank Bowling. General admission fees are 27 dollars for adults, 10 dollars for ages 7 to 17 and free for children under six years old.

Born in 1934, Bowling graduated from the Royal College of Art in London with a silver medal in 1962. He then moved to New York in 1966 and lived there for almost a decade. He taught as an assistant professor at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston for a few years and was elected to the Royal Academy of

Arts in 2005.

Bowling's work is mostly abstract expressionist, a style which originated in Europe, but blossomed in New York City after World War II. Boston Latin School visual arts teacher Mr. Joseph Carrigg comments, "Before, artists did all the portraits and the scenes, but then the camera came around," increasing the popularity for abstract arts.

Frank Bowling's Americas showcases the artwork Bowling created during his residence in New York. According to the MFA's website, "*Frank Bowling's Americas* offers an essential contribution to a more cross-cultural and global understanding of modern art."

The exhibit is located on the first floor, near the Fenway entrance of the museum. The first room displays Bowling's *Map Paintings*, which depicts the outlines of several

continents. Parts of the continents' outlines are clearly visible, while other parts blend into the background. These paintings marked the beginning of Bowling's experimentation with the abstract expressionist style.

The next room includes copies and notes from Bowling's *5+1* project, an exhibition curated by Bowling that displays the art of five African American artists along with his own. This project draws inspiration from the Black Power movement, which gained momentum during his time in New York. Bowling also wrote for a few years as an editor for the *Arts Magazine* and contributed to the discussion of "Black arts."

Finally, the exhibit leads to a room with works that emphasize Bowling's various painting techniques. In his collection *Pouring Paintings*, Bowling poured paint

from above to create different textures on the canvas. He routinely employs slashing, stitching and stenciling techniques in his artwork. In pieces such as *Looking West Again* and *4 Bensusi*, objects are painted on and ingrained into the product to introduce personal meaning.

Bowling also uses a mix of materials like ammonia, acrylic paint and metallic paint to produce radiant colors and vivid tones. In Bowling's *Suncrush*, the bright hues evoke a warmth likely representative of Bowling's early life in Guyana's tropical weather.

Frank Bowling says, "I'm looking for something that will jolt me and I can feel that rush — the nervous system being so excited it's going to act. It's what keeps me awake at night." This passion is beautifully captured in *Frank Bowling's Americas*.

Kaleidoscope Switches Up the Order

By **Zoe Colimon (II)**
Contributing Writer

All television shows follow a simple, unspoken rule — watch the episodes in order. *Netflix* has decided to break this rule by producing a show that can be watched in any order: *Kaleidoscope*.

This new heist drama, released on January 1, consists of eight different parts, each highlighting a significant event in the crew's burglary plan. It spans from two years before the heist to six months after it. Unlike other shows, it provides viewers with pieces of information instead of following a linear timeline.

Filmed in Brooklyn, the show has a familiar yet mysterious vibe that is guaranteed to have viewers on the edges of their seats. We have all seen heist media, but *Kaleidoscope* takes it to a whole new level — with its intricate characters, thoughtful planning and climactic execution, the show keeps watchers on their toes while giving them valuable background knowledge. Interestingly, it can be watched in exactly 40,320 different combinations, but *Netflix* always lists the finale as episode "White," which culminates in the actual heist.

Although one can watch it in chronological order, viewers find that the show is more enticing when they can choose. It gives power to the individual

and allows new viewers to begin watching without confusion. Gabriel Feinberg (II) says, "The show was super engaging. I really enjoyed connecting information about the characters throughout the episodes, and how past events lead to others."

The creator, Eric Garcia, uses numerous tools to give the story a more exciting twist. By following suspense with shocking reveals, he tells an invigorating story. The show also puts a new twist on color theory. Each episode possesses a title that states a color, which is significant throughout the run. When asked about the show's open watch order, its lead actor Giancarlo Esposito says, "I think the magic of this is to watch it in the color scheme that appeals to you."

Even though the show has been praised as a groundbreaking production, it was awarded a mere 6.1 out of 10 rating on the *IMDb* website. Some critics claim the overall plot is too boring to make up for the interwoven storytelling. Other critics think the story is too difficult to follow.

Preston Musoke (II) says, "It was a bit confusing at times, but it was worth the hype in my opinion."

With its action-packed episodes, fun characters and complex arrangement, *Kaleidoscope* manages to blow viewers away and portray life in new colors. Although no *Netflix* original is perfect, *Kaleidoscope* comes close.



Kaleidoscope's cover reflects its nonlinear plot.

Catherine's Concerto: *SOS* by SZA

By **Catherine Cox (III)**
Staff Writer



SOS

By SZA

December 9, 2022

Genre: R&B

Highlights: "SOS," "Kill Bill,"

"F2F"

Rating: 8/10

After five long years, Solána Rowe, better known as SZA, has finally released her highly anticipated sophomore studio album, *SOS*. Released on Top Dawg Entertainment and RCA records, the album sees SZA channel all the emotions and events that have occurred since her last studio album, *Ctrl* (2017).

