



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

BLS's Junior Research Paper Evolves

By **Olivia Chen (IV)**
& **Meilin Sha (V)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Starting in the 2024-2025 school year, juniors will choose novels from a list of frequently banned titles for their Junior Research Paper.

The Junior Research Paper is a literary research paper required for all juniors taking English at Boston Latin School. It is eight to ten pages long and requires four critical sources. The assignment asks students to identify and analyze a theme and message that an author conveys in their novel, with the goal of improving students' writing and independent research skills. Previously, students chose from a list of books by authors from Britain and the former British colonies.

The new topic of banned books encompasses numerous other disciplines, including literary study. BLS English teacher Mr. Mark Sanford explains, "Change is a good thing and very often benefits students and teachers alike. [...] The new iteration is a more cross-disciplinary approach. [...] It should prove to be an exciting, new platform for independent literary study that transcends conventional, abstract and conceptual-based interpretation of canonical works."

In Massachusetts, books relating primarily to gender, sexuality and race have been challenged by parents. Over the past

five years, about 70 books in school libraries were requested to be removed. Over ten school districts removed or placed restrictions on at least 17 books.

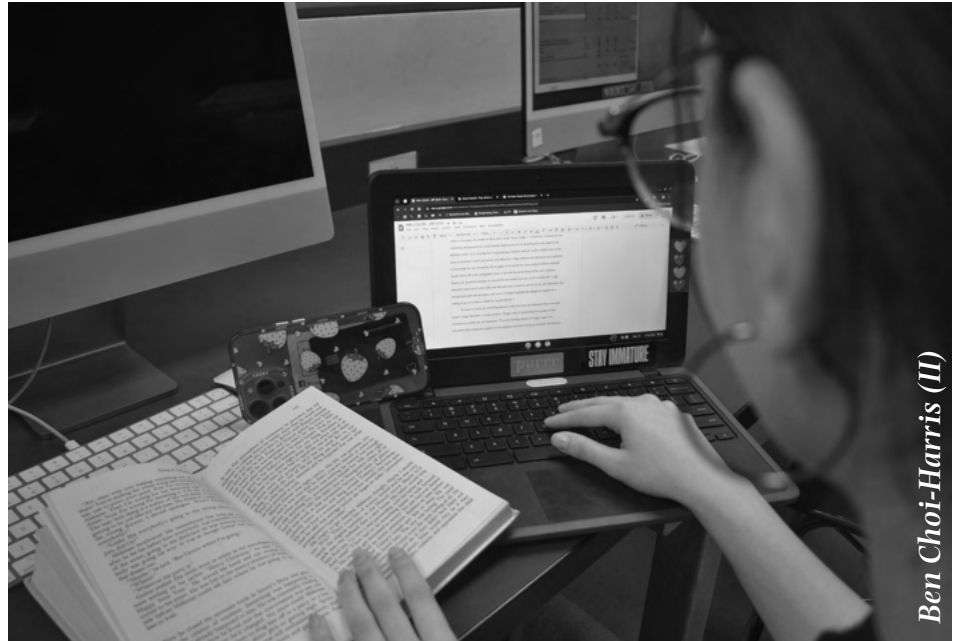
Curriculum on banned books aims to enhance one's understanding of "controversial" topics and give students a better understanding of why books were banned. These books often address diverse topics that are deemed "too sensitive" for the student body.

Students express mixed emotions about the modification of the assignment. Some look forward to the new topic, as it allows students to consider different perspectives. Ruth Gelaye (III) remarks, "This change is very interesting, given that it provides more of a subjective standpoint for students to analyze their chosen novel. [...] I am looking forward to developing new outlooks through the greater literary depth this new assignment facilitates."

Teachers also believe that this change would make the whole writing process easier for students, as the paper will be centered on issues that students can relate to in their own lives.

Mr. Sanford notes, "The primary concern is for students to feel confident, proud of and gratified by their abilities and to learn the process as a matter of methodology. Our collective job is to prepare students for higher education and for informed citizenship."

Others, on the contrary, think



Ben Choi-Harris (II)

Mia Colón (II) works on her Junior Research Paper.

that changing the overarching theme to "banned books" will greatly limit what they can write about. Maya Koreth (II) says, "The most enjoyable part of the Junior Research Paper for me was coming up with a theme I was passionate about, and connecting my book's main point and argument to that theme."

By changing the theme to banned novels, the English Department delivers the message that reading is both a right and a freedom. With a vast number of dystopian authors having written about the insidious

dangers of banning books, the English Department believes that reading in any manner is fundamental to an open democracy.

Gelaye concludes, "Many banned books are actually exceptional literary works that employ a plethora of rhetorical devices and themes. [...] In addition, this change in requirements will challenge students to weigh in and consider different perspectives before picking a standpoint. Acquiring the ability to assess different perspectives is a lifelong skill that this research paper would allow students to adopt."

Out of Service



Alicia Moy (I)

The bathroom across the Main Office remains closed until April Break.

By **Ailin Sha (II)**

News Editor

On March 11 and 12, several of the

bathrooms at Boston Latin School closed down due to a leak in the waste pipe in the Audio-Visual (A/V) room on the ground floor.

At the end of R5 on Monday, senior

custodian Mr. Robert Jelley was notified that the waste pipe in the A/V room on the ground floor was damaged, most likely from corrosion over time. The pipes from the bathrooms on the three floors above all led to this pipe, which leaked due to an opening on its side.

To prevent further leakage, BLS Director of Operations Ms. Jesse Kwan and the custodial team closed all the bathrooms above the A/V room on the side of the School along the Avenue, including the faculty restrooms on the first and third floors. Plumbers from E.M. Duggan, a company contracted with Boston Public Schools, patched the pipe in order to reopen the bathrooms on Wednesday. Currently, all except for the women's bathroom located directly above the A/V room and across from the Main Office, are open.

During the closure, many students were surprised and disappointed to find several bathrooms unavailable. Abrianna Dumel (II) reflects, "[At first] it was a little jarring, and it feels [...] a little inconvenient, considering we already don't

have that many bathrooms around the school." Most students, however, quickly adapted to find other open ones around the school.

Throughout April break, the plumbers will fully replace the broken pipe, as the current patching is only a temporary solution. The seven days of the break will provide sufficient time for the process, which involves tearing down a part of the ceiling and wall, replacing the pipe and restoring the ceiling and wall.

Around a month ago, the custodial team addressed another issue with the bathrooms at the back of the school, where the sewage pipes had backed up due to blockage. After investigating, Mr. Jelley determined that it was due to students flushing brown paper towels, which, unlike regular toilet paper, does not disintegrate in water. To prevent more issues in the future, he reminds students, "Please do not put anything down the toilet that is not flushable."

For now, thanks to the custodial team, all the open bathrooms are functioning properly.

NEWS

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BLS Athletics and other local sports organizations have been experiencing difficulties finding referees to officiate games, Julia Sax (I) reports.

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In a 4-2 comeback victory over Tewksbury, BLS boys' hockey becomes the Division II State Champion for the second time in school history.

EDITORS' NOTE



Lauren Dong (IV)

Fellow readers
This is major
Your homeroom has been graced by
The *Argo's* 20-pager

Bathrooms reopen in stages
JRP has big changes
Evan Ding (III) makes some slayages

Should standardized testing come back?
The American tax system is out of whack
And digital activism gets some flack

PLEASE LEAVE will make you stay
Check out an exhibit at the ICA
Give 1999 Write the Future some time of day

P and Z always stay spicy
Whether it be for love triangles, breakups, or
pre-quarter-life crises

Caitlin Clark continues to breakthrough
And this hockey trophy is brand new
But three-point goats? That's Steph Curry and
Sabrina Ionescu

We stand on business at Args
Our crossword is tall like the blue locks of
Marge

Ms. Moon and our editors are truly superstars

Essentially, we're telling you to listen our bars
And take a flip through this newspaper that we
call ours

It is now time to send our regards

— JOE

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can be made to blsargo@gmail.com)*

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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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Evan Ding (III) Rings Bell as National STEM Champion

By Meilin Sha (V)

Contributing Writer

In early February, Evan Ding (III) was selected as a National STEM Champion, winning an all-expense-paid trip to the National STEM Festival in Washington, D.C.

Ding was surprised with the news when he was interviewed live on the Columbia Broadcasting System. BLS Science Department Head Ms. Kathleen Bateman comments, “[I am] very proud but not at all surprised. He is a very innovative science thinker with an incredible work ethic.”

The National STEM Challenge is an opportunity for middle and high school students to create and showcase an independent science project. Top-scoring champions from each state are invited to the National Festival in April. Ding participated in the 2023-2024 National STEM Challenge, developing his project on a gene switch.

Ding explains, “I took a small section of DNA and modified it and inserted it into a gene therapy product. And that could help enhance the safety and efficacy of that said product.” Gene therapy uses genetic material such as reconstructed DNA to treat and cure diseases.

Having started his project last March, Ding went through extensive research and experiments, spend-

ing over 500 hours in the laboratory. Throughout the process, he has been mentored by Dr. Zhenghui Li, who works in the Department of Neurosurgery at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Dr. Li provided guidance in areas such as lab training, research and experimental design.

Even so, Ding encountered challenges throughout the development of the gene switch. For example, results varied across his experiments. To address this, Ding repeated the same process under controlled conditions for consistent results.

His results also differed from past studies. Ding elaborates, “I wasn’t sure if it was me doing it wrong, or if it was just like the other people doing it wrong. So I ended up going with it and it all worked out at the end.”

As he advances on to the next stage, Ding hopes to further develop his project. One improvement is changing the DNA sequence for enhanced efficiency of the genes. Ding is also screening for a new chemical drug to lower the dosage and potential toxicity to patients. The first applications are planned for the eyes, but he aims for further expansions in the future.

Gene therapy reaches beyond the National STEM Fair into the real world, where it can benefit patients and advance scientific developments. BLS science fair advisor Mr. Scott Balicki says, “Maybe someday these



[projects] are the foundations of changes that will be put out into the world and will make a difference.”

An avid musician, Ding hopes to combine his interests of STEM and music. He shares, “Besides science, music has also been a big part of my life. When I grow up, I hope to be a musician-scientist who can study genetic diseases that deprive people of the joy of music. So something related to hearing loss or tone recognition.”

Ding looks forward to presenting his project and hearing ideas from fellow young scientists at the National STEM Festival in April.

What BPS Can Learn From the Newton Teachers’ Strike



Newton students and educators rally for a new contract.

By Juns Ye (III)
& Stephany Zhu (III)

Contributing Writers

After a series of unsuccessful contract negotiations with the school committee, the Newton Teachers Association (NTA) initiated a strike on January 19 that lasted 11 days.

During the strike, Newton Public

Schools (NPS) were closed, disrupting the city’s 24 schools, 12,000 students and 2,000 educators. The extended closure has forced Newton to hold school on four days of February break in order to meet the state’s requirement of 180 days of school.

Boston Latin School AP Government teacher and Boston Teachers Union (BTU) member Ms. Meredith Elliott explains, “Traditionally, the urban school districts have

been more likely to strike than suburban ones, so not only Newton, but other suburban districts, going on extended strikes indicates a willingness to make tough decisions.”

As the BTU and Boston Public Schools enter into negotiations for a new contract, school districts around Newton have become more aware of possible strikes in their own schools. The extent of inflation’s role on the probability of teachers’ strikes depends on the impact on the teachers’ standard of living. Additionally, it depends on BPS’s ability to accommodate for inflation in their contract.

BLS Latin teacher and BTU Representative Mr. John Kerpan states, “Only if it becomes so hard for teachers to survive teaching that they need to do something drastic, [so] the goal of negotiations is to avoid that.”

The Newton strikes are not the first ones that have happened in Massachusetts. Approximately ten years ago, there were difficult contract negotiations between the BTU and the school committee, where the BTU voted to go on strike. A consensus was reached, however, between teachers and the district before the strike was initiated.

Due to the recent strike, NPS pushed back the curriculums in all classes, especially affecting AP classes. Students also missed out on extracurriculars such as sports, impacting their ability to compete and earn sports scholarships.

The walkout began after the union

failed to reach a new contract agreement with the Newton School Committee. School teachers sought higher wages, changes to teacher contracts and attention to concerns regarding student mental health.

As the strike continued, tensions between the NTA and the school district rose. Although Newton teachers viewed their strike as a positive step forward to increase voice for educators and students, district leaders viewed it as a failure of management, mainly focusing on the disruptions that the strike had caused. Since it is illegal for public workers, such as teachers, to strike in Massachusetts, the NTA faced fines exceeding 600,000 dollars for initiating the strike, along with salary losses.

After 11 days, the NTA and the school committee reached a deal for a four year contract. The new contract includes increased pay for classroom aides, 40 days of paid family leave, a promise to hire more social workers in schools and an increase to annual cost of living adjustments for teachers. The new contract is expected to cost the school district an additional 53 million dollars over the next four years.

Mr. Mike Zilles, president of the NTA, summarizes, “It gave our members more autonomy and voice and how the Newton Public Schools operate. [...] It made the relationship better and gave us more power in the relationship.”

SSC Personnel Subcommittee Begins Hiring Faculty

By Olivia Chen (IV)
& Abrielle Huang (VI)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On March 1, the School Site Council (SSC) Personnel Subcommittee began its hiring process for Boston Latin School faculty.

The SSC makes major decisions for BLS, including the creation and modification of policies and the management of the school’s budget. The SSC is composed of the Head of School, teachers, parents and community members.

The SSC Personnel Subcommittee is a self-nominated group of at least two faculty members, one parent, student and community member from the SSC. These members will aid in the hiring of faculty along with the Head of School. Each member can serve for a maximum of three years.

The hiring process begins by finding candidates who have applied for vacant po-

sitions through the Boston Public Schools TalentEd website. Then, the subcommittee will review all of the resumes and select around five to eight candidates to interview for each position. Though the subcommittee’s members are fixed, it may bring in an alternate member to fill in as needed.

Following the interviews, members will take part in a meeting where they will discuss the candidates and fill out a form indicating their opinions. During this process, the subcommittee will also pick a few candidates to lead sample lessons. Some members believe that this is the most insightful step. Head of School Jason Gallagher explains, “When you’re doing interviews and you see people working with students during sample lessons, there’s just a feeling that you get. [...] It’s not always described just on a resume.”

Ultimately, the Head of School will make the final decision on who receives the position. The concluding choice for each position usually takes two to two and a half

weeks to complete.

The subcommittee looks for many qualities when finding the right candidate. Other than caring about students, members also look for diverse experiences. Faculty Representative Mr. Brian Smith remarks, “I personally like [...] a candidate who has had a different walk of life that might add to the big, broader way for us to think about ‘great’ education.”

The group faces some obstacles during the hiring process. Some challenges include finding a diverse group of candidates, narrowing down a pool of many qualified people to just a few candidates and setting aside one’s personal biases in favor of picking a candidate who is best fitted for the job.

While there are challenges, many aspects of the hiring process can be rewarding for members. During this process, meeting a qualified pool of diverse candidates allows current educators to reflect upon themselves. Faculty Representative Ms. Rachel

Kelly explains, “I think it’s enjoyable [...] seeing [...] that the standards that we’re holding our candidates to [are those] I’m also holding myself to.”

The benefits of the hiring process continue. Members also believe that while meeting new and amazing people, they can also hear diverse opinions, not only from teacher and parent representatives but also from the student body.

Currently, the subcommittee is reviewing resumes and interviewing candidates. While this process is demanding, members agree that the process of hiring faculty and working with the SSC Personnel Subcommittee is enjoyable.

Head of School Gallagher reflects, “I love working with the team of people because [...] the student representative on it always brings [...] things that we, as adults, don’t always think of and [...] it’s the same with the families’ perspective. You put that together with a teacher’s perspective and we just get a really good group.”

Annie Tomasini ('98) Hired to Chief White House Role



Biden Transition

By Ross Wilson (III)
Staff Writer

On February 8, President Joe Biden announced the promotion of Annie Tomasini ('98) to the position of Deputy White House Chief of Staff.

Tomasini will be one of three Deputy Chiefs of Staff, serving along with Bruce Reed and Natilie Quillian. She will take over for outgoing Deputy

Chief of Staff Jen O'Malley Dillon, who will be moving to President Biden's re-election campaign.

Some of Tomasini's new responsibilities will include supervision of the president's schedule and overseeing the White House personnel and operations on the campus. Each Deputy Chief of Staff has their separate portfolio that helps to reduce the workload, carried by Chief of Staff Jeff Zients.

Prior to serving as Deputy Chief of Staff, Tomasini was the Director of Oval Office Operations. She ran the in-and-outs of the office, including who went in and for how long.

Former Facing History teacher Ms. Judi Freeman shares how Tomasini approaches her job: "She's somebody with seemingly endless energy. Her brain can juggle multiple issues at the same time, she's a constant multi-tasker. The best part about [Tomasini] is that she does it with good humor, even though she works crazy hours."

At Boston Latin School, Ms. Tomasini was the captain of both the swimming and basketball teams, in the Irish Historical Society, the History Club, the Key Club and Students Against Drunk Driving. She was also on the yearbook staff and the prom committee.

BLS Earth Science teacher Ms. Raquel Jacobson-Peregrino, who had Ms. Tomasini as a student in elementary school and at BLS, comments, "She had a lot of curiosity and a lot of spunk, [...] she was a pretty amazing little kid."

When she attended Boston University (BU), Ms. Tomasini was a guard on the women's basketball team and averaged three points per game. Being on both the BLS and BU basketball teams helped her with valuable teamwork and organization skills that are necessary for managing one of the most powerful people in the world.