The album opens with title track "SOS," where SZA proclaims her distaste and aggravation towards a past love interest, lamenting the effort she poured into unrequited love. The opening horn sequence is sampled from Gabriel Hardeman Delegation's "Until I Found The Lord (My Soul Couldn't Rest)" and pays tribute to her soul influences.

The second track of the album, "Kill Bill," continues to express the frustration caused by SZA's relationship with a comical component in the hook: "I might kill my ex / Not the best idea." Reissued as a single after the album's release, "Kill Bill" has rapidly climbed charts and social platforms due to its popularity on *Instagram* and *TikTok*.

"Love Language" and "Blind" return to the R&B sound SZA is known for by bringing in hip-hop undertones and an orchestral component. In the last phrase of "Love Language," SZA samples her popular 2020 song "Hit Different."

Throughout her career, SZA has collaborated with artists from a variety of genres. "Ghost in the Machine," arguably one of the most anticipated tracks on the album, features indie-pop singer Phoebe Bridgers. The track combines SZA's range with Bridgers's signature soft, stacked vocals,

blending the unique sounds of each artist together effortlessly. "F2F" explores an indie-pop sound reminiscent of the early 2000s with an acoustic guitar lead and live drum set. Furthermore, it features vocals and lyrics from popular American singer and rapper Lizzo.

Continuing the acoustic guitar lead into the next song, "Nobody Gets Me" showcases SZA's vocal range and lyrical skills, expanding on her relationship with her ex-fiancé. In an interview with radio station *Hot 97*, SZA elaborated on the struggles she expresses in the song: "We went through all of these arguments. [...] I just felt like I was going to be doomed to be in hell for the rest of my life."

Connections to social media abound in this album, with its third single, "Shirt," reflecting SZA's commercial success. A snippet of the song was posted to her *Instagram* story in October 2020 and went viral soon after, creating an immense desire among listeners for a full version. "Shirt" has become SZA's "BIGGEST debut on the Global *Spotify* Chart, with 3,949,534 streams," according to @ChartingSZA on *Twitter*. Likewise, "I Hate U" and "Good Days" have become instantly popular on social media, luring listeners in with catchy hooks and major chord progressions.

An album with 23 tracks is an ambitious project, but SZA rose to the challenge and did not disappoint her listeners. With a perfect balance of vulnerability and originality, *SOS* further defines SZA's artistic identity, blending genres while maintaining the consistent, authentic sound that any artist strives for. In her own words, "If you sound like you, your [music is] going to be cohesive."

Mary & Emilia's Corner

Hey Argo! I am wondering what I should do if I'm in a relationship and my s/o isn't putting in as much effort as I am.

Dear Anonymous,

I'm so sorry, that sounds really difficult. Relationships take a lot of time and effort, and it's important that both parties are invested. The most important thing to consider in this situation is communication. You need to let your partner know how their lack of effort is making you feel. It's possible that your partner has no idea that they haven't been involved enough in your relationship. Your partner's effort may also just look different than yours. Everyone has a different love language, and they may be expressing theirs in a way you haven't yet noticed.

If after communicating with your partner you feel things still haven't changed, it may be time to reevaluate your relationship. Ask yourself, are you AND your partner willing to put in the work to save your relationship? What emotional work needs to be done? Does being with your partner still make you happy?

I hope this helps,
Emilia

How to study for a test when the teacher doesn't even freaking teach you that thing and instead teaches you something else so the average is a 60 and you went R1 so no one got 100 in your section help.

Dear suffering math student,

Don't worry, I think most of us at BLS have been there. I have had frustrating experiences with teachers myself. Having to take a test you have no idea how to complete is the absolute worst.

There are a few things you can do to bring up your math grade. First, reach out to your guidance counselor. They can connect you with tutoring services across the school; for example, you can be paired with an upperclassman who has already taken your course.

If talking to your guidance counselor seems too daunting, then maybe talk to a former math teacher. Do you have a teacher from seventh or eighth grade that you loved? Stop by their class after school one day and see if they can answer any of your questions.

Don't forget you can always turn to the internet! Boston Public Schools has a great resource called *Paper* which offers tutoring 24/7. You can find this by logging into *Clever* or sometimes it will just pop up on your screen. Another helpful online resource, for those of us who have a hard time talking to strangers online, is *Khan Academy*. They have free videos for entire courses, so maybe give them a try. You got this!

Emilia

There's this person that I was really close with last year and at one point had a crush on, but we drifted apart over the summer and winter break. I want to talk to them again, but things just aren't what they used to be. Should I just stop and find someone new who would be easier to talk to?

Dear Bawling in Boston,

I have totally been there. Drifting away from friends is tough, especially when there's no real reason for the friendship to end. The worst feeling is when something reminds you of them and you want to text them, but you feel like you can't. It's time for you to leave that feeling behind.

First, I want you to consider that maybe this person misses you too. They were close to you for a reason, and unless you truly screwed them over (which I don't think you did), they probably miss the friendship from time to time. There is, however, also a chance that they purposefully distanced themselves from you, and while that is an unpleasant reality, it's one you should be prepared for.

There's no harm, nonetheless, in reaching out one more time. You should ask them to hang out, in person, and based on their response, you'll be able to settle this internal debate. If they respond positively, you'll have your chance to finally reconnect. If they are vague or they flake, it has to be the end. Give them the chance to show you how they feel.