After graduating from BU in

2002, Tomasini became an executive assistant to Larry Rasky, a Biden confidant. Rasky pushed for her to be hired by then-Senator Biden for his 2008 presidential campaign, serving as his national deputy press secretary. Once Biden was elected Vice President, Tomasini joined him as his White House deputy press secretary.

Tomasini then worked at Harvard University for a couple of years, but later joined President Biden for his successful 2020 presidential campaign, serving as his traveling chief of staff. After he was elected, she joined him on his notable high-risk trip to Ukraine.

School Registrar Mr. James Lane, who was a classmate of Tomasini's in elementary school, high school and college, shares, "I love telling people I know who she is and watching any presidential speeches to see if I can see her. [...] She definitely remembers where she comes from and appreciates Boston, especially Latin School."

Afrofuturism: Showcasing Black Culture at BLS

By Trinity Ngo (III)
Contributing Writer

The Black History Month Showcase, hosted by Boston Latin School Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge (B.L.A.C.K.), returned to BLS on March 1 after years of absence. The showcase featured a wide array of talented performers focused around this year's theme of Afrofuturism.

According to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, "Afrofuturism expresses notions of Black identity, agency and freedom through art, creative works and activism that envision liberated futures for Black life."

In addition to BLS's Gospel Choir, Step Squad and Jazz Band, the audience also enjoyed selections from soloists, spoken word artists and the Origination Dance Team. The showcase also contained a fashion segment, which displayed outfits celebrating Black creativity and resilience.

Amanuel Habtemariam (III) remarks, "It was cool to see all of these people doing all of these cool things and I feel like [the showcase] was kind of like a call to the past, while also being like a call to the future by showing our capabilities and stuff like that through the arts."

In the weeks leading up to the showcase, both students and teachers were busy with planning and rehearsing, all while balancing their other responsibilities. One of the main difficulties was accommodating the hectic schedules of the performers and the short month of February.

Nonetheless, BLS B.L.A.C.K. was not only able to host the showcase, but also a spirit week and a cookout, all of which took place in the same week. They were able to partner with ZaZ Restaurant, which provided Caribbean, Latin and Asian fusion dishes.

Ms. Rose Delorme-Metayer, the Director of the McCarthy Institute and faculty advisor for BLS B.L.A.C.K., comments, "It's always important to high-



BLS Step Squad impresses at the Black History Month Showcase.

light the different aspects of Black life and culture, but also in particular, for people to understand that so much of what they

see around them originates out of Black arts, Black music, Black dance and Black culture in general."

Stepping Into the Past: BLS's Nuclear Shelters



Olivia Huynh (II)

Believe it or not, there is a bunker near this very office!

By Xintong Guo (III)
Staff Writer

The ground floor of Boston Latin School contains several spaces that were originally built and utilized as nuclear shelters. A nuclear shelter, also known as a fallout shelter or bomb shelter, is a

confined space designed to shield occupants from the harmful effects of radiation resulting from a nuclear explosion.

During the nuclear tensions of the Cold War (1947-1991), many governments initiated civil defense programs aimed at protecting civilians. Nuclear shelters emerged as prominent strate-

gies in response to a perceived threat of nuclear attack.

Beginning in the 1960s, the United States federal government directed the Army Corps of Engineers and civilian architects to inspect buildings that might be appropriate for nuclear shelters. Feasibility as a public nuclear shelter was marked by a protection factor of 40, meaning the radiation level behind the protective barrier is reduced by a factor of 40 compared to the level outside the barrier. A capacity for at least 50 people with ten square feet of space per person was also necessary.

Consequently, many schools were identified as suitable buildings for public nuclear protection spaces. These shelters were located underground or in the centermost of sturdy structures, marked with a yellow and black trefoil sign. BLS archivist Ms. Valerie Uber explains, "Boston Latin School was designated as a public fallout shelter, and "Fallout Shelter" signs were placed outside and inside the school."

Although all signs were removed by the early 2000s, remnants of the nails that held up the plaques remain visible on some walls.

The rooms on the ground floor of BLS without windows or external venti-

lation were all considered available nuclear shelters. Head custodian Robert Jelley notes, "the biggest area and the lowest area is the boiler." In the boiler room, two recessed spaces were considered the safest areas of the school in the case of a nuclear explosion. Today, all of the building's shelters have been repurposed into storage and utility spaces.

In the 1960s, the school also conducted air raid drills during which students practiced evacuating to the nuclear shelters in case of a nuclear attack. Some students were appointed as "drill wardens" or "air raid wardens."

"When they had those air raid drills [...] the student leaders who were the air raid wardens or the drill leaders would be sure that everyone was out of the hallway and that everyone was following the rules," AP United States History teacher Ms. Ashley Balbian informs.

Although few nuclear shelters remain present, the design and construction of nuclear shelters can also be applied as protection against natural disasters. Ms. Balbian concludes, "I mean, there's lots of spaces left. But mostly those spaces are now just basement storage, or they've been repurposed."

SCOTUS Update: Upcoming Notable Cases

By Alex Chan (III) & Brian Xu (V)

Contributing Writers

Loper Bright v. Raimondo & Relentless Inc. v. Department of Commerce

In a legal clash with significant implications, the combined cases of *Loper Bright v. Raimondo* and *Relentless Inc. v. The Department of Commerce* have taken center stage in the Supreme Court of the United States. The core issue revolves around whether courts should reconsider the decision of *The Chevron v. Natural Resources Defense Council*. The case from 1984 led to the establishment of the Chevron deference, which gave administrative agencies the power to interpret ambiguous statutes and allow courts to defer to their expertise.

These current cases, if successful, could reshape this precedent and place greater limitations on an agency's ability to interpret unclear areas in the law. Some argue that Chevron deference gives unelected officials in bureaucratic agencies too much power, potentially leading them to step out of bounds. Overturning the Chevron case could lead to more rigorous examination of an agency's actions.

Saeed Saeed (III) believes that lobbying for more diligent examination of certain agency's actions is "very important because [he] believes people in certain political and administrative offices should be held to a higher standard rather than a lower one." Oral arguments were heard for this case on January 17; the Supreme Court seems poised to overrule the case.

Moody v. NetChoice, LLC & NetChoice, LLC v. Paxton

Florida and Texas state laws restricting social media companies' content moderation practices are under intense scrutiny. The central issue revolves around the constitutionality of these restrictions and whether they align with the principles of the First Amendment. Oral arguments were heard on February 26, which questioned the legitimacy of state intervention in social media platforms' content moderation policies.

A particular concern is the provisions requiring individualized explanations for content moderation decisions, which prompts a closer examination of the balance between user expression and platform regulation.

The legal discourse also draws on a 1985 Supreme Court ruling which affirms a state's authority to require companies to disclose factual, uncontroversial information about their services. The outcome of this case could have a massive impact on the legal boundaries of digital free speech and redefine the extent to which states can regulate content moderation on social media platforms.

These content restrictions have already impacted the way teenagers absorb social media. Ethan Tran (III) says that content restrictions "affect some of the content that [he] absorb[s], but [it] is overall a good thing because it can help to limit the spread of misinformation and things that can be a bad influence." Though the cases are still being deliberated, the impacts still remain in many places around the country.

Trump v. Anderson

On February 8 of this year, the Supreme Court case *Trump v. Anderson* was heard, questioning whether or not Colorado can remove former President Donald Trump from the 2024 presidential election ballots.

The main debate was about Section Three of the 14th Amendment, which disqualifies previously elected officials from holding office again if they participate in an "insurrection or rebellion" against the U.S. Under this amendment, Colorado electors filed a petition to remove Trump from the ballot. They argued that after Trump took the presidential oath, he purposefully incited the January 6 attack on the Capitol, and as a result, he would not be a qualified candidate. The Supreme Court of Colorado affirmed this decision, removing Trump from the Colorado state ballot.

After appeal, in a unanimous *per curiam* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that only Congress had the power to rule a candidate ineligible. The opinion also stated that states do not have any power to enforce Section Three, as it would cause disenfranchisement of voters before the election. Thus, Trump was allowed back onto the ballot in Colorado, Maine and Illinois.

Santiago Comella (III) concludes, "I do agree with the Supreme Court's decision because I respect the Supreme Court and until he is found guilty of the things he is being charged against, he still should be allowed to run for office."

Trump v. United States of America

Originally decided by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, *Trump v. United States* is one of the most important Supreme Court cases in the recent past. The case itself is about the federal trial against Donald Trump and the extent to which presidential immunity is given.

On August 1, 2023, Trump was indicted on four counts regarding his involvement in the January 6, 2021 attacks on the Capitol, including a conspiracy to defraud the U.S., efforts to obstruct the vote certification proceedings and a conspiracy to violate civil rights.

Trump's claim of presidential immunity means that he claims he cannot be prosecuted for the actions that he did when he was in office. This has delayed Trump's trial from the planned date of March 4, as U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan said that she won't schedule a trial until the U.S. Supreme Court reaches a decision over whether Trump was immune from prosecution.

For the first former president in U.S. history to face criminal charges, arguments will be held during the week of April 22. Whether this will affect his current presidential campaign is still up for question. Saeed concludes, "I believe that Trump should be allowed to run because he has only served one term and many of his cases are still being decided."

BLS Travels Abroad!

By Constance Fang (V)

Contributing Writer

Costa Rica



During February break, Boston Latin School freshmen and sophomores visited Costa Rica in an experience dedicated to exploring the country's unique environment, rich biodiversity and culture.

Led by BLS Science Department Head Ms. Kathleen Bateman, students expanded on their interests of biology-related topics through a week-long, hands-on experience. The group was able to participate in several tours across the country, learning about service projects and their objectives.

Their tour first started in the small town of La Fortuna, which included a horseback ride to visit the Maleku village, home to one of the four remaining indigenous groups in the region. Students then went kayaking in Lake Arenal, the largest lake located in the northern highlands of Costa Rica and a source of hydroelectric power, where they learned about its impact on the tourism industry.

The students and faculty headed off to the Pacific region of Costa Rica, where they identified animals in their natural habitat. There, they then discussed the balance between tourism and the protection of the country's ecosystems, concluding with a farewell dinner.

Ethan Cox (IV), a trip participant, notes, "Much of Costa Rica's GDP comes from tourism, so during the pandemic many people were out of a job and they struggled to make enough money, even to get food for their families."

France



This past February break, BLS French teacher Madame Carole Lapointe-Prospere led roughly 30 students to France, where they immersed themselves in the culture and learned more about the country's history.

The trip was made possible through an exchange program with seniors from the French high school Lycée André Argouges of Grenoble, all of whom had been hosted by a BLS student that attended the trip. The first few days of the trip were spent with the exchange students, who joined in on many of the activities.

"The goal was to understand more about French culture and to immerse [ourselves] into that environment," comments Jennifer Nguyen (I), a participant of the trip.

Over the next few days, students departed Grenoble to visit a variety of Romanesque architectural landmarks in Lyon, a kind of architecture marked by a fusion of several European styles. Students also had the opportunity to explore the downtown area, enriching their experience.

The group ended the trip in the vibrant capital city, Paris. There, they many visited famous sites, including the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre Museum, where they viewed the Mona Lisa.

Nguyen concludes, "A big thank you to [the chaperones], Madame Lapointe and Ms. Gonzales, specifically, for organizing everything and updating the itinerary to let us have a good time."

Greece and Turkey



A group of students from Classes I, II and III embarked on a trip to Greece and Turkey, setting foot in the very places where many of the most prominent ancient myths originated.

The group, led by BLS Classics teacher Ms. Catherine Foley, visited numerous cities and ancient sites throughout the trip. The students spent the first few days in Athens and Mycenae, where they roamed and took in the wonders of the world-famous Parthenon and the legendary home of Agamemnon.

Gregory Ware (II), an AP Latin student who went on the trip, remarks, "[We] could really immerse ourselves in the sites and imagine what life may have been like."

Afterwards, the group went to Turkey, marking the first time that BLS had traveled there on a school-sponsored trip. They visited the remains of Ephesus, Pergamon, Troy and other sites relevant to the Classics curriculum.

All of the archaeological sites on the trip have deteriorated due to time, erosion and, in some cases, theft throughout the millennia. Many of the remaining artifacts are currently preserved in museums such as the Acropolis Museum and the Museum of Troy.

From the Acropolis of Athens to the legendary site of Troy, the historical sites have considerably broadened students' perspectives and paved the road for further exploration of these ancient civilizations.

Go Offline to Grow Your Mind!



Ryan Liu (VI)

Onslaughts of late-night notifications deteriorate students' work-life balance.

By Fathia Shodeyi (IV)

Contributing Writer

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic, digital learning platforms have become a more popular way of teaching in schools. Websites like *Google Classroom*, *DeltaMath* and *Edpuzzle* are often incorporated in day-to-day school life as students have transitioned back into real classrooms, but what are the long term effects of the increasing reliance on these platforms? As the use of online learning platforms increases, the work environment of students is negatively impacted and the future of learning within classrooms is at risk.

After the pandemic, it became far more common for teachers to use online platforms to create tests and quizzes. Many enjoy using online apps for multiple-choice tests because the platforms can grade them automatically.

As plagiarized work from online tools becomes more common among students, however, lower test grades are also becoming more common in classrooms. This is because students do not truly understand what they are learning, since websites are always there as an auxiliary measure.

During the pandemic, digital plat-

forms were the only way to continue learning. After the return to in-person, schools did not stop using these programs. As institutions continue depending on digital platforms for teaching, the possibility of education in the future being completely online arises. Boston Latin School AP U.S. History teacher Mr. Dominic Rinaldi raises this concern, "We won't necessarily have the ability, some point down the road, to snap back into the way we used to be."

Access to the vast networks of information provided by these platforms can make students lazier when it comes to actually completing work. Students become reliant on digital platforms to get their work done since it is easier to find answers online. Mr. Rinaldi says these platforms "desensitize students to the importance of gaining knowledge because it's always there, if you need it you can google it."

As the constant use of apps on the internet increases, students aim to submit work rather than taking the time to understand and learn from assignments given. This can impact homework too; easy access to answers from apps like *Quizlet* or *SparkNotes* eliminates the "further practice" aspect

of homework, making it far less worthwhile. Procrastination can also become more common, as deadlines at 11:59 P.M. can cause students to put off their work until the last minute — late at night. This can lead to a decrease in the quality of work, because students are turning in rushed work to avoid it being "marked late" on *Google Classroom*.

Digital learning can also disrupt the human element of teaching and learning. The more slideshows and online presentation platforms are incorporated into lectures, the more limited become connections between teachers and students. When teachers switch to reading off slides while students take notes, learning becomes far less engaging and exciting. It is important to find a balance between hands-on and online learning.

The ability to use technology is also becoming a crucial skill for learning in the future. This can create a divide between the older generation, who grew up with less technology, and the younger generations, who are children of the internet. Teachers and adults now have to learn the new skillset of navigating digital learning platforms, which can be a difficult learning curve.

Constant use of chromebooks

to access online sites can also be detrimental to the mental health of students. Some may argue that online platforms are less unhealthy because they are used for knowledge, but the vast amounts of dopamine, or instant gratification, received on social media can be received on other digital platforms as well. When students turn assignments in on *Google Classroom*, sometimes it becomes more about receiving the gratification from seeing assignments go away, than actually putting their best effort into their work.

The same goes for the Aspen Student Information System (SIS) where students are constantly checking their grades to validate themselves, or doubting themselves when their grades do not match their expectations. This feeling may cause students to overwork themselves, and possibly experience burnout in exchange for an increased grade. BLS English teacher Mr. Michael Vallone notes, "[Students] start to second guess their abilities [...] unless they have that sort of external validation".

Live grades on digital platforms become unhealthy as students begin to feel anxious and stressed over their grades. Mr. Vallone voices this concern, stating, "I hear students in the hallways all the time, talking about their grades in SIS and I'm not sure if seeing that students are checking it every single day and getting anxiety, is healthy."

With students on their screens in school in addition to their screen time outside of school, they are virtually never offline. Sitting in front of a screen during school, then sitting again in front of a screen for homework, becomes straining for the developing teenager. "Considering we are on screens most of the day now, sometimes I just want to shut off my chromebook but I can't since I have an assignment due online," Maya Tran (II) explains.

Having to sit in front of a computer while reading a PDF or using a digital app for schoolwork causes students to have an even higher screen time, which negatively impacts their well-being. It is easier to limit screen time for social media, but for school, students most likely have no choice but to continue using online apps because their learning tools and assignments are online.

Technological apps do offer some benefits, like allowing students and teachers to stay organized, or providing further explanations to unfamiliar topics for students. Even so, it is crucial that we do not rely on digital apps too heavily, as they can quickly become destructive to the future of learning.

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Should We Have Daylight Saving Time?

Yes, We Should Have Daylight Saving Time

No, We Shouldn't Have Daylight Saving Time

By Annie Dai (III)

Assistant Forum Editor

Twice a year, the United States turns the hands of its clocks forwards or backwards by an hour in a familiar seasonal ritual. Although many may view daylight saving time negatively due to their lost sliver of sleep, daylight saving has boundless potential to benefit the American people and economy.

Since daylight saving time promotes longer daytime hours, the additional illumination contributes majorly to public safety. More light increases driver visibility, lowering car accident rates and the risk of pedestrians being hit by vehicles.

Some may argue that daylight saving causes an initial spike in traffic accidents. While this is true because people are adjusting to the new time, it is important to remember that daylight saving is a prolonged practice occurring over months. Over time, with consistent evening sunlight promoting improved road safety, the net effect of daylight saving time on traffic accidents becomes overwhelmingly positive.

Research from the National Incident-Based Reporting System, moreover, has shown that after daylight saving time in the spring, robbery rates decreased by an average of 51 percent. It found a substantial drop in other reported crime rates as well, including a 48 percent decrease of attempted murder. Because the effect was most significant during the daylight hour of sunset, which would have been complete darkness without daylight saving time, the benefits were attributed to the extra light rather than other causes.

Along with the safer environment, the supplementary daytime encourages further physical or open-air activities following work or school. Most are deterred from venturing outside after dark, so with the addition of an extra 60 minutes, there is an increased opportunity to step away from the modern-day sedentary lifestyle. For students especially, who spend the majority of their day bound to a classroom desk, daylight saving time can provide incentive to stay outdoors longer, thus fostering healthier lifestyles.

This small change to the clock also has a surprising positive effect on businesses. After a traditional workday, more daylight encourages increased retail activity and sales. Experts say that consumer spending increased during daylight saving time, giving the economy a boost.

The time changes positively impact various industries as well. Analysis on different industries has shown that many benefit from daylight saving time, including transport and utilities, with 6.7 percent of employees working the night shift, manufacturing with 5.7 percent, and wholesale with 5.1 percent. Since daylight saving time turns the clock back, employees are able to receive an added hour's worth of pay, and employers are able to see increased profit margins.

Daylight saving time helps conserve power, too; a nationwide study conducted by the Department of Energy illustrated a 0.5 percent energy usage decrease across the U.S.. That amount seems miniscule on paper, but in reality equates to 1.3 billion kilowatt-hours, enough to power a dishwasher in every U.S. house for more than a week straight.

Numerous people assert that daylight saving time is too inconvenient, and should be replaced with standard time year-round, but this decision would cut evenings short for eight months between March and November. Standard time would make sunrises extremely early throughout spring and summer, while most are still slumbering. The lost sleep time during daylight saving is nothing in comparison to how much sunshine would be wasted while Americans sleep through standard time.



By Ellie Fung (V)

Contributing Writer

As March approaches, so does that dreaded time of year: the beginning of daylight saving time, when everyone turns their clocks back an hour, supposedly for extra evening sunlight and energy conservation. Daylight saving time, however, is an outdated system dating back to World War I, and comes with a host of negative consequences for all types of people.

Experts have found that a plethora of health consequences accompany daylight saving, notably an increase in heart attacks, fatal car accidents and workplace injuries after the time switch occurs. Many of these consequences are attributed to the lack of sleep due to the lost hour during the daylight savings-time transition.

Charlotte Anderson (V) says, "I do know [for] a lot of people in my family and a lot of my friends, it does mess up their sleep schedule and [...] their daily routine because when [...] the hours fall back to the winter time, it's really dark in the morning, so the morning commute can be more treacherous."

Daylight saving time also disrupts one's circadian rhythm, or the body's internal clock. The circadian rhythm is driven by the sun, so shifting the clock forward means artificially altering the amount of light received during the mornings and evenings, making it harder to get up in the morning and more difficult to go to sleep at night.

This can be problematic for people who are already sleep-deprived, like parents of newborns, teenagers who suffer from sleep difficulties during the school week and night shift workers who struggle to sleep during the day.

Another study shows an increase in depressive episodes during the transition back to standard time. Because of these negative effects, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine supports staying permanently in standard time.

Boston Latin School Latin teacher Ms. Veronica Lau states, "Every time they change clocks, they change it so you have more evening [light]. As a teacher who wakes up at the crack of dawn, I enjoy more morning sunlight. Right now the sun comes up at 6:30 A.M., daylight savings will push it back. So when I wake up at 5:30 A.M., I'll be shrouded in darkness."

Advocates for daylight saving time often argue that it reduces energy consumption because people can utilize natural daylight instead of electric lights. Most studies, however, show that there is only a one percent difference in energy consumption, possibly because of increased power efficiency of modern light bulbs.

Daylight saving is also a hassle because many clocks must be changed to correspond with the new time. Anderson says, "If your clocks aren't hooked up to the internet, they don't automatically change, so you're going to be like, 'Wait, it's 2:15 P.M., [but] I ended school an hour ago.'"

Lastly, eliminating daylight saving time would boost uniformity with the rest of the country and the world. Neither Hawaii nor Arizona implements daylight saving time, and less than 40 percent of countries still use daylight saving time today.

Angelina Guzman-Volpe (IV) claims, "[I]t seems unnecessary. The U.S. seems like basically one of the only [...] countr[ies] that does it, and though I understand it's to 'save' daylight [...] it just throws off my sleep schedule."

Daylight saving is a well-worn tradition, but not something that should be carried into the future. Although it is theoretically a good idea, in practice, the negative effects outweigh the benefits. Making a change, like remaining in standard time year-round, would significantly improve life for people and their clocks.

No Taxation Without Education!

By Brandon Flores (III)

Staff Writer

How much do taxpayers really know about tax avoidance and American tax policy? Although there is a widespread stigma around taxes, not much knowledge accompanies it. With further investigation into tax policy, it becomes clear that corporations are taking advantage of people's lack of information, exploiting the government in the process.

In a democracy, the populace is tasked with holding leaders accountable, but when the populace is unaware or unmotivated to tackle certain issues, problematic activity like tax avoidance, the legal misuse of policy in order to minimize tax expenditure, can occur behind the scenes.

In regards to current tax policy, Boston Latin School AP Economics teacher Mr. Patrick Boor states, "Many loopholes allow those with political, social and econom-

ic capital to take advantage of the system in their favor. Many wealthy individuals also have a lot of their wealth in other assets like real estate and other investments which get taxed at a lower capital gains rate than income."

One of the main strategies used by corporations to avoid taxes is tax inversion. According to *Investopedia*, tax inversion is the process by which companies relocate or create subsidiaries overseas in order to avoid paying taxes. While there is now an international minimum tax, the impact of tax inversion and other tax avoidance practices is still significant.

Despite the prevalence of these issues, many remain relatively uninformed on the topic. Savan Boxer (III) says, "A lot of people think we should tax the rich more, but they don't know how that would be implemented." If people are not educated on a topic, how can they advocate for change?

Tax software companies like *TurboTax* depend on lower-to-middle class citi-

zens for revenue, so they try to hinder this demographic's education in taxes and tax policy. These companies encourage ignorance, not just because their services will be used more, but also because they are run by the same corporate tycoons who exploit American law and government.

Wealth, furthermore, grants access to tax resources like financial planners, making it easier for the wealthy to avoid paying their fair share. Enabled by poor tax policy, this inequity essentially "keeps the rich rich and the poor poor," according to Ekin Nguyen (III).

If the government has not done anything about these unjust tax policies and practices, there must be some incentive for them as well. Lobbying and corporate influence are familiar terms in the American political sphere, but nowhere is it more prevalent, yet hidden, than in tax policy.

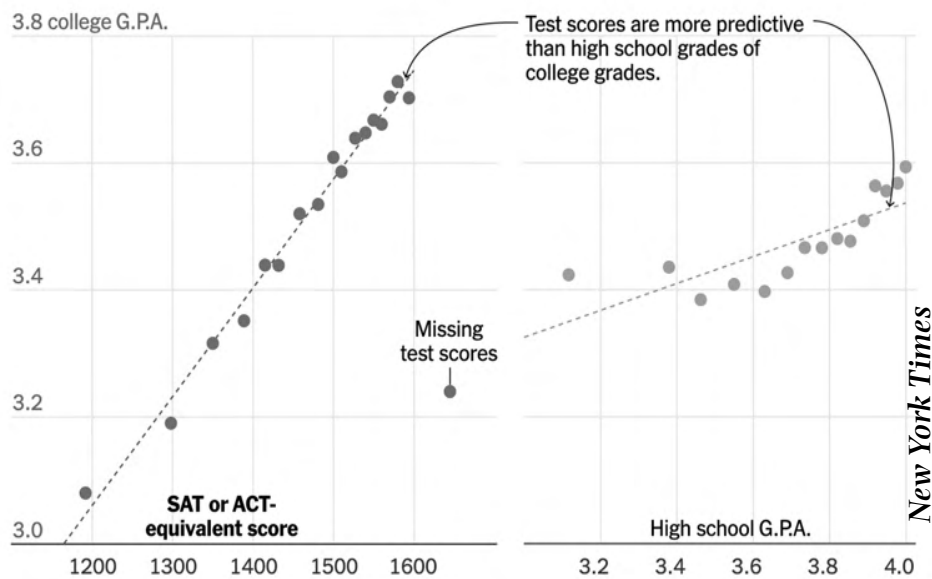
It is no accident that such is the case, since both the government and large businesses hope to hide these practices, keep-

ing the public ignorant and placid. Transactions like these are not the only thing incentivizing the government, however. The national economy depends on large businesses, so the government feels the need to appease the wealthy.

Corporate influence, however, is a threat to democracy. How free are civilians in a country where corporations control politicians and the populace by threatening to throw a financial fit if policies do not support corporate interests?

BLS plans to host discussions on many important financial and political topics, but the issue of tax policy tends to go under the radar. Becoming resistant to the power plays of the government and large corporations starts with education and discussion, so it is imperative that students are afforded the opportunity to learn about taxes and tax policy. Economic injustice is among the largest issues plaguing this country, but it is one that so many can unite on.

Mandate Standardized Testing



By Mark Snekvik (II)
& Vinh Nguyen (IV)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Recent decisions from Dartmouth University and Yale University to reinstate mandatory testing for the Class of 2025 have again raised the debate around the relevancy of standardized testing. During the COVID-19 pandemic admissions cycles, most colleges became test-optional in an attempt to make admissions more equitable. This, however, removed an important aspect of measuring college readiness: a nationwide quantitative measurement of academic achievement.

Despite the flaws of standardized testing, it is necessary alongside qualitative measures, such as extracurriculars and essays, to ensure that students admitted to college are prepared. It can furthermore be a tool for colleges to increase diversity in a post-affirmative ac-

tion world.

Without test scores, colleges have only one quantitative measure to determine college readiness: GPA. Recent studies by Brown University, Dartmouth College and Harvard College, however, show that ACT and SAT scores are much better indicators of college performance than high school GPA, which depends on myriad factors, including homework and participation. In college, tests and essays make up a much larger percentage of grades, so students need to be able to synthesize and output information effectively, which the SAT measures for.

Relying solely on GPA furthermore makes it difficult to compare students whose schools use different weighted systems. Ms. Chloe Sigillito, Interim Schawbel Center Director and former college admissions officer, who leads the Junior Forum classes says, "We always considered students within the context of their own high school — not across high schools."

Though this is true, it is impossible to balance hundreds of different systems to make a perfectly accurate comparison, which is why having a standard metric is crucial. Kaitlyn Ho-Tran (I) notes, "The SAT or the ACT does help to standardize everything to put you [in] better [...] context of other applicants."

Despite common misconceptions, standardized testing can actually be used to increase economic and racial diversity in higher education. Since affirmative action has been removed, schools cannot consider race in their admissions processes, but they can admit disadvantaged students — mostly lower income students, of which a large percentage are Black and Latinx — at higher rates than high-income students with the same SAT scores. Dartmouth University uses this policy and has found that lower-income students who were denied admission and had not submitted test scores would have been admitted had they included them.

Furthermore, test-optional policies have not substantially increased schools' diversity. A 2021 study by American Educational Research found that "test-optional admissions increased the share of Black, Latino and Native American students by only one percentage point at about 100 colleges and universities that adopted the policy between 2005-2006 and 2015-2016." Abrianna Dumel (II) comments, "If you look at the demographics now, it's clear that getting rid of standardized testing hasn't helped with diversity."

Those against standardized testing argue that it is prejudiced and favors white, higher-income students. While this is true, even without mandatory standardized testing, higher-income students still have the resources and oppor-

tunities to make their application stronger through extracurricular activities, college consulting and essay coaching.

Standardized testing will positively impact BLS students by bringing a measure of certainty to the college process. Test scores are one of the only things that students can feel confident in to increase their chances of being admitted, and there are resources readily available to improve.

The decision will also discourage students, who, in order to build strong resumes in the absence of testing, participate in an excessive number of clubs. This can lead to unhealthy sleep habits and flaky participation, which often generates strife between friends and prevents older students from fostering community in their clubs.

Anti-testing advocates argue that people using ideas of equity to push testing are just doing this to make their argument more palatable and do not actually want a more equitable educational system. Dumel comments on this, saying, "[We need to ask] 'Who wants this? What socioeconomic status [are] they from?' If it's really only high-income people who want standardized testing, they're not going to be the most reliable for helping [disadvantaged students] out [...] even if standardized testing would be helpful for them." Even with that, Dumel agrees with colleges' decisions, stating, "Data is more reliable from a purely logical stance."

So, while intent matters, regular citizens need to ensure policymakers continue to pursue more equitable outcomes — abolishing legacy admissions, for example — and data must be the first metric to inform admissions policies. Standardized testing ensures that this will happen.

The Future: Powered by AI

By Angelina Wei (III)

Staff Writer

In a rapidly evolving world of technology, the rising prominence of artificial intelligence (AI) has become apparent. AI, defined as technology that replicates human intelligence through machines, is revolutionizing numerous industries and people's daily lives. From enhancing agriculture to healthcare, these profound impacts on society have been catalyzing questions about the technology's potential threats. Many believe that AI will steal jobs from real humans, while others believe that it will improve quality of life. In these uncertain times, it is crucial to maintain an open mind while acknowledging that the effects and perceptions of AI will change depending on the user themselves. We should view AI as a powerful tool that can assist people rather than a robot takeover.

AI is often negatively portrayed in the media, since its impacts are not fully understood. Many science-fiction movies also showcase AI as a dystopian force that threatens humanity, contributing to its reputation as dangerous and unpredictable. Kevin Wang (III), an enthusiast of robotics and computer science, adds that movies like "I, Robot [...] associate AI with bad robots."

With the continuous portrayal of AI in a negative light, pessimistic assumptions of its impacts have been normalized. Correspondingly, in American education, students are told to value hard work and integrity and produce work with genuine creativity. As stated in the Boston Latin School handbook, plagiarism and the use of AI on schoolwork is forbidden.

This is because many argue that the overdependence on AI will damage students' creativity and imagination. Mr. Patrick Hourigan, the Viterbi Director of Technology at BLS, however, illustrates otherwise: "People also said this about calculators back in the '50s and '60s and home computers in the '80s and '90s, and I don't believe [...] technologies made us stop learning, or less creative. But they certainly changed the ways we learn or express creativity."

One must fully understand the properties of different technological programs and applications to avoid generalizations and unresearched assumptions about AI. Such simulations include *Sora AI*, which enables the creation of hyperrealistic videos, and *ChatGPT* and *Chatbox*, which generate human-like conversations.

AI itself is not inherently evil, but it may have evil implications based on the user's intentions; in a consumer's hands, AI can become either harmful or helpful. While AI does come with some imperfections, it positively impacts the world by accelerating the development of new drugs and medicines, increase of agricultural productivity and development of self-driving vehicles. AI isn't a threat to humanity, but rather an extension of technology that may assist humankind.

Tim Nguyen (I), the winner of the citywide science fair with his project on AI improvements, adds, "AI, when used responsibly, has this immense power that could revolutionize how we process information as it frees us up from 'lower-level' thinking to allow us to think at a 'higher level.'"

Many have the misconception that AI will take away jobs and replace



AI-generated coffee is too hot to handle.

humans, but instead of focusing on job displacement, it is imperative to concentrate on the broader picture of how jobs will adapt and evolve alongside the creation and advancement of AI. There is a boundless potential for AI to automate repetitive tasks, create new job opportunities in all fields, generate solutions to complex problems and increase information security.

The progression of AI is not a foreshadowing of a nightmarish future, but rather a great auxiliary development in allowing people to have more free time to focus or branch out into new productive tasks. What seems like a hindrance to society's innovativeness may actually assist humans in positively impacting society.

Mr. Hourigan agrees, saying, "We

all have 24 hours in the day, and it's up to each of us to decide how we want to spend those hours. My hope is that we will spend them attempting to improve the lives of all humans and that AI can help make that happen."

Keeping up with news about AI is essential for individuals to stay informed about the latest developments and their potential implications. People must understand the underlying algorithms, ethical factors and societal impacts associated with AI deployment to recognize the true benefits behind the proliferating misconceptions. As students navigate a world of constantly evolving technology, they should embrace a future where AI is not seen as a threat, but rather a catalyst for progress, creativity and innovation.

Let's Talk.

By Atticus Scovel (III)

Contributing Writer

In an increasingly polarized society, conflicting opinions about controversial subjects are seen as inexcusable thoughts and moral flaws. Open-ended questions are undermined as merely having a correct and incorrect answer. Those who side with the “wrong” argument are viewed negatively.

This societal outlook on controversy reinforces a mindset where people are afraid to speak their authentic voice, where conversation is discouraged and disagreement is not tolerated. When people fail to “agree to disagree,” these issues are exacerbated, while having productive conversations about these problems helps to find common ground and broaden one’s perspective.

This dilemma results partially from the simplification of complex questions into “correct” or “incorrect” answers. Having opinions is human nature, and treating these difficult debates in such a polarized manner causes people to take clear, one-dimensional sides, and miss out on crucial nuance and understanding.