Either way, it's never a bad thing to find new people to talk to. Don't let the potential of this friendship stop you from making new friends and new connections. And if this person lets you down, remember: it doesn't mean you're not worthy of great friends or relationships. Good luck!

Love,
Mary

How do you choose when you have options for something? Is there a better strategy than eeny meeny miny mo?

Dear Anonymous,

All you need to do is an intuition test. Grab a coin and you're ready to begin! Assign one option to be heads and the other to be tails and flip a coin. Then do whatever it landed on.

Haha, just kidding. Once you see the result of that coin, pay attention to how it makes you feel. Are you relieved? Great, then your choice is made. If you're disappointed, then do the other thing. You have to trust your gut!

Best of luck,
Mary

hi. How to pronounce data? date-a? Dat-a?

Dear Anonymous,

Date-a. If you say dat-a you are just trying to sound fancy (which can be fun). Or you're British.

Chip Chip Cheerio,
Mary

Across

1. Australian rock band of "Back in Black"
5. Gun, as an engine
10. *Amo*, ____, *amat*
14. Superhero from __: *Love and Thunder*
15. __ Hill, testifier against Justice Clarence Thomas
16. Phase change from a solid to a liquid
17. SCOTUS case that protected interracial marriage
20. Site of sports matches or concerts
21. Popular Latin dance
22. Vietnamese New Year festival
23. State bordering N.D.
24. First name that sounds like a fish's respiratory organ
26. __er Wand, one of the three Deathly Hallows
28. Newly-elected Speaker of the House, after 15 rounds of voting
35. Sauce you may dip sushi in
37. Fire remnant
38. Emphasis word after "yes" or "no"
39. *asil* __ s'icniV aD

41. Gen Z word of agreement
43. Compound interest formula
44. Thespian
46. City in Germany whose name also means "to eat"
48. Japanese pond fish
49. Place where one might do proofs
52. __ de Armas, *Knives Out* actress
53. Lucy __, *Kill Bill* actress
54. __ Gourmet, Boston coffee chain
56. User authentication
59. Construct, as a statue
63. Yearly, but you took the L this time
65. Main character of mega-popular recent *Netflix* show
68. "It's my turn!"
69. Wide open
70. Mountain range including the Matterhorn
71. Bog or swamp
72. Former *The Tonight Show* host Jay and family
73. Not hard

Down

1. Titan who holds up the sky
2. Group of musical notes
3. Bird symbolizing peace
4. Opposite of 41-across
5. __time: Scott Joplin genre
6. Ltr. holders
7. __ *la revolución*
8. Like water or electricity (abbr.)
9. Unit of astronomical distance common to sci-fi
10. French friend
11. Pave __
12. I cannot tell __
13. Baseball fig.
18. Gullible
19. High-society parties
25. Arm or leg
27. Fashionable outfit
28. Popular Phoebe Bridgers song named after a Japanese city
29. Professional basketball player
30. World Cup star sound-alike
31. Opposite of musical notation "dim."

32. Arduous journeys
33. One who might battle a villain
34. Himalayan cryptid
35. __ Paneer
36. __ upon a time...
40. New York museum displaying Jackson Pollock, among others
42. American computer corporation
45. Rapp or Zellweger
47. Mythical river nymph
50. Ankle-related
51. Ice cream dessert
54. Things at a gas station
55. Like someone with an attitude
56. Sink or __
57. Tractor-trailer truck
58. Bad smell
60. Border
61. Actor James of *Elf* and *The Godfather*
62. Spelling mistake
64. Queen in *The Lion King*
66. Opposite of SSW
67. Endings of gen. sg. or nom. pl. first declension Latin nouns

JANUARY CROSSWORD

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By Caitlin Donovan (I),
Kyler Hoogendoorn-Ecker (I)
& Alex Strand (I)
Staff Writer and Contributing Writers

Art Without Humanity

By **Mindy Luong (II)**
& **Charlotte Ray (II)**

Contributing Writers

There have been robots, cars and computers. For several decades, artificial intelligence (AI) has extended its influence to areas that tiptoe closer and closer into the realm of daily life. Its ability to mimic and initiate human tasks such as facial recognition, directing vehicles and reciting the weather has won over many users.

We live in a world where art can be created from mere words and phrases entered into a text box. A work of art that might have taken an ordinary person weeks or even months to complete can now be synthesized with the click of a mouse or a tap on a screen — like ordering from *DoorDash* or sending an email. But what distinguishes computer-generated art from other convenient services is that AI gains sources from existing artworks. *The New York Times* calls it “a high-tech form of plagiarism.”

While AI art marks a revolutionary turning point in the art world, there are reasons to question its ethics. First and foremost, what is considered AI art, as opposed to any other work created with the help of a computer? In modern society, technology has become a staple in the creative process. In fact, the majority of the music industry uses computer-generated instruments and sounds to produce songs.

Apps such as *Procreate* and *Concepts* provide users with a variety of digital brushes and tools that can be used to create original pieces of art online. Is this unethical, or is it just a prime example of how technological advancements go hand in hand with human creativity?

Due to the fine line distinguishing what is AI-generated art and what is not, there have been a variety of software programs sparking controversy among artists in recent years. AI image generators and photo editing apps such *Dall-E 2*, *Midjourney* and *Lensa* have recently surfaced



Jason Allen

Jason Allen's *Théâtre D'opéra Spatial* won first in the Colorado State Fair.

on the web. While such apps are cheap and accessible, they also imitate styles that may have taken artists many years to develop, discrediting the importance of human creativity.

Such apps are programmed to analyze thousands of images of pre-existing artworks and use them to imitate a specific style or aesthetic. They memorize the database of images in order to create similar ones. Because these pieces of art are made by real people, however, artists are concerned that they will eventually take their jobs and livelihood.

A piece of AI-generated artwork called *Théâtre D'opéra Spatial* recently won first place in the Colorado State Fair, which raised eyebrows and a *Twitter* outrage. Jason M. Allen, the winner of the compe-

tion, states in an article from *The New York Times* that “he empathized with artists who were scared that AI tools would put them out of work [...] but their anger should be directed not at individuals who use *Dall-E 2* or *Midjourney* to make art but at companies that choose to replace human artists with AI tools.”

Given that apps like *Midjourney* are available for public use, can the artwork truly be attributed to a single person when anyone else can replicate it using the same keywords and software? Regardless of who is manipulating tools that generate AI art — individual or corporation — it is important to hold anyone accountable if they have an unfair advantage.

Mindmatters.ai also poses the question: “If all art were only a synthesis of

prior art, then we must ask, where did the prior art come from?” After all, being influenced by previous works and simply meshing them together are entirely different. True artistry comes from creating something raw and original, even if it's based on what has already been made.

Valeria Serna Lopez (II) expresses her concerns, “I believe that [AI art] takes away from human creativity, and it won't be appreciated as much if [it] can create what humans should.”

Although AI has proven beneficial in other areas of life, it does not belong in the realm of human creativity. Making art is not a matter of convenience, it is about expressing complex emotions and originality, things that a computer cannot truly replicate.

Artist Spotlight: Nathan Zhang (I)



Karen Dong (I)

By **Yongyu Qiu (I)**
Staff Writer

From playing the piano and trumpet to drums and guitar, Nathan Zhang (I) has done it all. At the age of five, he started learning the piano, which he hated at the time. As he grew older, however, he developed an appreciation for music and the ample opportunities it provided him.

Like learning any other skill, playing an instrument requires hard work and patience. Zhang has long had a natural musical curiosity; he is able to learn and play the songs he hears on the radio and sees in movies. He further displayed his creative potential by joining Boston Latin School Thursday Dues Band in sixth year and BLS Big Band in tenth grade.

Music is everywhere, and even simple notes can evoke strong emotions and help build connections with others. For Zhang, “music is deeply intertwined

with emotion.” He remarks, “If I'm very happy and listening to a certain song, I'll, from then on, associate that song with happiness, even if it's not that good of a song. It's strange what music does to your mind.”

Not only does music tap into his emotions, but it also provides a haven from the outside world. Zhang often finds himself using instruments to cope with any stress he feels — when he needs a break, he starts playing his guitar.

Big Band also fosters a sense of community and is a place where Zhang found others with similar passions. Zhang recalls, “One of my most memorable moments with Big Band wasn't even music-related. After our recording session, the entire band, along with some band alumni, went to get hot pot in Chinatown. It's just small things like this that make the band feel more like a group of friends rather than an extracurricular.”

Zhang credits his band director, Mr. Paul Pitts, for supporting him and providing him with the most help. From lending him instruments and musical pieces to giving him the opportunity to play lead, Mr. Pitts ensured that Zhang had everything he needed to excel.

“He's a big voice in the Big Band, an excellent lead trumpet player and pretty good lead soloist,” Mr. Pitts comments. “He has developed very steadily. [...] He's a conscientious musician.”

Aside from his involvement in Big Band, Zhang enjoys crew, which he joined in freshman year. The memories that crew has brought, such as rowing on the Charles River at sunset, made it an enriching and worthwhile experience.

Looking to the future, Zhang is excited to bring his skills to the next level. He plans on joining a band in college, as well as pursuing other possibilities that the musical world offers.

BLS Hockey Breaks the Ice at Frozen Fenway



BLS boys' hockey team plays BLA at Fenway Park, beating them 3-1.

**By Rachel Li (IV)
& Juliet McVay (IV)**

Contributing Writers

Earlier this month, the Boston Latin School boys' and girls' hockey teams had an extraordinary opportunity to play against Boston Latin Academy at Fenway Park in the Frozen Fenway High School Scrimmages. The girls' varsity hockey team fought hard, but took a loss to BLA by a final score of 1-5. A few days later, the boys' varsity hockey team

defeated BLA 3-1.

This season, the girls are hoping to make it to the State tournament. With a smaller team composed largely of younger players, the girls' hockey team is working to make sure everyone is pumped up and ready to fight. The girls have been able to bounce back from minor injuries, illnesses and losses alike to become stronger as a team.

Similarly, the boys' varsity hockey team is hoping to improve this season. Their goal is to make it to States as well, where they hope to compete for both a

league and State championship.