As a result of this extreme polarization, people often tune out the arguments of the opposing side. Andy Yu (III) says, “I think that a lot of the time, especially since we’re in such a [...] pro blue state [...] we miss out [on the fact] that Republicans kind of do have an argument.”

Furthermore, these viewpoints of individuals are seen by many to determine one’s morality. If an individual disagrees with another’s opinion on a certain issue, they often generalize that person as a horrible person. People often surround themselves with those who have aligning opinions, and having different ones may fundamentally prevent them from being friends.

As Elliot Strand (III) says, “Even if you don’t agree [with someone], you still need to respect the person. Maybe not the opinion,



Parker Hastings (I)

Students express their hot takes over controversial topics.

but they’re still ultimately a human being.” Yu adds on to that, emphasizing the dehumanization of the “other side” that is so present nowadays in discourse.

Moreover, neutrality on issues is seen as impermissible, and many people feel that everyone should have strong stances on current issues. Oftentimes, people do not truly understand the full extent of the issues themselves, but are rather trying to performatively portray the idea that they have decisive stances on issues. This results in immense social

pressure that limits free speech and spreads misinformation.

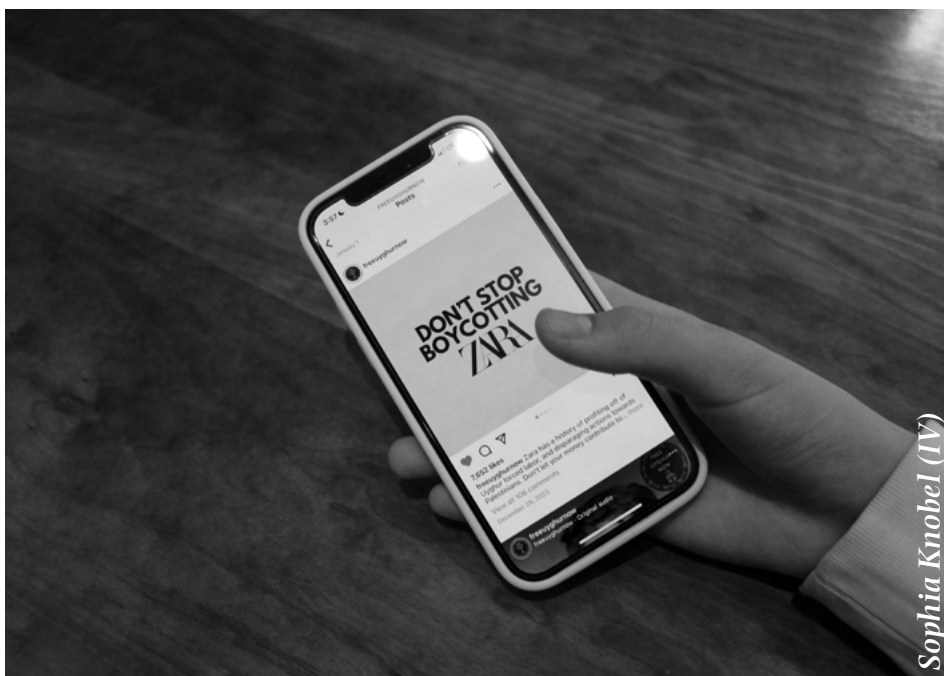
Part of this comes from overuse and overreliance on social media. Social media is designed to get an intense emotional reaction out of a user very quickly, whereas reading a book forces one to truly process the information presented.

Even within the BLS community, sometimes an echo chamber can be created. While in many parts of the U.S. one may be primarily exposed to conservative ideas, Boston, with

a largely liberal, left-leaning reputation, is actually overexposed to an opposite narrative. This overrepresentation of one-sided beliefs within a community discourages people from voicing their views when they do not align with the “universally agreed upon ones.”

Strand concludes, “Everyone should try to talk to one person a week about something they disagree [about] and try to find some middle ground with them. It can be something as stupid as, ‘what’s your favorite ice cream flavor?’”

ACT-ivism



Sophia Knobel (IV)

Instagram is a great place to spread awareness, but does it really help?

By Louis Nguyen (III)

Contributing Writer

In an era dominated by hashtags and Instagram stories, activism seems to have found a home on the screens of Generation Z. Given how simple it is to use the term “activist” online, what does it actually mean to be one in the modern era? Are people merely shouting into the void of social media, or can they transform their passion for change into tangible action?

Social media has amplified voices like never before, providing a megaphone for voices that might have otherwise remained unheard; platforms like Instagram, TikTok and X offer opportunities to spread information and mobilize large audiences. This new-

found accessibility, however, comes at a cost: activism has become synonymous with an occasional retweet or a well-placed hashtag.

A cause may gain temporary attention, generating a flurry of hashtags and Instagram stories, only to fade into the background as soon as the narrative shifts. The challenge lies in whether the attention on social media truly translates into real activism or if it is just a trend that loses momentum when the spotlight moves elsewhere.

Alan Zhao (III) says, “I know Black Lives Matter and LGBT movements have millions of supporters, but the number of people actively protesting is nowhere close to those numbers. The worst part is those [movements] are ongoing and I haven’t heard about them nearly as much as I

should.”

Recent events, such as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, underscore the temporary nature of social media activism; initial waves of online engagement and awareness surged in response to breaking news, but attention quickly shifted towards the conflict in the Middle East, despite the former still ongoing in real life.

This raises questions about online activism’s ability to maintain momentum beyond the initial wave of attention. Activists must juggle the challenge of sustaining interest and commitment over time, especially when social media algorithms rapidly shift focuses.

But by that point, are they really activists, or are they only spreading awareness?

This word “activist” has been adopted by Generation Z, a generation recognized for their social awareness. The ease with which one can express support through a swipe or a share, however, has given rise to what critics call “clicktivism,” a form of online activism that involves minimal effort and commitment from participants. The concern lies in whether these digital actions truly contribute to social change or if they merely create the illusion of activism.

While “clicktivism” allows people to show interest and raise awareness, it lacks meaningful impact; clicking a button or sharing a post does not translate into concrete actions or substantial change. Grace Leung (VI) says, “You can tell friends or family about online posts, but let’s be real, no one will help the people unless they’re actually affected.”

The same could be said about individuals who feel they are contributing to a cause without actively participating in more

substantial efforts, such as volunteering, attending protests or supporting organizations directly.

To revive the term “activist,” emphasis must shift away from passive internet gestures and toward active, meaningful participation that causes real change. Activists must consider whether their acts go beyond the virtual world, examining the depth of their dedication to the causes they support. Restoring meaning to activism involves breaking free from the screens and hashtags.

Change is a collaborative effort; activists must build connections inside their communities, serving as middlemen for movements that directly address local issues. Whether it is supporting local farmers, creating neighborhood watch programs or engaging in town clean-ups, real-world activism is about bridging gaps and creating a feeling of shared responsibility for our communities’ overall well-being.

“At the risk of sounding like a ‘boomer,’” Boston Latin School psychology teacher Mr. Michael Galego shares his wisdom: “I would advise Gen Z to put their phones down and live more in the real world. Humans evolved for physical activity and face-to-face social interactions that social media simply cannot replicate. Changing hearts and minds will always be more effective when done ‘in vivo.’”

Redefining activism in the present day means returning to the streets, neighborhoods and hearts of the communities that require support. Let us move beyond the scripted tags on social media and into the practical, messy task of creating change. Activism is not a label that can be claimed; it is a commitment to creating a real-world difference, one community at a time.

PLEASE LEAVE (a message) Leaves (a Mark) at States



PLEASE LEAVE actors create sound effects by dragging microphones.

By Catherine Cox (II)
Staff Writer

Earlier this month, Boston Latin School Theatre brought its latest work, *PLEASE LEAVE (a message)*, to the Black Box stage, delighting audiences with its creative spin on the ClusterFlux Collec-

tive's production. Directed by Creighton Banitt (I), Mitchell Phesay (I) and under the guidance of BLS theatre teacher Mr. Joe Gels, the play is backed by a completely student-led cast and crew, from sound to stage.

PLEASE LEAVE (a message) focuses on five hazmat-suited individuals,

each of whom have a unique message to share and record for the future. Inspired by their real-life experiences, actors Jude Cannon (I), Z Colimon (I), Saffron Lam (I), Anoushka Mittal (II) and Erika Monteiro-Tavares (III) wrote and delivered deeply personal monologues on stage. From sharing the guilt of leaving their recently dumped friend behind while they go on a hike, to fears about their upcoming adventures in life, their compelling stories draw in the audience the moment the play opens.

To create balance, actors were not afraid to sprinkle humor into the vulnerable stories. With each self-curated monologue, sudden karaoke numbers interrupted each individual's story. Actors could be heard belting out hits such as "Waterloo" by ABBA and "Take My Breath Away" by Berlin.

Griffin Berry (I), a member of the tech crew and an audience member of the play, expresses his appreciation for the thoughtful addition of music: "The personal connections that each actor has to the story [...] makes the show feel alive and intricate. [...] I found the ending to be quite enjoyable and heartfelt."

With the action limited to forty minutes, the crew had to work swiftly to

engage the audience while ensuring their qualification for the Massachusetts High School Drama Festival. Jennifer Okwesa (VI) describes the exciting atmosphere of the pre-show production process: "Some challenges I encountered [were] finding some of the many sounds used for this show. There were many sounds the sound crew had to experiment with, and had to figure out which of them sounded good. This was also a highlight for me because it was actually pretty fun!"

The production of *PLEASE LEAVE (a message)* has allowed the cast and crew to experiment with new theatrical components not yet seen in previous BLS Theatre productions. Mr. Gels shares, "[The show] brought a lot of very unique elements. First, we were integrating student writing into the bones of an existent piece. Second, this was a level of projection that we have never done before and it is completely immersive. There were a number of things to figure out around that."

BLS Theatre additionally took *PLEASE LEAVE (a message)* to the Massachusetts High School Drama Festival, where they won the semi-final round. On March 21, they also took their show to the state finals.

Tiny Habits' Not-So-Tiny Success

By Lara Glaum (III)
Contributing Writer

Playlist getting repetitive? How about Tiny Habits, a local pop band formed in 2022, comprised of the members Cinya Khan, Judah Mayowa and Maya Rae? The trio met at Berklee College of Music in the spring of 2021 and began posting covers of songs from their dorm rooms on social media. After gaining attraction on platforms such as *Instagram* and *TikTok*, they officially formed the group the following winter. Since their launch, they have been consistently putting out singles every few months, and their first EP, *Tiny Things* was released on April 12, 2023. The EP consists of six songs and stands at 18 minutes.

Although the band is relatively new, they have achieved many milestones in their time together. In the past year, they accompanied artists Gracie Abrams and Ingrid Michaelson as openers on their tours. They traveled on their first headlining tour in June 2023 and will embark on their "Little Bit Farther" tour this spring.

They were also a part of artist Lizzy McAlpine's "Tiny Desk" concert, a video which has accumulated over 1.6 million views, and they have received praise from many influential artists such as Phoebe Bridgers and Justin Timberlake. Their accomplishments have garnered them with a substantial amount of attention, as well as a number of new fans, with a current standing of 418,000 monthly listeners on

Spotify.

Tiny Habits falls under the folk-pop genre, creating music with a comforting vibe. The members have experience in choir, jazz, musical theater and more, which makes for an incredibly diverse range of skills and a very unique sound. John Mirisola, a Berklee student, describes their harmonies as "a smooth three-part unison, balanced with surprising flashes of dissonance and harmonic complexity," in his article "From *TikTok* Fame to Tiny Desk, Tiny Habits is a 2022 Breakout Band."

Supporting Tiny Habits, a local band, helps to foster a sense of community in this city, and it can be very comforting for artists when they receive support from the people around them. Sofia Maheras Matthews (III)

explains, "I think that it's important to support local artists because it helps to keep the community alive."

It's a great way to discover new music, as music by these artists can have special aspects that music by larger artists may not possess. Felix Hirsch (III) expresses, "I think that small artists are important because I think they bring a refreshing love of music to what they make. I think a lot of the time big artists making millions off every single can often lose the love of the art. Small artists keep the magic and culture that keeps music so amazing."

Tiny Habits is an extremely talented band with incredible music that is appreciated by many. Go ahead and support them by checking out their music on *Spotify*!

Celebrating Spring Holidays

By Lauren Dong (IV)
Contributing Writer

Lunar New Year

Gabriel Yuan (I)
Q: How does food play a role in celebrating?

A: Food is a big part in celebrating Lunar New Year for my family. We usually eat dumplings and all get together, making an exciting time every year!



Fiona Liang (II)

Q: Why do you celebrate?

A: One, I'm Chinese, but it's also because I want to join in with my family on the celebration and honor my ancestors. Lunar New Year is also the time for cleansing and hoping for good luck the following year, and I for one would not want to have a bad year ahead of me.



Mika Liu (VI)

Q: What is your favorite tradition?

A: For my family and I, we make food like dumplings and sticky rice balls. These foods usually represent something in life, like [...] the longer noodles are, the longer your life will be.



Ramadan

Hajar El Ayoubi (III)

Q: Why do you celebrate?

A: I celebrate so that I can gain more empathy and sympathize with those who are not as fortunate to have something to eat. It also allows me to become more down to earth, and gain more spiritual awareness.



Razan Mohamed (IV)

Q: What is your favorite part?

A: My favorite part of Ramadan is when my family sits together for Iftar. Iftar is the time after sunset when Muslims break their fast with a huge meal, and my mom always makes the best food during Ramadan.



Hamdi Mohamed (IV)

Q: What does Ramadan mean to you?

A: Ramadan to me is the time to strengthen your faith, better yourself as a person and spend time with the people you care about. Personally, it's my favorite month of the year; I love the whole act of it.



Avatar: The Last Airbender Review

By Anneliese Yu (V)
& Shirlyn Wang (IV)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On February 22, the latest live-action adaptation of the originally animated series *Avatar: The Last Airbender* was released on Netflix. While *Avatar's* first remake, *The Last Airbender* (2010) was a disappointing successor to the original for many, the release of the new show has captured the attention of many old and new fans.

In a world split into four nations: Water, Earth, Fire and Air, the series follows Aang (Gordon Cormier), Katara (Kiawentiio Tarbell), and Sokka (Ian Ousley) on a mission to stop the Fire Nation's plan of world domination.

While some individuals have the special ability to "bend" their nation's element, Aang, also known as the Avatar, has the power to master all four. Upon discovery of a world filled with war and conflict, he is ultimately tasked with the duty of restoring balance among the once harmonious nations.

As with any adaptation for a popular series, fans immediately picked up on differences from the original show. Despite receiving a fairly positive audience response upon release, many found that the show lacked certain elements crucial to the original plot. One major difference was the decision to leave out Aang's waterbending journey, although this was a crucial detail in the first season of the original series titled *Book One: Water*.

The departure of the original creators from the animated *Avatar* series, Bryan Konietzko and Michael Dante DiMartino, may also have made a significant impact on



the changes from the animated series. While originally being on board in the creation of the live-action show, both Konietzko and DiMartino later released public statements explaining their decision in exiting the project.

"Though I got to work with some great individuals, both on Netflix's side and on our own small development team, the general handling of the project created what I felt was a negative and unsupportive environment," writes Konietzko in an Instagram post in 2020. "We ultimately came to the belief that we would not be able to meaningfully guide the direction of the series."

DiMartino continues in an open letter

posted on Facebook: "Look, things happen. Productions are challenging. Unforeseen events arise. Plans have to change. And when those things have happened at other points during my career, I try to be like an Air Nomad and adapt. I do my best to go with the flow, no matter what obstacle is put in my way. But even an Air Nomad knows when it's time to cut their losses and move on."

In spite of these differences, the live-action show definitely exceeded our expectations, especially with the casting decisions. The 2010 movie casted white actors to play the lead roles that were depicted as people of color in the animated series, and

the decision was quite controversial, as fans were displeased. Though the 2010 version was originally supposed to continue as a trilogy, it was canceled. Be that as it may, the 2024 live-action adaptation did not make the same mistake. "It was surprisingly good," says Isabella De Almeida (V). "It was way better than the [2010] film."

All in all, the show was quite enjoyable and delivered entertaining moments that echoed the familiar series that many know and love. Much to the excitement of its fans, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, the 2024 version, has been renewed for a second and third season. The announcement of its return has many eager for what is to come.

Putting You On: 88rising's 1999 Write the Future

By Kenneth Cacho-Bermudez (III)

Contributing Writer

Released under the acclaimed 88rising record label on February 9th 2024, hella graces the world with a new and original sound. Joined with the likes of Smino, Rick Ross, and Cuco, 1999 Write the Future sets out to make a bold mark on the industry with their first album which truly has something for everyone.

The album starts off with "avOcadO SHake" which is a feel good jam which has three beat switches, surprising me on my first listen. The production and attitude perfectly encapsulates the emotion of the album and provides the listener with a blast. They also do a good job of introducing and expanding their styles, especially in their debut album.

The end fades perfectly into the next track, "SPIKY BOiz", featuring Ghostface Killah from Wu-Tang Clan, Rich Brian, Smino and Surprise Chef. The song is chaotic, utilizing a slight synth and even a cow bell, but it ultimately works together as the rappers flow together with their signature styles and help to create one of the most unique beats I have ever heard.

The third song on the album is "LiGhT rAiLs" also with Rich Brian and Rick Ross.

The production on this song is spectacular, laying out the base for the unlikely duo to successfully pull off their first collaboration. This is a sound I have never heard Rick Ross on before and adds to his versatility as an artist.