Boys' varsity Coach Frank Woods states, "Collectively, the team needs to have more consistency game in and game out. We have made some adjustments to the lineup, and the boys have been working hard in practice. We're hoping to see some improvement as we enter the second half of the season."

On January 10, during the Frozen Fenway match between BLS and BLA, the girls were naturally excited to play at Fenway Park. Although the crowd turnout was underwhelming, the experience was still surreal.

From the beginning of the girls' game, the team decided to leave all they had on the ice. There was a hard offensive drive by Ava Enright (III); though it did not end up as a goal, it drew enthusiasm from the crowd, and supporters were passionately cheering their teams on.

BLA scored the first goal, but Aoife Bourke (IV) quickly evened it with an assist from Captain Rynne Daily (I) and Sylvie Hove (III).

Sadly, even with the team's efforts, they were not able to score another goal, with the final score called 5-1 in BLA's favor. Daily reflects, "The game at Fenway was a really big opportunity for everyone. Although it didn't necessarily go our way, the experience was more than enough." The girls may have lost their game, but there is no doubt that the team had a pleasant experience playing

at Fenway.

The BLS vs. BLA Boys Frozen Fenway Match took place on January 13. The crowd turnout for the boys was impressive, since their game was on a Friday night.

Captain Richard Bova (I) scored the first goal just a few minutes into the game with an assist from Captain Thomas Harnan (I). It took some time before the score changed, but when it finally did, it was in favor of BLS. This time, it was Tristan Spiess (III) who scored, with an assist from James Fitzgerald (I). Despite their lead, BLS still had to fight to win; BLA scored a few minutes later, leaving the team on their toes.

Bova recalls, "Going into the Fenway game, as a team, winning was the top priority, but we also wanted to soak in the experience and have fun."

Coach Woods mentions that after BLA's goal, "freshman goalie Oliver Murphy made a big save late in the game to preserve the lead." After that, Fitzgerald went on to score the last goal of the game with under two minutes left.

In their respective games, both teams gained memorable experiences playing at Fenway Park. Although the girls' hockey team lost to BLA, they were able to reflect upon the experience. While the boys' hockey team won their game, they were also able to assess their performance to improve for the rest of their season.

BLS Wrestling Gets in the Zone

By Jessica Li (II)

Contributing Writer

After a few years of practices, meets and tournaments riddled with COVID-19 restrictions, Boston Latin School wrestling is finally back to normal.

What has changed? How is the season going? Let's jump into an update on the BLS wrestling team.

Led by Coach Jeffrey Gibbons and captains David Santana (I), Henry Stratman (I), Alex Greene Barrios (II), Graeme Dierks (II) and Eric Power (II), the BLS varsity wrestling team's scoreboard is at 7-6, similar to last year.

In a large blowout, BLS dominated Josiah Quincy Upper School 60-3. BLS also took down Westford Academy 48-36. The outcome of the meet was much closer, with a win-difference of only three or four matches. The fact that Westford was also in Dual County League Large made the win even more meaningful.

"I'd say we're a good team, and we've certainly gotten unlucky a few times this season," Greene Barrios states. "Even though we're still doing well, I think we're a better team than our record shows."

Indeed, the BLS varsity wrestling team is formidable. At the 42nd annual Dan Balboni Holiday Classic tournament, great efforts from the team resulted in an impressive performance. Boston Latin School placed fifth out of 22 teams; four BLS wrestlers accumulated 128.5 points to make it to the semifinals.

Their loss against Boston College High School, however, was a huge upset. With only seven points designating BC High as the victors, the score of 36-43 was devastating.

"The team is more focused now," shares four-year varsity wrestler Oscar Ali (II). "We've been working harder, trying to get better as much as possible."

This willingness to improve is backed by fierce dedication. In the daily two-hour practices after school, the wrestlers brush up on technique, run drills and spar in mini games. In the days leading up to meets,



Eric Power (II) faces his opponent at a meet.

practices increase in intensity. Sometimes, to get to know other wrestlers in the area, the BLS team will have joint practices with Boston Latin Academy, Roxbury Latin School and Excel Academy wrestling teams.

Most notably, the wrestlers continued a 15-year long tradition with the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Blue Hills run. During an exhausting 3.5-mile run up and down the Blue Hills in Norfolk County, the team battles elevation changes, slippery snow and the biting cold. The demanding practice also includes wrestling drills in the snow, ending their long weekend with arduous physical activity.

Several new changes impacted this year's season. With most COVID-19 restrictions on sports gone, the transition back to normalcy has come with the lifting of mask requirements.

New changes came in the off-season. For the first time in BLS wrestling history,

captains' practices were organized. "We've had some wrestlers do off-season wrestling in the past, but this year we've had more than ever," Greene Barrios explains. "Combined with captains' practices, which is a new thing for our team, our guys were coming into the season more caught up, and we avoided some of that early season rust that has plagued us in the past."

Besides improving on skills, captains' practices also help the wrestling team with exposure, bringing many new faces to the team. First-year wrestler Nick Seaver (II) explains the impact of captains' practice on his introduction to scholastic wrestling, saying, "Captains' practices were cool because it let us ease into the regular season, which might have been overwhelming otherwise. A couple of sixties' first-ever practice was captains' practice."

The younger kids' efforts have been outstanding. With only one person per weight class, the varsity starting roster is

constantly shifting. Injuries have opened the opportunity for spots, allowing seventh- and eighth-grade wrestlers to shine. Members of the team are excited about the JV talent.

Reflecting on the success of younger wrestlers, Ali is a big advocate for having new people try out wrestling. "I'd definitely advise people to join wrestling; it's fun, it's a great way to stay active," Ali says. "If you're not good at some other traditional sports, I know that's why some of us join wrestling, wrestling is a great sport, and there's a very good culture."

Even with the season coming to its end, the BLS wrestling team continues to make progress and work as hard as ever. On February 1, they will face BLA in an annual meet. The team welcomes spectators; to see the match, follow the BLS wrestling's Instagram account, @bbs.wrestling, to find the exact time and location, as well as further updates on the terrific season!

Is Messi the G.O.A.T.?

Yes, Messi is the G.O.A.T.

By Vera Jacobson (II)

Contributing Writer

First and foremost, Messi's statistics are simply staggering. Along with recently winning the World Cup, he has received the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Player of the Year award six times, the most of any player in history. He has also won the Ballon d'Or award, which is awarded to the best player in Europe, a total of seven times. In addition, Messi has won multiple league titles and Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Champions Leagues with his previous club team, FC Barcelona.

Some may try to argue that Messi hasn't transformed the game of soccer in ways that other players have. No other player, however, has raised the bar for individual performance as high as he has. Messi's incredible skill and technique on the field truly sets him apart.

His aptitude for dribbling past defenders, envisioning the play and passing is second to none. He is also an excellent finisher who has scored over 700 career goals for club and country.

Yet, being the greatest of all time (G.O.A.T.) is about more than just statistics; it is about longevity and narrative. This is not to say that Messi's statistics aren't impressive — after all, he has won 11 different Man of the Match Awards from World Cups — but his legacy transcends the bounds of quantitative records.

Messi was an underdog who rose to national fame through talent and determination despite the challenge of his smaller stature. Even with widespread fame and international recognition, he has remained humble and continues to strive for self-improvement. This message resonates with many and drives Messi's status as a global inspiration. His humility and remarkable sportsmanship, despite his immense success, make his name synonymous with an excellent work ethic and genuine dedication.

To truly be the G.O.A.T., one must perform at a certain level of mastery and skill over a long period of time. Messi has been consistent throughout his career, showing his quality in every match he plays season after season. He is not a one-hit wonder or a player who shines only in certain matches or tournaments, but a consistent performer at the highest level.

Messi won Copa America, and his work with FC Barcelona, as well as being a star player on his current club team, Paris Saint-Germain, is astounding. He holds the record for the longest period between a player's first and most recent World Cup goals, revealing he has maintained his superiority long enough to undoubtedly be the G.O.A.T.

Messi's embodiment of perseverance earns him this title. Boston Latin School girls' varsity soccer manager Veronica Smith (I) believes that "his years of unrelenting dedication to the sport [is] inspiring."

Lionel Messi is not just a soccer player; he is a living legend. It's his skill, technique, artistry and character on the field that truly sets him apart. His game has consistently shown to be a symphony of fluidity, elegance and precision.

In a sport that has seen many greats come and go, Messi stands alone. The Argentine maestro has transcended the game and left an indelible mark on the sport's history. He is undoubtedly the G.O.A.T. — the greatest of all time.



No, Messi is not the G.O.A.T.

By Caitlin McDonough (II)

Contributing Writer

After Lionel Messi lifted his elusive trophy at the 2022 Men's World Cup Final between Argentina and France at Lusail Stadium in Qatar, debates have sparked regarding whether or not he is the greatest of all time (G.O.A.T.). But while Messi is undoubtedly a world-class player, he isn't the G.O.A.T.

A G.O.A.T. excels to the highest level, achieving the greatest success in their particular field, but this title doesn't just encapsulate on-field accomplishments. To be the G.O.A.T., one must transform the game in new ways and popularize the sport so that everyone wants to play it.

There is no denying the success of Messi, who has the most assists in soccer and has won an impressive count of 42 trophies for club and country, yet he hasn't brought the game to new

heights, literally. His fellow countryman Diego Maradona was two inches shorter than Messi, yet he was still able to be a maestro of the ball, so Messi's height wasn't too great a hindrance. Yes, Messi faced challenges, but claims that he defied the odds to be the best because of his small stature are irrelevant. Other athletes have been told at one point that they were too small; this only fuels them to work harder.

Many act as if Messi is the only player who has had it tough or worked this hard. Every professional athlete has had to sacrifice an immense amount of time to get to where they are now. Messi is not the first, nor the last, to become an underdog determined to be successful. For example, Pelé grew up in poverty and used football as a way of motivation to prove all the doubters wrong.

With this sense of motivation, Messi has accumulated numerous trophies and accolades over the years, but his success isn't the greatest. His 42 trophies for club and country ranks him second for the most trophies won — wouldn't a G.O.A.T. have the most trophies won? Furthermore, Messi has only won one World Cup, which is nowhere near three — the highest amount a single player has ever won. Again, wouldn't a G.O.A.T. have won the most World Cups?