"thanksgivin" is the sixth song on the project and features a combination of Smino and the legendary Busta Rhymes. They go in on the bass, resulting in a fast paced song that keeps you on your toes. I did not like Busta's performance, due to him sounding dissonant with the beat. It is still a solid track and does not fail to bring the energy.

"COuGhDrOPs" follows and combines the soft voice of Cuco with the quick rap of Warren Hue. Both artists contribute so much passion into the song and although it is one of the slower songs on the album, it serves as one of the most notable. The two go switch off with each other sort of creating this feeling of rocking back and forth and an exceptional listen.

A notable song is "MiNt cHoCoLaTe" featuring the talents of BADBADNOTGOOD, and brothers Westside Gunn and Conway the Machine. This is by far my favorite song in the entire album and for good reason too. The beat is simply ethereal and also zen which juxtaposes with the gritty lyrics being spoken by the brothers, birthing a

beautiful track in the process. There are also multiple instruments used in the ensemble which further adds to the delightful sound.

Another highlight is "SLOPES" bringing back Warren Hue and introducing Offset. This is a partnership I wouldn't have expected but operates surprisingly well. The two rappers alternate between lines and with the employment of trumpets in the background, the song is nothing less than a banger. One can really see the group showcase their creativity in this track.

To wrap it all up comes "siGiL aNd the MaZE." Featuring OK Wang, the melody helps to wind everything down and completes the task of wrapping up the album sublimely. It's cozy and graceful guiding the listener through with a beautiful piano composition and elegant lyrics.

On the whole, the album is a pleasant ride, taking us through the amazing world of 1999 Write the Future and introducing them to the public ear. While it is early to tell with this being their debut album, it's safe to say that they offer something refreshing and new to not just the rap but the music scene as whole. They were able to bring an unexpected mashup of people together and still create a powerful sound.

Now, we will have to wait to see what new music they put out next.



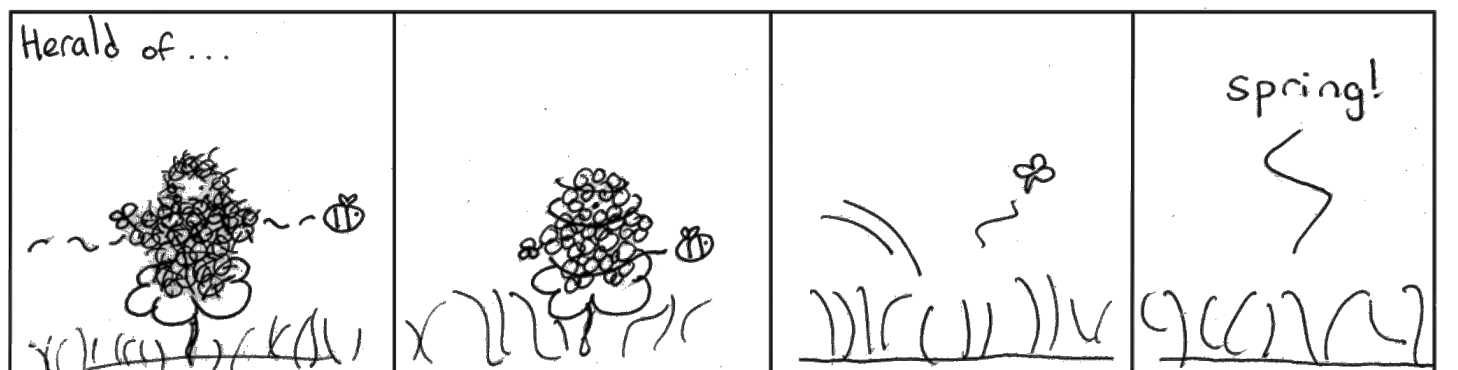
By 1999 Write the Future
February 9, 2024

Genre: Rap, Funk, Soul, Pop

Highlights:
"MiNt cHoCoLaTe",
"SLOPES",
"siGiL aNd the MaZE"

Spring Forward!

By Fiala Kraman (IV)
Comic Artist



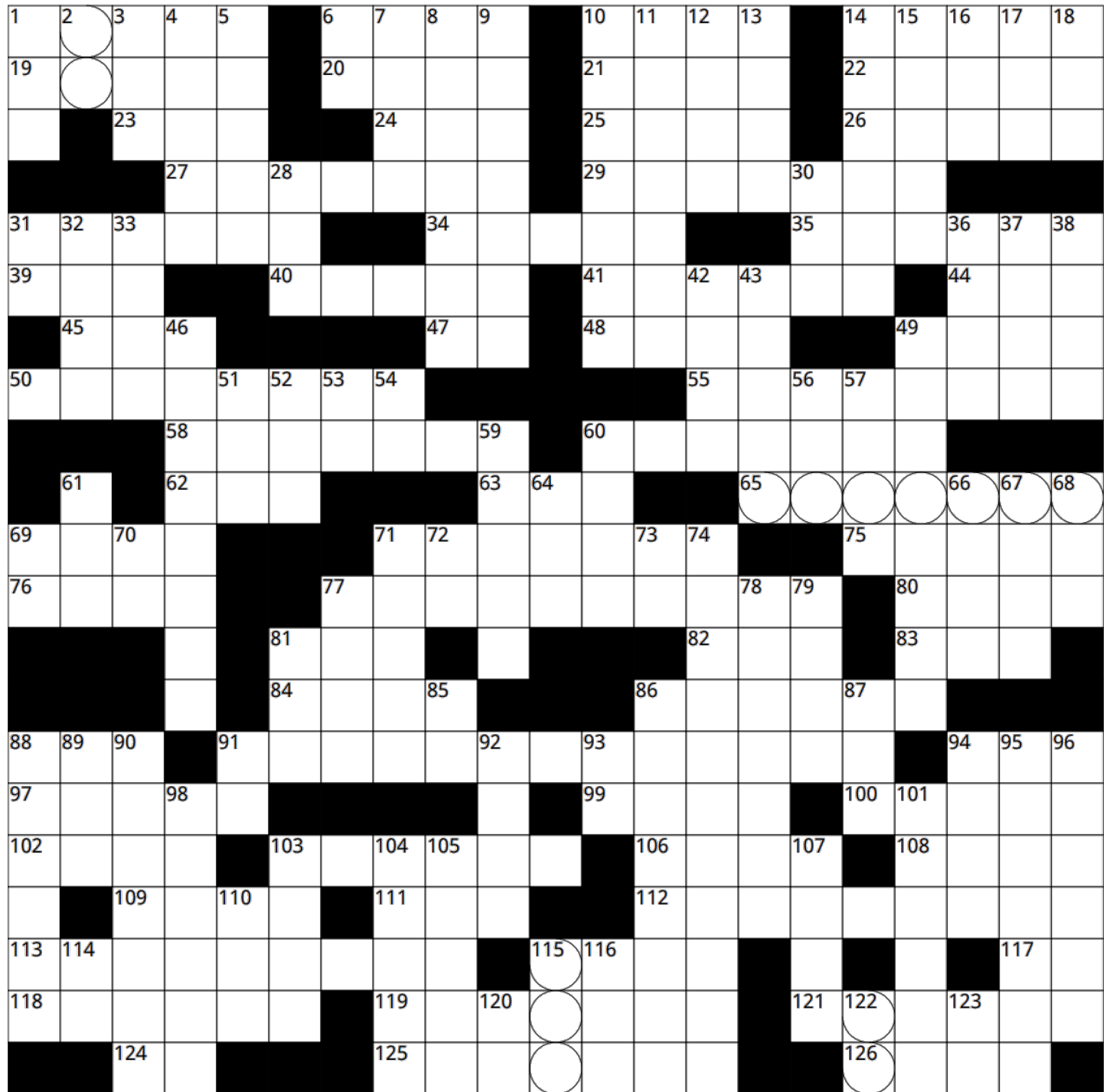
Issue IV Crossword

By Parker Hastings (I), Lily Huynh (I) & Joanna Lin (I)

Head Cruciverbalists

ACROSS

1. *Aladdin* antagonist
6. Trail mix
10. Juices from a tree
14. Vending machine favorite
19. Nemesis of Fix-It Felix
20. What 6-Across is to a hiker, possibly
21. Streaming platform of *The Bear*
22. Drake accompaniment on "First Person Shooter"
23. Santa's saying
24. When doubled, socialite with surname Gabor
25. Purim's month
26. 1868 Restoration that brought about the Westernization of Japan
27. Thermodynamic tendency toward spontaneity
29. Akin to orange and General Tso's
31. Navalny of Russian opposition, for which many recently held vigils
34. What Doja Cat often says in feature of 21 Savage's "n.h.i.e."
35. University attended by Oliver and Felix in *Saltburn*
39. Far out!
40. Count when a football may be snapped to quarterbacks
41. Online game platform used by over half of all American children under 16
44. Calculation of how well investment has performed, abbr.
45. Addictive drug in tobacco products, abbr.
47. "Live free or die" state, abbr.
48. Type of thermometer used by veterinarians
49. Hairstyle rocked by Mr. Galego, Mr. Kearns, Mr. Rinaldi and Mr. Sebold
50. Type of room closed because of a leak at BLS (pg. 1)
55. Song sung by Jude Cannon (I) in *PLEASE LEAVE* (a message); or, a battle between France and Britain
58. "God willing!"
60. What BLS was before 1972
62. Soak (up)
63. Cleverness
65. One destination of the AP African American Studies trip
69. Kahan of indie folk music
71. Speaker in "YOU SHALL NOT PASS!" meme
75. Japanese cyberpunk film released in 1988, regarded as most iconic anime film ever made
76. Oil, in Latin
77. Flirty
80. Places to wind down
81. Hunk's pride
82. Char., Nil., Miss., Danub.
83. Currency used in America
84. Thespian's item
86. Steep slope
88. ___-fi
91. Kendrick Lamar advises "to put it in a song" in *good kid, m.A.A.d city* track
94. Ending for neuter, i-stem noun in Latin
97. Pig of children's television
99. *Apple* scheduling app
100. What Notorious B.I.G. calls himself in 1994 *Ready to Die* track: Big ___
102. Text message status that could be construed as ignoring
103. Type of comma not used by the *Argo*
106. Nike competitive
108. Dissipated in 1991
109. 88rising headliner; best hits include "Every Summertime" and "indigo"

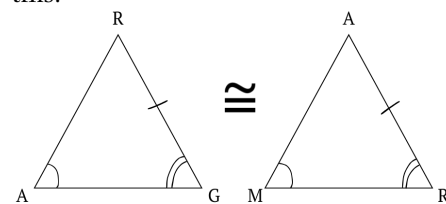


111. Online equivalent of AWOL
112. What Five Guys fries their potatoes in
113. Pickup line?
115. Say that I'm the one 'cause you are ___
117. K-pop girl group __ SSERAFIM
118. Allotted time of week for lifts, pumps and barbells
119. Sheer, informally
121. Mnemonic used to memorize conjunctions
124. Noise of agreement from members of Congress
125. Break down a passage in AP Literature, to a Brit
126. Son of ___; term to describe a rascal

DOWN

1. Literary paper undergoing changes at BLS (pg. 1)
2. Battery that has 1.5 voltage
3. Milli who collaborated with Lil Yatchty on "Never Lose Me"; or, menstrual cycle tracking app
4. Twin famous for ambient techno tunes
5. *Rhodanus*, to Ancient Romans
6. Best friend forever : BFF; Girlfriend : ___
7. Greece's most popular drink
8. What happens when you die in *Minecraft*
9. Clay for kids found in yellow tubs
10. Her hips don't lie
11. Bird group?
12. 401(k), for instance
13. Operation room activity, abbr.
14. Discount apparel chain found on Newbury Street
15. Starting card in card game President: ___ Spades
16. Swimmer in a Japanese water garden
17. What Lily may say about Joanna, abbr.; or, I Love Joanna (written by Lily)
18. *Tre * due* =

28. *Hermano del padre*
30. What you do not want dogs to drop in your front yard
31. Interactive reality experience that combines the real world and computer generated content
32. Oh wow, that's so coquette, it's so ___-coded
33. What Jessie Wang (I) or Kevin Zhong (I) do to articles in the *Argo*
36. With B, competitor of Colgate and Crest
37. Caramel-filled, washer-shaped chocolate
38. Had brief and fatal fling with Aeneas
42. Cry profusely
43. Sometimes happy, sad, even mentally disturbed; some even report super and drama variants
46. Shirley of New York who was the first Black woman to run for a major-party Presidential nomination
49. What a couple may do before going to colleges
51. Greek letter used to represent density in physics
52. Basketball offensive play alley-___
53. First poster on a *Reddit* thread
54. Taylor Swift song in *Lover*
56. Tit for ___
57. Fitzgerald in scat
59. Confess
60. Massive all-terrain *Star Wars* walker
61. Ancient email site
64. March 15, for instance, to Ancient Romans
66. Puppy bites
67. Like much folk music, abbr.
68. What type of triangle congruency is this?



69. Meghan Trainor song

70. Latin first declension genitive ending
71. There's no use waiting for him
72. Initials of the 2021-2022 Assistant News Editor of the *Argo*
73. Ranking below capt. in U.S. Army
74. Four blocks up from Fifth Avenue
77. Civil rights group that launched the 1961 Freedom Rides
78. The island right off the boot of Italy, to Italians
79. Temperature control syst. present at BLS
81. Local music ensemble conducted by Benjamin Zander
85. 3.14159265358979
86. The ones that got away
87. Unit of measurement for powerlifters
88. Fleetwood Mac's "Silver ___"
89. Central, to UK drill
90. I heard a tall, tan, young and lovely woman has walked here once
91. State of Pitts., Phil. and Hrrsbrg.
92. Stopper
93. Point of contact between humans and computer
94. Ablative masculine singular for Latin demonstrative to mean "himself"
95. 20th letter of the Greek alphabet
96. The focus of biopic *One Love* (pg. 15)
98. 2000s stage name for Sean Combs
101. Pleasant excursion
103. Like unwashed hair
104. Form determining eligibility for financial aid, currently experiencing major delays
105. *Saepe*, in Latin
107. "It's not ___, it's a when"
110. "The Jungle Book" python
114. Apple of my ___e
115. Capital of GA
116. Whose neighbor shalt thou love?
120. Sports video game brand, associated with *FIFA*, *Madden NFL* and *NBA Live*
122. Major U.S.-based airline, abbr.
123. School that awards the Menino Scholarship

Z AND P'S CORNER



Jenny Chen (1)

By **Zoe Colimon (1)** & **Parker Hastings (1)**

Creative Consultants

How do you know if breaking up with someone is the right thing to do if you are questioning your relationship? And if it is the right thing to do, how do you follow through with it? It is scary to disrupt your life in such a big way and maybe lose them after getting so accustomed to them and talking to them everyday.

Z: It honestly depends. Why are you questioning the relationship? I have also found that my friends tend to be quite smart when it comes to these decisions because they serve as outside opinions and they can really tell when I'm upset (even when I don't want to admit it). If the relationship is unhealthy and you don't feel valued, then breaking up is the right thing to do, hands down. You should never compromise your feelings because you feel like you're being too sensitive, because these things pile up. On the contrary, sometimes people self-sabotage because a relationship feels too safe and the "spark" goes away, but keeping that spark alive is as easy as committing to the relationship and making a consistent effort. (This could look like scheduling bi-weekly dates or any other kind of bonding activity.)

I think that the right way to follow through with it is to sit down with your partner and have a genuine conversation. You should release people with care, especially if you care about them. But don't forget that people who suck do not deserve your compassion in this way! I think you should evaluate the "why" you want to break up and treat the conversation appropriately.

And yes, it is scary. But these things are often necessary to keep your internal peace. And if it's the right decision, then you will feel relief after the initial shock. And that relief is the best feeling ever.

How do I know if what I'm choosing for after graduation is the right choice?

Z: Like you don't. None of us do (that is fully a lie, I am projecting)

Z: Does it feel right to you? Do YOU feel at peace with your decision? Take it for me, someone who wanted to study astrophysics for 3 years of high school (like boi what the heck) and is now majoring in film. Literally nothing is real. And a lot of people don't even go into a field that is directly attached to their major. You have so much time to figure it out and as long as YOU (yes you, not ur mama or whatever) feel good about it, then run with it.

P: You don't lowkey, and that's the gag. It's scary and unknown but there are so many different ways for your future to pan out. Let's say you commit somewhere, it could suck, but you can transfer! The world is your canvas.

How do I get coworkers to be my friends outside of work?

Z&P: This response contains work horror stories that can offput one who is looking to work in the restaurant industry. Reader discretion is advised.

Z: Parker is much better at making friends so... take it away poopkins <3

P: I work at a restaurant, so a lot of our bonding is based on intense suffering. Every shift is lowkey something out of Tartarus, and the fact we all have to go through it together makes us really close. I carpool with my work friends, and so we sometimes hang out after work and debrief the (usually) hellish shift. But I feel like my experience at work is very different because there are some points where it is like *The Bear*, and we kind of feel like a family.

Z: *The Bear*?!?! Do you have a hot chef that screams at everyone about his knife being missing?

P: No, but one of the old managers threw a burger patty at the guy on the grill because he kept messing up the order. Another time, I was hosting, got yelled at by the same manager and then went out to the host stand just to get berated by a customer and I teared up and started crying in front of a line of 20 people at 7:30 P.M. on a Saturday in the middle of July. The people behind that customer apologized, and the same day, someone gave me 15 dollars for not quitting after seeing how bad work was. Regardless, I love the place and the family there (pay isn't too bad either).

Z: I would like to say that my place of work is quite calm. I think this is a you problem. I don't have a saga to share, but I get a lot of old men calling me a "pretty little lady" before they proceed to ask me my age. I usually get tipped tho. W.

P: HA!

Z: I just remembered that I'm legal though and now I have to lie about my age to get them off my back. Oh, the world we live in.

My boyfriend left me for his abusive ex but lied to me and said it was my fault. It's been about a month and it's my birthday and I'm having a hard time living this day to the fullest because I'm still really sad. I feel like I'm wasting the hours of my birthday because I'm not feeling the happiness a birthday should bring.

Z: First of all... what?! CRAZY EX ALERT! Or they have some serious stuff to work out. Second of all, yeah... birthdays suck. If it makes you feel better, I have an irrational fear of my birthday. But let's not make this about me. At the end of the day, birthdays are literally just a day. Like nothing magical happens and you always feel the same, but you should use the fact that birthdays are supposed to be special to feel special, you know? Like it literally doesn't matter. So treat stuff like it doesn't matter for a day!

My plan is to keep him blocked for a couple months and then check in to see if he's stopped majorly tweaking—I'm using an oven metaphor for this. I'm letting him bake in the oven (he won't bake into a regular guy if I 'keep the oven open'/keep talking to him and trying to fix things) and I'll keep checking to see if he's baked through yet. If he's still raw, I let him bake longer. If he's not going to bake, I'll just let him burn.

Z: Burn? As in the song from *Hamilton*? :0 (sorry)

But if he's all baked—that is, very apologetic for being a horrible [redacted], I'll take him out of the oven, let him cook off, and then take a bite. Because I can't eat him while he's still hot from the oven. And if it turns out after he cools off that I can't eat him, I'll feed him to someone else.

Z: Feed him to WHO???

Anyway, that whole process is going to take years. How do I feel okay while I wait?

P: Years? What! In the most retrospective way this is one singular person. Per the information given, you guys aren't in some sort of an arranged marriage and you have to stick with him, so I'm honestly taken aback you're seeing a multi-year future with him, while you're being hurt. As much as you want to save him or try and help him out of this situation, you need to put your health first. Using your oven analogy: you're so preoccupied with this one loaf, that you have an entire pantry full of ingredients. Also, as a loaf-lover myself, sometimes the yeast is bad and the bread doesn't rise. And you really want to just give it time because time heals everything, right? Just make a new loaf. Leaving the metaphor, you're ignoring so much of the universe by pinholing on this one person. Like there is so much going on around you, sometimes you need to take a step back to realize it. Like yk Where's Waldo? His ass is Waldo. But here's the catch: it's not Where's Waldo, not even just Waldo, it's just the beach and people are there. Remove the obsession and you will feel so much better.

Z: I do not have the energy to metaphor rn. This is like an AP Lit essay level though. You should talk to Ms. Moon!

But in all seriousness, I promise he is not worth it. I am willing to bet on that. No high school boi who is crazy is worth your time. Dare I say, he is the equivalent of a literal loaf of bread? Maybe try finding a hobby. I heard knitting is good for the soul! I think?

How do you accept that high school dating will not be the vibe?

P: First of all, it still can be. Don't lose hope. Even if you've lost hope, find hope.

Z: Keep your head up and your fist in the air!

P&Z: #KEEPPIGHTINGSOLDIER

P: When I say find hope, I mean don't give up hope, but still recognize that maybe the people you want to be in a relationship with are not within the parameters of 78 Avenue Louis Pasteur 02115. Branch out; there is more than one high school in Massachusetts.

Z: I'm gonna drop the humor now though and lock in: You accept it. Because a lot of people don't date in high school and don't want to. There is this really odd culture where people are supposed to be dating like they're a married couple with years of dating experience, but it is up to YOU when you get that experience. It doesn't have to be that young. Me at 15 is ten times different from me now at 18. Making those big decisions and being attached to a person is really mentally taxing, and if anything be happy that you get to focus on YOU! Have pride in your independence!

[H]ow to not self sabotage when talking to someone?

Z: First thing I will say is that if you feel like you can't be yourself, then you shouldn't be talking to this person.

P: Make sure they are a good person. Or else you end up sabotaging how people think of you, without you even knowing it, until you do, but even then, you don't really get it.

What do u do when ur btwn two possible ppl?

Z: Pros and cons list, always.

P: Which one likes you more?

I develop an attachment/obsession w any one who gives me attention. and they're always older than me. and when I say older I mean like [redacted]. What do I do?

Z: Oh honey...

crickets

Z: We are sitting here quite baffled. I'm gonna be so real. I'm sorry. Maybe you should talk to your doctor about that.

P: I'm sighing but there's no word for that. Like my read is that maybe it's because you're seeking approval or some sort of validation from someone older because you lack a role model?

Z: Do you have a healthy relationship with your father?

NEED MORE ADVICE?

GET ONE LAST ANSWER FROM Z AND P IN THEIR NEXT AND FINAL ISSUE AS THE ARGO'S BELOVED CREATIVE CONSULTANTS.

(THEY DIDN'T GET FIRED, THEY'RE JUST GRADUATING)



Spotlight on Iris Tian (II)



By **Mindy Luong (I)**
Staff Writer

Congratulations to Iris Tian (II) for passing both Senior Districts and the Massachusetts Music Educators Association (MMEA) All-State audition for violin! Tian currently plays for the Boston Latin School Concert String Orchestra and has nearly ten years of experience under her belt.

Among the 27 students who represented BLS at the MMEA Eastern District Senior Festival this January, Tian was one of 16 receiving an all-state recommendation.

Many BLS students participating in band, choir and or-

chestra are familiar with the lengthy audition process of All-States: the months refining an unfamiliar piece, the judging process, all before moving on to the next round of auditions. Auditionees selected from the top scorers in Senior Districts auditions earn an All-State recommendation, which qualifies them for All-State auditions. These are followed by more judging, and for string players, getting accepted means a chance at being selected to play with an orchestra of like-passionate musicians that also qualified for MMEA for two days: one for rehearsal and the other for the performance.

With such a demanding musical commitment, how does one balance the arts on top of school and other extracurriculars? Tian finds that in regards to her own practice, it's much more productive to focus on quality rather than quantity.

She explains, "Some people I know practice two hours, [which] is a lot of time to invest, especially for BLS students. I like to designate a bit of time where I really work on one specific thing that I want to improve on." This way, she is able to make the most out of her limited practice time.

One of the biggest obstacles Tian has faced in her musical career is accurately gauging her abilities, whether in terms of strengths or areas for improvement. When she first started the violin, Tian's assessment of her skills largely depended on instructor feedback. But throughout the years, she began to realize the importance of determining her artistic identity.

A key factor in doing so was accepting humility as part of the growth process. While Tian is now at a point in her journey where her mindset reflects positively on her skills, she equally recognizes how important it is "to realize not everything is perfect [...] there's always something to improve [upon]."

Playing an instrument has intangible rewards, too. Although Tian initially relied on self-discipline as motivation, she has since discovered that music is an excellent medium for expressing emotions. She believes that, "Especially for violin and other instruments, it's a very cathartic experience [...] And it's really relaxing after a tough day, to just set everything down and pick up your violin."

Aside from excelling in orchestra, one can find Tian picking up a new crochet pattern, plucking the ukulele or playing tennis for the BLS girls' JV team.

To all her fellow musicians, the best piece of advice Tian has to offer is "just to find what makes you happy when you're doing music. Don't force yourself to [...] practice every day if that's what someone's forcing you to do."

And of course, explore different genres of music! Despite being an avid student of the classical genre, Tian is branching out into jazz and encourages others to explore outside of their main genre as well. In the end, what matters most is personal fulfillment and discovering an outlet representative of your artistic expression.

Boston's ICA: Exhibiting Talent of All Ages

By **Sophia Fortuin (IV)**
& **Sophia Knobel (IV)**
Contributing Writers

You've definitely heard of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, but have you heard about the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA)? The ICA is a museum and teaching space located along the Boston Harbor in the Seaport District. It was founded in 1936 as a sister institution to the New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and was hence named the Boston Museum of Modern Art. Over a decade later, though, it diverged from the MoMA and was renamed the Institute of Contemporary Art, a name that better reflects its mission: to showcase contemporary artists and their art. Tourists and Boston residents alike enjoy visiting the institute's one-of-a-kind exhibits, in addition to their numerous programs specifically designed for teenagers to express their passion for art.

Unlike most fine art museums, the ICA houses relatively new works from 20th and 21st century artists. Inevitably, modern technology impacts the mediums these artists use. Boston Latin School arts teacher Ms. Elizabeth Walshak comments that with "more immersive experience museums opening up," more and more art-

work displayed in museums "will adapt to consider a broader range of experiences."

Massachusetts-born artist Wu Tsang's collection "Of Whales" is on display at the ICA until August 4. The work is from the perspective of a sperm whale, and is part of a trilogy inspired by the classic novel *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville. The collection takes advantage of modern technologies, using real-time video created by extended-reality software and layered music that fully immerses the audience.

Behind the scenes are workers that help keep the ICA running smoothly, as well as several paid teen programs, such as the Teen Exhibitions Program (TEP), of which Leandra Bautista (I) is a part of. Members of TEP "organize two exhibitions a year to amplify teen art and invite teens in Boston and beyond to engage with the artwork," says Bautista. Bautista has been involved with art her whole life, growing up in a family full of artists. At BLS, she took Foundations of Visual Arts as a junior and is currently taking AP Art and Graphic Art. She first started working at the ICA four years ago.

Bautista reflects, "Seeing the impact I left by displaying others' art and meeting so many talented people in the greater Boston area really solidified my feelings about cu-



Boston teens showcase their artistic abilities at the ICA.

ration and the possibility of pursuing a career within museums." Bautista's work at the ICA has not only helped others, but also led her to discover a possible career path.

Recently, the ICA Teen Arts Council hosted a free teen event, "Home Is Where The Heart Is," which included an evening of postcard making, paper collage art and open-mic discussions.

Whether you think of art as a necessity or just a part of life, anyone can benefit from visiting the ICA. Ms. Walshak adds, "Through visiting museums, people can also learn about the sociopolitical context of art or learn about facets of culture." After all, the ICA is free for all Boston Public Schools students, so what are you waiting for?

Phasing In and Out: Artists and Their "Eras"

By **Alexandra Lee (II)**
& **Katie Hurley (III)**
Contributing Writers

The concept of artists having "eras" has existed for decades, originating with iconic stars like David Bowie, the Beatles, Madonna and more. Whether it be a change in genre, appearance or sound, eras mark a shift in an artist's presentation. As musicians evolve, though, fan opinion varies, often resulting in instability regarding ratings and sales.

Madonna's most famous — at least, most widely recognizable to Generation Z — period is her "Material Girl" era, during which she released her album *Like a Virgin*, which included the song "Material Girl." While the music video for "Material Girl," inspired by Marilyn Monroe's *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, may feature sparkly diamonds and adoring men, the song is about a woman conning a greedy, patriarchal society. In her next era, Madonna continued to channel Marilyn Monroe and emphasize the theme of standing up to male authority, proving

her capability of maintaining fame with the album *True Blue*.

Madonna's fourth and fifth albums of the late '80s explored themes of sexuality, religion and destigmatization of the AIDS crisis — prompting backlash from the Pope and further establishing Madonna as a social justice advocate. Although Guinness World Records has named her the best selling female recording artist of all time, even the staunchest Madonna fans can acknowledge that her prime has passed. Album sales have taken a hit since the early 21st century, dropping from multi-millions to thousands.

Hanna Flynn (III) doesn't like to categorize artists' eras based on their popularity. An avid fan of the rock band The Smashing Pumpkins, Flynn doesn't think that streams equate to success in the group's various eras. Their classic and pop rock albums simply "appeal to... different audience[s]," she remarks. Flynn does admit, however, that the band's latest album, in which they veered away from rock and into folk, "wasn't very successful at all."

While '80s artists Madonna and The

Smashing Pumpkins have continued to follow their passions past commercial success, the '70s band Fleetwood Mac has not recorded new music in decades.

Fleetwood Mac began as a blues band in the '60s, an era cut short with the departure of guitarist Peter Green after only a few years. Their second, and arguably most creative, era was prompted by the addition of three new members who transitioned the group to experimental rock.

Fleetwood Mac's third and final era began in 1975 with the addition of Stevie Nicks and Lindsay Buckingham. Seven studio albums including *Rumors* and self-titled *Fleetwood Mac* were released during this time when they reached their height. With Buckingham writing most of the music, the band's sound became more reminiscent of soft rock, losing the less mainstream influence of blues and experimental rock in favor of a pop flavor. Much of their music was influenced by multiple complicated romances between the members — you might recognize the lyric "I'll follow you down 'til the sound of my voice will haunt you," which

was written by Nicks about Buckingham.

Eras due to personnel changes or desire for commercial success aren't uncommon; The Ramones, a band popular in the '70s and '80s, cycled through different drummers and producers who altered the group's overall sound. Additionally, strings and horns were incorporated in an effort to achieve mainstream success, which transformed their music. While they're often credited with the popularization of punk rock, they were still unable to make a hit.

As a self-described "aficionado" of the Ramones, Boston Latin School AP Language and Composition teacher Mr. Robert Oakes attributes their lack of commercial success to them being "too weird-looking, too aggressive." Along with being a music fanatic, Mr. Oakes has been playing and making music since high school. While he's always been a fan of The Ramones and The Beatles, lately he's grown to appreciate the "originals" and "masters," such as John Lee Hooker and Robert Johnson. These blues artists drew inspiration from the aforementioned Beatles.

Tough Love for *One Love*

By **Aurora McLaughlin (IV)**
& **Julia Morellato (IV)**

Contributing Writers

On February 14, the biopic *Bob Marley: One Love* was released to theaters. This movie shares the most eventful years of Marley's career, spanning from his 1976 "Smile Jamaica" performance to his death in 1981, with occasional flashbacks to his childhood. The film allows viewers to travel along with Marley as he faces challenges with faith, fame, relationships and the music industry.

Bob Marley, played by Kingsley Ben-Adir, was a Jamaican reggae singer. He left behind a legacy of impactful music, and people are now diving deeper into his life with this new biopic that sheds light on his achievements and struggles.

During the height of his career, there was an abundance of violence and political issues in Jamaica; *One Love* depicts his main goal of spreading peace through music on tour for his album *Exodus*. The film highlights negative aspects of fame, too, revealing how the tour caused tension in his marriage, with his manager and in his faith.

Following his tour, he returned to Jamaica because two leaders, Michael Manley and Edward Seaga, who were from opposing political parties, said they had been inspired by Marley's music to come to an understanding. They wanted him to have a concert where they publicly appeared together to make it known that they were at peace to prevent further

violence, a portrait of just how Marley's music impacted the world.

Since *One Love* was released in theaters, there have been many controversial opinions circling among critics and audiences. While it has higher reviews on other platforms, on Rotten Tomatoes, it has a rating of 42 percent. Some critics argue the film only captured part of his career and vaguely pictured some of his upbringing and youth.

Odie Henderson, a critic from the *Boston Globe*, states, "This man was a national treasure. So how, in the name of all that is Irie, does *Bob Marley: One Love* make his story so flat, lifeless and dull?" The overall verdict of the critics is that the film did not fully encapsulate Marley's accomplishments.

Echoing this statement, Desmond Cikacz (IV) mentions, "I think that [the] journey with trying to protect his loved ones was a very important topic [but] they could've shown a little more of what people were thinking of him at the time."

Other students, however, such as Nick Miani (IV) and Connie Wu (IV), believe that the film delivered an important message, noting that what "was well represented in this film was Bob Marley using his music to really encourage the idea of peace in Jamaica and not only move people with his music but change what life means to people."

In all, we'd rate this film an eight out of ten. Although the movie emphasized Marley's passion for peace and all the incredible things he contributed to Jamaican society, a lot of Marley's life was missing, such as the very beginning of his musical



career and his creative process. Regardless, we feel the film did a great job of depicting the personality of Marley, his dedication to his music and his values in life.

Tet Festival: Entertainment, Excitement and Eating



Students sing their hearts out at Tet Festival.

By **Bridget Blair (IV)**
& **Ashley Hur (IV)**

Contributing Writers

On February 16, Boston Latin School Vietnamese Students Society (VSS) hosted the highly anticipated Tet Festival in celebration of Lunar

New Year. Dinner, games and several performances were made available for the attendees.

The event began in the dining hall, exploding with a variety of games such as fishing and "Feed the Lion." As participants won games, they received stamps which could be redeemed for prizes. Afterwards, those in attendance migrated to the auditorium to watch the lineup of performances.

The festival offered a range of performances from different groups and clubs, including dance performances from JEN-DSY, BLS Dance, BLS Koreo and BLS Breakers, and band performances from Zebra Therapy, The Color Blue and Aquarium Gravel. Dance Club officer Karina Ryan (IV), explains, "I've been working on the dances since October with my fellow dance friends, so when the big awaited moment came to perform, I was so excited."

Preparation, although intense and stressful, was key in making sure

this event went smoothly. VSS recruited training officers and formed committees for the festival in order to get work done efficiently.

Performers shared this sentiment of productivity as well. Kumba Marah (IV), the event's MC, explained that there was fun in the demanding environment, expressing, "My favorite parts were [the] after school rehearsals; they were really fun."

The festival provided an enjoyable experience, and was delightful for audience members and gave students an opportunity to demonstrate their talents. The energy created during the showcase is a testament to the importance of the Tet Festival.