While Messi has won the most Ballon d'Ors of any male player at a count of seven, the award has potential bias. A select number of journalists decide who wins and journalists may vote for a player from their own country. The trophy also neglects players outside of Europe, as it was designed only for European league players until 1995, so numerous players before Messi could have surpassed him.

One could argue winning a record-seven Ballon d'Ors transforms the game, but it doesn't. Messi wears the number ten on his jerseys, and it's associated with playmakers of the highest quality. The number, however, would be just a number if not for Pelé, who transformed the number ten into one every soccer player hopes to wear. Pelé was the man who made the number iconic, not Messi.

As the world may be divided, soccer players from Boston Latin School surely aren't. Natalia Troy (II), a girls' varsity soccer team captain, is firm in her opinion that "of all the players there have ever been, he's maybe not the G.O.A.T."

Likewise, Bryan Ferreira (II), goalie for the boys' varsity soccer team, believes that "it's hard to say [who is] the G.O.A.T." and thinks others like Pelé or Maradona are worthy too. He says, "To me, they're all legends."

BG Free at Last



Miguel A. Negron/Associated Press

Brittney Griner reunites with wife Cherelle Griner.

By Lauren Choy (I)

Head Editor

Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) star Brittney Griner was infamously detained in

Russia on February 17, 2022, for carrying hashish cartridges while trying to return home to the United States. 295 days later, Griner was released from prison and able to return home.

Her release was thanks to President Joe Biden's approval of a U.S.-Russia prisoner-swap agreement. In exchange for Griner's return, the U.S. sent international arms dealer Viktor Bout, a prisoner in the U.S., back to Russia.

Ever since Griner returned home on December 8, she has been spending time alone and with friends and family. On December 21, 2022, a couple of weeks after her return, Griner spoke out for the first time with a message on *Instagram*. She thanked everyone for their efforts in securing her return home, saying, "[the letters] show me you cared and I want to personally take the time to write to you and say that your effort mattered. Your efforts helped me to not lose hope during a time where I was full of regret and

vulnerable in ways I could have never imagined."

Griner also pointed out the importance of working together, writing "[the support showed her] the power of collective hands. Together, we can do hard things. I'm living proof of that."

Since her release, Griner has also been a strong advocate and voice for Paul Whelan, a former U.S. Marine serving a 16-year sentence in Russia. Whelan has been detained in Russia for around four years, and Griner has been fighting for his release and encouraging people to write letters to Whelan.

Griner's experience is one that no one should have to go through. Everyone must continue supporting and advocating for those in positions similar to hers because messages of support to prisoners can go a long way. As Griner says, "Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. Because of you, I never lost hope."

Spotlight on Kate Lincecum (IV)



Andrew Ye (II)

By Christopher Choy (V)

Contributing Writer

Powerlifting is an extremely underrated sport among Boston Latin Stu-

dents. Kate Lincecum (IV), however, joined powerlifting in the spring of seventh grade and has had an amazing experience with the program.

Her seventh-grade year took place during quarantine, so she explains, "I was pretty bored in quarantine and my brother was in powerlifting so he said I should try it out."

Thus, Lincecum took advantage of her free time and began powerlifting. Even though her brother was going to graduate the next year and would not be on the team with her, she fell in love with the sport.

Joining powerlifting during the pandemic meant that the team had to practice outdoors on the sidewalk, but once COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, the team moved back inside.

Lincecum says that the current season of powerlifting is going well for everyone on the team, and she has big hopes for many achievements this year. She reflects, "Ever since I started powerlifting, I have loved it, and it is incredibly rewarding."

Although she loves many aspects of the sport, Lincecum says that one of her "favorite things about the team

is how supportive it is on bad and good days. On bad days, people are there to support and remind you that it's just one day, and of course, on those good days, they are there to congratulate you." And her hard work has paid off; Lincecum is ranked third in her weight class for deadlifts sanctioned by USA Powerlifting.

She explains, "For me personally, getting a new personal record and just walking out of the doors that day knowing what I can do is such a strange and rewarding experience."

Lincecum enjoys the environment that the powerlifting team creates, and appreciates that her teammates are there for each other at all times. She believes that "having everyone cheer each other on and be there for every up and down really creates an amazing atmosphere which [she] wouldn't trade the world for."

As the season progresses, we can't wait to see Lincecum accomplish even more with the BLS Powerlifting team and continue to have a rewarding experience.

Damar Hamlin Is on the Road to Recovery

By Terence Xie (I)

& Liam Sullivan (III)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Heading into Week 17 of the 2022-2023 National Football League (NFL) season, stakes were high for the Cincinnati Bengals and Buffalo Bills. The teams met in Cincinnati to play a crucial game in the NFL playoff race.

What was supposed to be an electric game between two strong contenders quickly took a turn for the worse. On January 2, Buffalo defensive back Damar Hamlin suffered a cardiac arrest on the field shortly after making a tackle.