VSS co-president Daryl Nguyen (I) concludes, "*Tet Festival* is our way of sharing Vietnamese culture with a broader audience here at BLS. [...] VSS has always sought to nurture a comfortable environment for students to learn how to embrace their identities and also educate others on the beauty of maintaining traditions like these."

Upcoming Concerts in Boston

By **Elizabeth Noronha (III)**
Contributing Writer

There is only one thing better than streaming your favorite artists' music: seeing them live in concert! Thankfully, Boston is a tour stop for many of our favorite artists within the next six months.

On April 1 and 2 in the TD Garden, Olivia Rodrigo will be touring her "Guts Tour." She began her career as an actress but over the years pivoted to singing and songwriting. Following the success of her debut album *Sour*, for which she received three Grammys, Rodrigo became a favorite for many young adults, who relate to her songs about growing up as a teenager.

Continuing their busy schedule, AJR is performing as part of "The Maybe Man Tour" on April 3 and 4 — also at the TD Garden. They accomplished their goal of selling out a stadium in Boston, prompting them to add another tour

date. You might recognize their song "World's Smallest Violin" as a popular TikTok trend last summer.

If you love classic rock, you are in luck because the Rolling Stones are coming to Boston on May 30 to perform in Gillette Stadium as part of their "Hackney Diamonds Tour." Known as the greatest rock and roll band of all time, they were the first band to ever perform at Gillette when it was first built. The Rolling Stones have been active for the past seven decades, but each show is still a unique experience.

This summer is also jam packed with artists on tour, such as Melanie Martinez for her "The Trilogy Tour." She will be performing in the TD Garden on June 7. Known for her appearance on *The Voice*, she has been compared to Lana Del Rey and Lorde in her vocal style. Not only does Martinez have an amazing set of pipes, but she also has her own lip-stick line: Lime Crime: Unicorn Lipstick.

Canadian artist Tate McRae will also be visiting Boston on her "Think Later Tour." You can see her on August 9 in the MGM Music Hall at Fenway. As a friend of Rodrigo, she was featured in the "bad idea, right" music video. McRae rose to fame due to her prominence in dance competitions and on YouTube. Her most popular song, which inspired the Tube Girl trend, is "Greedy," the lead single from her *Think Later* album.

And to end your summers, P!NK will be coming to Boston for her 2024 "Summer Carnival" show. She will be performing at Gillette Stadium on August 21. This is her eighth tour and she is promoting her new album *Trustfall*. P!NK always puts on the best performance with her astounding voice and acrobatics.

This will be an exciting year for music fans of all genres and each show, even beyond the ones mentioned, will be sure to create unforgettable memories.

March 25, House of Blues:
Offset

April 1 and 2, TD Garden:
Olivia Rodrigo

April 3 and 4, TD Garden:
AJR, Dean Lewis

April 9, House of Blues:
Busta Rhymes

April 16, MGM Music Hall:
girl in red

April 17, TD Garden:
Bad Bunny

May 7-8, Wang Theatre:
Laufey

May 10, MGM Music Hall:
Freddie Gibbs, Madlib, Eyedress

May 24-26, Harvard Athletic Complex:
Boston Calling (Ed Sheeran, Hozier, The Killers, Reneé Rapp, d4vd, Megan Thee Stallion)

May 30, Gillette Stadium:
Rolling Stones

Spotlight on Steven Miall (II)



By Sameena Ballal (IV)
Contributing Writer

Though something like Disney Junior might be the top choice for any other seven-year-old, for Steven Miall (II), fencing at that age is what led him to become the Junior National Fencing Champion.

Having an older sister helped, as she introduced and immersed him in the sport. It was his passion for competition and camaraderie with other teammates, however, that led him to excel. Miall recently traveled to Charlotte, North Carolina to compete in the Cadet Men's Foil at the 2024 Junior Olympics. After beating out 312 competi-

tors and a suspenseful final match, Miall came home with Gold and the title of National Fencing Champion.

There are several unique elements to Miall's journey in fencing. In addition to inspiring him, Miall's older sister, Annie Miall ('19) was the fencing captain for the Boston Latin School women's team. He states, "Without my sister, I would have never been able to find this sport." Both are part of a long tradition of fencing at BLS, with the women's and men's teams having taken home multiple championships over the past decade.

Although fencing may seem like an individual sport, Miall relies on his teammates to push and motivate him. He says, "I never get sick of it because I get to fence with all my clubmates every day."

He also has an individual routine to help prepare for his matches. Plenty of sleep the night before and a nutritious but light breakfast before warming up are just some of the keys to his success. Miall practices for several hours at a time, four days of

the week. This intense individual routine is balanced by working with teammates and younger players to help them achieve their potential as fencers.

One of the team captains, Lucy Zhang (III), comments on Miall: "He's a great teammate and wonderful foil fencer. I'm looking forward to leading the team to another victory together as returning [co-]captains!"

Miall's experience with the U.S. National Fencing Team has given him new insight into the sport, motivated him to be better and showcased his fencing talents on a world stage. While he has been fencing for over ten years, he is just getting started. In the future, he hopes to continue his fencing journey in college at a Division I program and potentially after he graduates. While he may have missed the s on Disney Junior, his future is bright as he is pursuing an exciting path in the world of fencing.

Is the NFL Rigged?

By Liam Sullivan (II)
Staff Writer

In the world of professional sports, where the competitive attitudes of athletes meet the passion of millions of fans, no other league has received nearly as much skepticism as the National Football League (NFL).

Whispers and conspiracy theories about the league being rigged have persisted for years, causing fans and sports analysts alike to question the authenticity of "America's sport." The rigging allegations center on the idea that certain games are manipulated to favor specific teams or players, usually for economic gain and increased engagement.

The theory that the NFL prioritizes specific teams or players questions the financial viability of the league. As an enormous industry with diverse streams of revenue, the NFL has numerous broadcasting deals and very profitable merchandise and ticket sales. A rigged league with a predetermined winner risks alienating fans and sponsors, potentially harming financial stability.

Social media platforms have become a breeding ground for football conspiracy theories and speculation, providing a platform for fans to share their analyses

and opinions on games without being questioned by league professionals. The instantaneous nature of social media allows fans to make real-time reactions regarding questionable calls and unexpected outcomes, which only accelerates the spread of rigging claims.

The rise of social media influencers and content creators who specialize in sports commentary has contributed to the circulation of theories as well. The ability of influencers and creators to reach audiences far and wide also creates a mass platform for skepticism. While some creators provide informed analyses, others capitalize on sensationalism to gain attention, further amplifying rigging narratives.

Critics of the NFL often point to high-profile incidents of controversial calls or game decisions that seem to favor more popular teams or players. The infamous "Tuck Rule" game in 2002, for example, involved the Oakland Raiders versus the increasingly popular New England Patriots, led by star quarterback Tom Brady. In the game, a play occurred, which resulted in officials citing a controversial rule, that favored the Patriots. This ruling ultimately caused the Patriots to beat the Raiders and was pivotal in their journey to a Super Bowl victory that year.

While isolated controversial calls

may raise eyebrows and cause questions to the legitimacy of the league, the NFL denies any intentional manipulation of games. The league also argues that the criticism placed on individual calls overshadows the many unbiased decisions throughout an entire season, which could have been just as controversial but with less on the line.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell defends officials and human mistakes saying in a 2012 campaign that pushed for the legalization of sports gambling: "Normal incidents of the game such as bad snaps, dropped passes, turnovers, penalty flags and play calling inevitably will fuel speculation, distrust and accusations of point-shaving and game-fixing."

Boston Latin School football captain and quarterback August Groh (II) believes that the NFL is not rigged. Sympathizing with referees, he says, "Football is a really hard sport to referee because of all the infractions like holding or offside. Things are pretty small [and] not very visible to the eye."

A further argument from NFL critics is the presence of the "Super Bowl narrative." Theorists argue that the league creates a storyline to ensure that the most marketable teams and players make it to the playoffs and ultimately the Super Bowl. Skeptics suggest that featuring favored

franchises or charismatic players draws higher television ratings, thus generating more revenue.

Some point to the highly public relationship between Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce and global superstar artist Taylor Swift, arguing that it has led the NFL to promote the Chiefs to garner more media attraction. Theorists believe the NFL intentionally used the widespread media coverage of the relationship to gain as much engagement as possible with the Super Bowl.

Wolfpack cheerleading captain and fan of popstar Taylor Swift, Bridget Treseler (I), believes that the NFL is not rigged, saying, "Taylor Swift is just popular and brings more viewers to the game."

The theories of the NFL being rigged remain largely speculative, lacking substantial evidence to support such claims. While controversies and questionable calls are part of any sport, attributing them solely to a league-wide conspiracy oversimplifies the complex and unpredictable nature of professional football.

As fans, it is important to appreciate athletes for their skills, athleticism and the excitement they bring. League conspiracy theorists and skeptics lose sight of the fact that genuine competition remains at the heart of the league.

March Sports Update

**By Michelle Wang (II),
Hannah Stoll (II)
& Michael Tran (III)**

Forum Editor, Assistant Forum Editor
and Contributing Writer

Cheer

The Boston Latin School cheer team has had a sweeping season this year, packed with intensive practices and various competitions.

On March 3, the varsity team placed third at Division I Regionals, qualifying them for the state competition. On March 10, the team competed in the Division I State Championships at Worcester State University, earning sixth place.

Varsity cheer captain Deborah Desir (I) reflects, "At first, our winter season had a rough start, but we came out of it and at Worcester State University we received our best score this season. Bridget Treseler (I) and I captained a team to states not once but twice, with our highest score and placement!"

Boys' Hockey

The BLS boys' hockey team is capping off an impressive 12-8 regular season. They were scorching hot with a five-game winning streak heading into the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) playoffs. This record was enough to earn them the No. 11 seed in the state tournament.

Defender James Sullivan (III) attributes the key to their success as their "hard working group that tries to get better every day. The high-intensity practices can be tiring, but there is always someone there to pick you up."

With impressive wins in the state tournament over Billerica, Concord-Carlisle, Duxbury and Westwood High School, they continued on to the state championship game, which was played at TD Garden on March 17 against Tewksbury Memorial High School. The Wolfpack made their first championship appearance in 19 years, ending their magical season with gold medals around their neck new hardware to bring back to the BLS community.

Girls' Hockey

The BLS girls' hockey team ended their successful season with 16 wins, four losses and two ties. They won against Andover High School in the MIAA round of 32 in double overtime before losing to St. Mary's Lynn in the round of 16, finishing with a score of 4-2 to end their year.

Boys' Basketball

The BLS boys' basketball team celebrated many highlight this past season. Despite enduring some ups and downs, such as going 2-8 (win-loss) in Conference games, the team went 10-0 outside of the conference, achieving a record of 12-8 and qualifying for the MIAA state tournament. During the preliminary round, they pulled off a 57-54 overtime win against the No. 23 seed St. John's Preparatory School, upsetting them in the process. In the next round, the boys played Lawrence High School, losing 66-37, therefore ending their season. Point guard Jadon Berkson (II) reflects, "We already look forward to playing together in the offseason and getting ready for next sea-

Crew

The BLS crew teams are putting their boats back in the water after a long winter of erging in preparation for the spring season of rowing. 14 rowers recently returned from Tennessee, where they strengthened their skills and prepared for a competitive season.

To kick off this season, their first race is the Salvo Cup on April 14, where the varsity crew team will row against Brookline High School. Boys' captain Rhys St. Crawford (II) comments on the intensity of regattas: "[The Charles River] can be brutal sometimes. It's windy some days and pouring rain other days. On top of that, you're rowing in basically a toothpick of a boat that unbalances easily and requires the energy of all nine people to be effective, which takes a whole level of patience and minor adjustments to fix."

Through persistent fundraising over the years, the crew team is excited to have a special boat christening at the upcoming Salvo Cup.

Referee Shortages: No One to Blow the Whistle

By Julia Sax (I)

Staff Writer

This year, sports across Boston Latin School have seen referee shortages, negatively impacting coaches, players and BLS families alike.

This shortage has no definitive start date, but BLS student Aidan Zaphiris (I), a local soccer referee officiating town games and youth club games in the Greater Boston area, has seen this issue grow throughout his time as a referee. Games have been consistently rescheduled, with futsal games in particular seeing around five games rescheduled a week due to a lack of officials. Annoyance among the players and coaches is a strong sentiment, but referees now must work overtime. He has had to officiate games by himself, adding more stress. As the shortage progresses, more is demanded of him. “[He is] often asked to take on extra games, sometimes in the same weekend; [he] will have to travel to more than three different facilities to get games and these can be over an hour away from each other or from [his] house.”

One incident stands out most to BLS varsity football coach Raymond Butler. Last year, a softball game started with only one official, as the other was late because he was officiating another game. Such instances point to the fact that officials are being stretched more than ever.

These shortages are the result of various factors, but according to BLS Athletics Director Jack Owens, “[T]he most glaring and impactful is the be-

havior of people at games whether it be coaches, players or spectators.” Many referees do these jobs on the side, and enduring poor behavior and inappropriate comments is simply not worth it. Because of their full-time jobs, high school games being scheduled on weekday afternoons limit the availability of officials. Additionally, referees are moving to other sports — Mr. Owens is the Dual County League liaison for baseball and has seen umpires move to sports with shorter games and similar pay. Lastly, officials are aging and retiring with not enough young referees ready to step in.

So, what is being done to handle it?

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association has partnered with RefReps, an organization educating and recruiting new game officials. Other organizations are doing outreach at various levels to help fill the void, but according to Coach Butler, getting high school officials “is challenging because of [the] certification and training requirements.” Leagues often reach out to former and current players to be trained to officiate youth games.

There is hope, though; high school students can help the shortage. According to Zaphiris, “[I]t is a great way to earn money during the school year [and] get started in a job that doesn’t need any prior experience.” He also believes that “[p]itching to high school students is crucial because they often have a lot of time on their hands to help out for local games and local leagues.”

To accommodate shortages, Coach Butler explains that some football games this season were moved to Thursdays,



A referee officiates the Latin vs. English football game.

allowing the league to maximize the number of available officials. As the game times were altered, officials are being required to work back-to-back games, which Mr. Owens has not seen throughout his career. There have also been adjustments to prevent varsity and junior varsity games from occurring at the same time, “translat[ing] to a facility issue, especially in the city” according to Mr. Owens.

The current impact of the shortage on gameplay is difficult to grasp, partially due to new referees entering high school sports. Coach Butler believes the cause of the shortage to be cyclical, and partially due to the increased poor behavior at games. Zaphiris agrees the

issue is longer term, as “[t]here is a lot of available human capital in kids who play youth sports or college students, but [he doesn’t] know if a ton is being done to reach out to these groups and convince them to join. [He] sees those two groups as the main sources from where the numbers of refs across sports are most likely to expand.” Mr. Owens brings a more hopeful outlook, stating, “The official shortage has not and will not ruin high school athletics, because the coaches and administrators will always adjust because it is all about the student athletes, but it has certainly created a burden for assignors and athletic directors to maintain the quality of the experience.”

Caitlin Clark’s Historic Season



C. Morgan Engel

Caitlin Clark prepares to shoot one of her iconic three-pointers.

By Luke Fredericks (I)

Staff Writer

The landscape of women’s basketball is undergoing a seismic shift, and at the epicenter stands none other than Caitlin Clark.

In case you are unfamiliar with the college phenom, Caitlin Clark is a senior guard for the Iowa Hawkeyes Women’s Basketball team, known for her unbelievable shooting performances and her competitive edge. This year, according to *ESPN*, she is averaging 5.4 three-pointers per game. To put that in perspective, Stephen Curry made 5.3 per game at a 38 percent success rate in his most productive offensive season, according to the National Basketball Association. Clark is not only hitting more threes than the greatest shooter of all time, but is doing it at a higher rate: 39.5 percent.

This barrage has allowed the Iowa guard to average 32.2 points per game while garnering support from all over the sports world. Boston Latin School’s girls’ varsity basketball captain Ruby Donovan (I) and her team feel “refresh[ed] to see a girl taken seriously as an athlete,” a sentiment that certainly rings true as Clark continues to attract millions of new fans to watch her performances.

This isn’t just some fluke of a season though, as Clark has averaged just over 27 points per game in her previous three years at Iowa. With her consistent scoring, Caitlin Clark has launched herself into the record books through a series of fabled performances. On February 15, the Iowa senior scored 49 with nine threes on her way to break the record for most career points in women’s National Collegiate Athletics Association history, previously held by

Kelsey Plum. In classic Caitlin Clark fashion, the history-making shot was a 30-foot bomb from the logo at the center of the court.

Her list of accomplishments from this season, however, does not end there.

On March 3, Iowa, then ranked No. 6, took on then No. 2 Ohio State. Clark entered the game 18 points behind “Pistol” Pete Maravich, who has held the Division I record for career points since 1970. This marquee matchup also stood as Iowa’s final regular season game, marking Clark’s last game in the Carver-Hawkeye Arena. The culmination of these events created immense anticipation, causing the average ticket price to be “546 dollars, the most expensive on record for a women’s basketball game, college or pro,” as reported by Scott Allen of the *Washington Post*.

Caitlin Clark did not disappoint. In the first half alone, the senior had 19 points, passing Pete Maravich on a pair of free throws. Iowa closed out the game in the second half, pulling out an upset against a Buckeye team who had previously won 15 straight. Clark finished her final regular season game with 35 points and nine assists, adding another iconic game to her legacy.

With the scoring title under her belt, Clark moved forward to the post-season. First up was the Big 10 tournament where Iowa entered as the No. 2 seed, much in part due to their win against Ohio State. After a bye in the first round, Iowa steamrolled their initial two opponents, beating both Penn State and Michigan by an average margin of 30 points. In the championship game of the Big 10 tournament, Caitlin Clark once again delivered, dropping 34 points and 12 assists, propelling the

Hawkeyes past the Nebraska Cornhuskers in a thrilling overtime win. This victory stamped the third straight conference title for Iowa, becoming only the fourth team in Big 10 history to accomplish this feat.

The road does not end there for Clark’s remarkable senior season, however. Following their outstanding performance in the Big 10 tournament, the Hawkeyes will be playing in March Madness as a top ranked seed.

In last year’s campaign, Caitlin Clark averaged 31 points across the six games, leading her team to the national championship game. Unfortunately, Iowa fell short to Angel Reese’s LSU Tigers in a game that “drew over four million more viewers than the previous women’s college basketball record,” states Nick Selbe of *Sports Illustrated*. This year, Caitlin Clark aims to secure the national championship for her home state of Iowa, marking a perfect end to her illustrious collegiate career.

On February 29, Clark announced her decision to forgo a fifth year at Iowa, and instead will enter the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) draft. This is welcomed news for the Indiana Fever, who will undoubtedly select the Iowa senior with the number one overall pick. As the most sought after prospect in WNBA history, Caitlin Clark will be expected to perform immediately. No one has ever averaged more than 26 points per game, but with her unique scoring ability, Clark is poised to add this record to her collection.

Nevertheless, even with all the talent in the world, no one can predict how Clark’s career will unfold. As basketball fans, we can only hope Caitlin Clark continues to deliver unforgettable performances, revolutionizing the game along the way.

BLS Women's Fencing Wins the State Championship



BLS Fencing team poses after winning the state championship.

By **Juliet McVay (III)**
& **Maya Lanfer (IV)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Have you ever dreamed of battling it out with nothing but your own wit and a sword in hand? Well, that is what the Boston Latin School fencing team does every day! In fact, the team has been very successful as of late with the girls' fencing team recently win-

ning their State Championship.

For those who don't know, fencing is a competitive combat sport which involves both physical and mental strength. The objective of the game is to hit your opponent in certain areas to win points. The first to five points wins the "bout," or game. Fencing involves fast thinking and even faster reflexes, along with complex footwork and advanced strategy.

There are three different kinds of fenc-

ing: foil, saber and *épée*, and each have their own weapons, target areas and rules. BLS fencing has separate divisions for each of these types and they work collectively to win the competition.

Throughout the regular season, the girls' fencing team played in four different competitions: first Brookline High School, then Dana Hall School, Cambridge Rindge and Latin, and BLS in the finals, finishing with a record good enough to pass through the first round of states without even playing a match.

They entered the exciting and competitive single elimination states tournament where the first to win 14 bouts would win it all. With all three different team subsets playing simultaneously, if one team went down, the others would pick up the weight.

Thus, another level of strategy is added to the competition and as a fencer for the foil team, Melania Yee (III) notes, "This made it really important to communicate between teammates so that we could figure out who had to be on guard (no pun intended) for the school we were fencing."

In some ways, their supportive cheering and pushing of each other to try their hardest is even more important than communication. Of course, as BLS students, the height of their chant is in Latin to fire up the team and keep the energy high: "*sumus lupi, sumus magni!*"

The team clearly has great communication between the subsets of fencing, so

their success is no surprise for BLS — both the girls' and boys' teams have past wins in State Championships. The girls' fencing team won the State Championship in 2022 and the boy's fencing team won their State Championship in 2023. Given these past accomplishments, their success is not a surprise, but it is still exciting that the women's team won the trophy again and they hope to see the boy's team win a trophy next year.

Despite the win, the season was not without its struggles. Last year, many seniors graduated from the fencing team. Regarding the difficulty of rounding up new members, saber captain Lucy Zhang (III) notes, "Recruitment and training for beginners have been the main goal. [...] We hope to help younger members improve and find their passion in fencing." The BLS fencing team does not want to fall behind other schools simply because of a lack of numbers.

Undeterred by these issues, the team is optimistic about the future. Graduating *épée* captain Evelyn Cabot (I) says, "I already know they will do incredibly well next year, but more than anything, I want them to always enjoy fencing and being on the team."

Next year the team hopes to gather more members and will welcome anyone who wants to join fencing, no matter their skill level. After this season, the BLS fencing team and their supporters have high hopes for many more wins to come and are very proud of our girls' team for winning this year's State Championship.

Boston, the New Tracktown?

By **Trevor Gracombe (III)**
Contributing Writer

The New Balance High School Indoor Nationals took place from March 7 to March 10 at the TRACK in Allston-Brighton for the second year in a row, as well as the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center in Roxbury. Nine Boston Latin School athletes competed: Ethan Andersson (I), Max Deane (I), Colin Fisher (I), Liam Fitzgibbon (I), Sam Burnett (II), Hayden Cooper-Dupont (II), Bilal Elhaji (II), Brendan Nolan (II) and Ianna Blenman (IV).

Nationals typically switches locations every year, but the Boston area has clearly been established as the best spot for the tournament since the TRACK's opening. The TRACK, which opened in 2022, features a 200-meter track, areas for field events such as discus, high jump, long jump, and shot put and a capacity of up to 5,000 spectators. Its unique curved shape allows runners to turn more easily and quicker, setting the TRACK apart from other indoor facilities. This modern technology has allowed multiple world records to be set here, and makes it an instant favorite with almost all runners. When asked about Boston's top spot in the track scene, spring and high jumper Amelia Brown (IV) shares that it is "definitely [...] a top destination for runners," and also adds that "my overall

running experience in the city has been pretty good."

When speaking about his experience running at the TRACK, distance runner Liam Fitzgibbon (I) states, "When you walk into the TRACK, the atmosphere is amazing. More specifically, the lighting and the crowd, both of which are better than any other facility I have been to. It is also a plus that it is just a train ride away." For athletes and spectators alike, the TRACK is clearly one of the best venues in the country and it is no wonder why New Balance has chosen it as host in back-to-back years.

Overall, the Wolfpack performed well that weekend, with an especially strong showing by the boys' Sprint Medley Relay team, finishing second in their heat, narrowly beating Somerville High School at the finish. Although Fitzgibbon and the Distance Medley Relay team did not have the best result, largely due to illness, having so many BLS athletes at nationals establishes a lot of hope for the future, setting the precedent for more athletes wearing Wolfpack jerseys to compete at track nationals in the next few years.

In addition to high school nationals, the TRACK also hosted the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I nationals that same weekend. Notably for the distance events, Nico Young of Northern Arizona University swept the 3000-meter and 5000-meter races,



Colin Fisher (I) sprints to the finish line in the Sprint Medley Relay!

cementing him as a name to remember for this summer's Olympic Trials. Maia Ramsden of Harvard College, additionally, won the mile less than a week after she ran the same event at the 2024 Indoor Track World Championships in Glasgow, Scotland, finishing tenth. For the sprints, Terrance Jones of Texas Tech University claimed the 60-meter championship, defending his national title, and Amber Anning of the University of Arkansas led a podium sweep in the 400-meter.

Texas Tech University took home the men's team title in the final event, the 4x400-meter relay, and the University of Arkansas continued as queens of the indoor track, retaining its women's team title.

With so many eyes on the TRACK, the Boston area is becoming both a national and worldwide hub for track and field competitions. We are so lucky to be able to witness top athletes from near and far!

Comeback Kings: BLS Boys' Hockey Captures State Title

By **Vera Jacobson (I)**
Assistant Editor

The Boston Latin School boys' hockey team had tears in their eyes as they clutched the Division 2 state championship trophy against Tewksbury Memorial High School in front of a roaring students section at TD Garden on March 17, late Sunday night.

Since Tewksbury entered as the No.1 seed and BLS the No.11 seed, the Wolfpack were underdogs. Having a lot at stake, they hoped to secure their first state championship

win since 2005. After Tewksbury scored just three minutes into the first period, the Wolfpack started out playing a defensive game. After that first goal, however, Wolfpack goalie Oliver Murphy (III) was a brick wall.

The second period was much like the first as Tewksbury secured their second goal two minutes in with a clean, fast snipe. Down two goals, the scrappy Latin team continued to press on. The momentum shifted when left winger Ryan McHugh (III) scored a late second-period goal.

Latin proved themselves to truly be

a third-period team when they hit the ice in this final period. A drive by McHugh left an excellent rebound for center Billy Cunniffe (II), who was able to bury it into the net. With five minutes left, both teams were square at 2-2. Although Tewksbury called a timeout to try to calm things down, there was no stopping the Wolfpack, as captain Aidan Fitzpatrick (I) roofed his own rebound at the right post to make it 3-2 with just under four minutes to play. As the Latin student sections howled for the first lead of the game, captain Matt Carrara (I) broke into the zone, evaded the defend-

ers, and secured the Latin victory at 4-2.

"They've carried us all year, those two players," said BLS boys' varsity hockey head coach Frank Woods. "It was fitting to have those two be the guys to get us the lead and extend it." Although the game was delayed for two hours as previous games ran over time, no one regretted watching the Wolfpack make history. Whether it was the luck of St. Patrick or more likely, the incredible determination and iron-clad willpower of the Wolfpack's players, they sealed their place as triumphant underdogs with this fantastic upset.

College Fan Storming Frenzy

By **Ben Jacobson (II)**

Contributing Writer

In the realm of sports, few moments can match the thrill of an underdog team triumphing over a formidable opponent. The sheer exhilaration of such victories often spills over into the stands, where fans feel compelled to rush on to the court to celebrate. This phenomenon, known as “storming the court,” has sparked debates regarding its appropriateness, safety and regulation. Some argue that it fosters camaraderie and excitement, while others caution against it for the dangers it poses to both players and spectators.

One primary argument in favor of storming courts is a sense of excitement and heightened team spirit. Grace O’Brien (II), left defenseman for the varsity girls’ hockey team, states, “In my opinion, a

[benefit] of storming the court is that it creates a sense of excitement and increases team spirit.” Jubilant fans celebrating with victorious athletes can indeed be infectious — forming memories to last a lifetime.

Echoing this sentiment, Evan Dalmanieras (II), member of the varsity football team, emphasizes the fans’ excitement, particularly after an unexpected victory. He asserts, “If a bad team beats a good team, then the fans have the right to celebrate.”

Others, however, are concerned about safety and orderliness. Boston Latin School Italian teacher Mr. Fredy Rodriguez-Diaz, expresses apprehension regarding the practice of court storming. He argues, “Based on previous incidents, this kind of celebration, court storming, should not be allowed.” Mr. Rodriguez-Di-

az advocates for tighter security measures to safeguard players and spectators from potential dangers posed by unruly fans.

The dangers of court storming were vividly illustrated recently, which involved Duke University basketball player Kyle Filipowski. According to *ESPN*, Filipowski sustained a knee injury when he collided with a fan during a court storming celebration. Such incidents underscore inherent risks of allowing unchecked fan exuberance.

The debate surrounding court storming is multifaceted, encompassing considerations of tradition, safety and sportsmanship. Though it undoubtedly adds excitement to sporting events and fosters a sense of community among fans, it also carries risks. Finding a balance between preserving tradition and ensuring safety remains a formidable challenge for

sports organizations.

Ultimately, the solution to this dilemma remains unclear. Perhaps a middle ground can be reached wherein court storming is permitted under certain conditions, such as increased security measures and designated areas for fans to gather. Implementing and enforcing such regulations, however, may prove impractical in practice.

As the sports community continues to grapple with complexities of court storming, one thing remains clear: the safety and enjoyment of all participants remains paramount. Whether it is stricter security protocols or alternative methods of celebration, addressing the risks associated with court storming preserves the integrity of sports and ensures everyone can partake in the thrill of victory without fear of harm.

Tennessee Welcomes BLS Crew

By **Dimitra Minasidis (III)**

& **Elizabeth Noronha (III)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Here at Boston Latin School, the crew team goes on annual training trips, where they can not only perfect their skills, but also create strong bonds and memories that will last a lifetime. This February, a group of 14 boys and Coach Conor Fearon, set out for Oak Ridge, Tennessee. With Tennessee’s perfectly still waters and amazing scenery, the location easily stole the team’s hearts. 26 miles of rowable water on the lake proved to be the perfect place to train for these five days.

The rowing conditions were much better in comparison to the Charles River in Boston and Florida, the location of the last trip the team had before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aiden McVay (I), who has been part of the team for five years and is now closing off the season as a senior on the varsity team, describes the temperature as “significantly warmer than in Boston” and “much more comfortable” than their practices on the Charles River, providing them with a training experience that “realistically would not have been able to happen in Boston.”

Team captain Rhys St. Crawford (II) adds to this and describes the process of each rowing stroke. Concerning the wind on the Charles River, he said, “When you’re taking a stroke, you have

to take your oar out of the water and the bounds can really make or break that recovery [into the water] as [...] it’s not easy when the wind is pushing on your boat.”

In Florida, there would be days when the weather created conditions that disabled them from being able to go out onto the water. In Tennessee, however, they were able to row two times a day!

Every day the team would wake up at 7:30 A.M. for a full day of training, consisting of a two-hour practice in the morning and another in the afternoon. They would take a bus from the hotel to a lake about 20 minutes away. The first practice was a rowing session from 9:00-11:00 A.M., followed by a lunch break where they would watch their recorded practice. At 1:30 P.M., they would drive back to the lake and do another session from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. The morning practices were chilly and the team wasn’t excited to go out. Without the coxswains, who help steer the boat, the team had to rotate and play around with the line-ups to learn how to row with different people in different positions.

The focus was to get as much time on the water as possible. Each practice they would focus on different technical aspects and rowing together as a team. Charles Ellrodt (III) notes that these extra practices “helped with the form, skills and team cooperation.”

While it was primarily an athletic



Boys’ crew coasts their way to Tennessee for a crew intensive.

endeavor, it succeeded in bonding the team through the shared memories. Each night the team would participate in a nightly bonding activity. These activities included a trip to the arcade, a fancy dinner at a steakhouse, bowling and an ice cream night. These experiences helped form connections between the varsity and novice rowers. “As a captain, you have to build connections with teammates, which isn’t always easy,” St. Crawford remarks. “During this training trip, I got more of an idea of how it’s supposed to be.” One thing he learned

was that it’s perfectly reasonable to step down and let people take care of themselves, and he was able to see them more as friends than just teammates.

McVay hopes to qualify for New England Interscholastic Rowing Association championships this year. The crew team is headed towards a successful season with the hard work and determination of its members. As Coach Fearon says, “Row well and row hard.” They plan to return the following year, hopefully with even more participants from the team.

Curry vs. Ionescu: Another Battle of the Sexes

By **Alice Fragrasso (III)**

& **Eliza Knight-Bairstow (III)**

Contributing Writers

Call it the Battle of the Ballers.

For the first time in history, the National Basketball League (NBA) partnered with the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) to host a three-point contest, pitting Stephen “Steph” Curry of the Golden State Warriors against Sabrina Ionescu of the New York Liberty.

The contest showcased a matchup between two of the world’s best three-point shooters and generated much-needed exposure for the WNBA, as women’s professional sports leagues notoriously make less money and have a much smaller fanbases than men’s teams.

“The NBA has a larger market and more people paying attention,”

says BLS girls’ junior varsity basketball coach Leah Lipschitz. “This will bring more popularity and exposure to [the] WNBA, generate excitement; it’s new and different.”

In the three-point contest, each player had 70 seconds to move around the three-point line to each station and shoot basketballs to earn as many points as possible. Each ball carries a different value: the majority of the shots earned one point, while a select few “money balls” yield two points. Curry took the crown with a score of 29 to Ionescu’s 26.

Desmond O’Hearn (III) says he was not surprised by the outcome. He says that while he was “aware of Sabrina’s dominance,” he’s been scarred by the Warriors’ repeated victories over Boston’s home team. “I’ve watched him destroy the Celtics countless times,” he says.

Curry is the undisputed best

three-point shooter in the NBA, averaging 26.9 points per game this season. Ionescu, Curry’s WNBA equal, is also known in her league for her classic three-point shot, averaging 17.0 points per game in the 2023-2024 season.

“As a fan, I enjoyed watching it,” says BLS varsity basketball coach Jerry Etienne. “It was a nice twist to the event, two sharp shooters from two different leagues. Putting two people that are at the top of what they do is fun to watch.”

As the number of girls participating in sports continues to decline, the importance of prominent female athletes to serve as role models for younger generations has become increasingly vital. According to a recent report by the Women’s Sports Foundation, by age 14, girls drop out of sports at twice the rate as boys do.

“I hope that it’ll encourage young girls to play because they have people to

look up to,” says Lipschitz, who played basketball throughout high school and college in addition to coaching it. “This will help to get a lot of exposure to women’s sports and motivate them if it’s something they enjoy.”

Etienne shared similar feelings to Lipschitz. When asked how he believes the exposure of the WNBA will impact young women in sports, he says, “Women’s basketball is more popular than men’s in college. All the big draws are in the women’s game. I think it’s an amazing time for women’s basketball. A lot has been done and a lot that will continue to be done.” Etienne is confident that events such as these will continue to be beneficial for girls in sports.

Increased exposure to professional female athletes such as Sabrina Ionescu and Caitlin Clark, a renowned basketball star at the University of Iowa, will help encourage more young girls to continue playing sports.