Medical personnel and local paramedics rushed to the field and began to administer CPR to the fallen Hamlin. After nine tense minutes, Hamlin's heartbeat was restored, and he was rushed to the University of Cincinnati Medical Center. In the following days, updates provided by the NFL and Hamlin's family reported that Hamlin was sedated and in critical condition in the Intensive Care Unit, but his health was improving.

The good news continued the next day on January 5 when the Buffalo Bills released a statement that Hamlin had "shown remarkable improvement" and appeared to be "neurologically intact."

On January 9, Hamlin was released from the University of Cincinnati Medical Center and transferred to the Buffalo General Medical Center. Following a series of tests and evaluations, as well as consultations with

Hamlin's medical team, the decision was made to discharge Hamlin and to continue his rehabilitation at home and with the Buffalo Bills.

Hamlin still faces a lengthy rehabilitation process, requiring oxygen and heart monitoring to ensure that there are no setbacks or after-effects of the injury. Before the news of Hamlin's recovery and stability came, fans were worried, as his injury was a frightening moment for all who were enjoying the game.

"I believe that it was a very scary moment for football. It was especially scary because it made me realize that injuries like this can happen to anyone in the snap of a finger," says Boston Latin School football team member Eric Powers (II), who watched the game and voiced his concerns over the unpredictability of injuries.

Fellow teammate Wilson Zheng (I) echoes similar sentiments, stating how he "felt that same anxiousness not knowing whether [Hamlin] would be okay or what even happened in the first place."

After the devastating event, the entire NFL community rallied in support of Hamlin. Fans took to social media platforms and offered their support to Hamlin, his family and the entire Buffalo Bills team. Players from various teams in the NFL wore Hamlin's number three during warmups. They were also seen wearing shirts with "Love for Damar 3."

Most notably, however, fans of the NFL raised over 5 million dollars for Hamlin's toy



Greg M. Cooper

Damar Hamlin leaves the field after a game in December 2022.

drive fundraiser which supports children in need. Hamlin had originally set out with a goal to raise 2,500 dollars to buy toys for underprivileged kids. After news of his recent injury, the community completely surpassed this target in the first 24 hours alone.

BLS science teacher and sports fan Mr. Michael Galego admires the level of community support, stating that "donating to Hamlin's charity helps combat these feelings [of sadness and fear] as it provides a means of helping while also connecting to others who share those feelings. But whatever the reason, it was heartening to

see the overwhelming amount of support he received."

He emphasizes the importance of understanding the causes of sports-related injuries, explaining how he would "like to see professional sports leagues be more proactive in screening players for heart problems to prevent this from happening to other players in the future."

While the road to recovery remains long and arduous for Damar Hamlin, the entire NFL community will be cheering him on, patiently waiting for the day he returns to the field.

The Boston Red Sox Throw Some Curveballs

By Julia Sax (II)

Staff Writer

Following a chaotic off-season, Boston Red Sox fans were eager to see what this season would look like. The team did not extend the contracts of key players and fan favorites Xander Bogaerts, Nathan Eovaldi and JD Martinez, all of whom were crucial to the Red Sox's limited success last year.

Losing Bogaerts was especially hard on fans. They made this clear last weekend at the Red Sox Winter Fan Fest by booing Red Sox staff while they were explaining why they did not re-sign Bogaerts and why they traded another hometown favorite, Mookie Betts, three years ago.

Chief Baseball Officer Chaim Bloom claims to have a plan, but many,

such as *The Boston Globe's* Dan Shaughnessy, are not sure the team is heading in the right direction. "I don't think the evaluations have been good. I don't like the makeup of their team this year; there's a lot of old guys," Shaughnessy says in an interview. He believes that the team "should be bringing in more people like [Rafael] Devers who are in the prime of their career."

Earlier this month, Devers was given an 11-year, 331-million-dollar deal. News of the signing brought much-needed relief to Red Sox fans, especially after Bogaerts was not re-signed. Along with extending Devers's contract, the team also re-signed Christian Arroyo, Ryan Brasier, Nick Pivetta and Alex Verdugo to one-year deals. But what about new players to replace those lost?

One exciting signing was that of outfielder Adam Duvall, a former Major League Baseball All-Star. Duvall is 34 years old and has 163 career home runs; he is expected to be a good fit for batting at Fenway. Rounding out the off-season, the Red Sox also signed some much-needed pitchers.

Tony Massarotti from *98.5 The Sports Hub* sums up the Red Sox off-season: "Well, there have certainly been off-seasons like it, but I can't remember one that felt as crucial — going into it — that feels as disappointing coming out." After the Red Sox finished last in the American League East in 2022, many people feel as if the team has been greatly weakened. While new pitchers are expected to make a significant impact, the Red Sox's lineup still doesn't measure up against better

teams.

With all of this in mind, what can fans expect from this team next season?

Boston Latin School boys' varsity baseball captain Douglas George (I) believes that "they can be a winning team, no matter what happens [and he] will always expect them to be a winning franchise."

Many fans agree with George's thinking; thus, there exists a generally strong sense of optimism that the Red Sox will be a winning franchise against all odds. They have certainly done so before: in 2012, the Red Sox finished in last place in the AL East but then went on to win the World Series in 2013. So who knows, maybe this year's team will buck the odds and come out on top.