



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

By **Weian Xue (III)**
& **Constance Fang (IV)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On January 17, Boston Latin School students participated in the annual Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) celebration, featuring performances and events from school-based and student-led organizations.

MLK Day is a federal holiday recognizing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a nonviolent civil rights activist, and his impact on the civil rights movement. Although the holiday was signed into law in 1983, it was first observed on January 20, 1986 and declared a federal holiday in 2000. In addition to celebrating the progress Dr. King made, MLK Day is also recognized as a national day of service.

BLS celebrates MLK Day each year by organizing a variety of programs for students on the Friday before the holiday. The celebration includes a school-wide assembly for all classes, workshops and service events. This year, the theme for the events was “I Am Possibility,” which represents Dr. King’s belief that people can make positive change in their communities and uphold the values of freedom, justice and democracy.

The assembly included Gospel Choir’s rendition of the Black national anthem “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” BLS Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge’s (B.L.A.C.K.) annual spoken word poetry performance, a self-choreographed performance from BLS Dance and a surprise portrait unveiling by former Head of School Rachel Skerritt.

Hosts then announced this year’s winners of the MLK essay, art and poet-

ry contests to be Olivia Chen (III), David Nguyen (III) and Suhaila Abdulle (IV), respectively.

Throughout the School day, teachers brought their students to various events around the school. This involved a workshop titled “Boston’s Past, Present & Future Trailblazers” in the Seevak Room, a MLK Day of Service featuring various volunteer organizations in the dining hall and a read-in and banner creation in the library.

The MLK Day celebration has been hosted annually for more than a decade, but the organization process has transformed significantly over the years. In October, a planning committee of both students and staff was created, including Head of School Jason Gallagher and BLS B.L.A.C.K. faculty advisor Ms. Cheralyn Pinchem, who has helped organize the celebration for the past ten years.

In prior years, the celebration was organized by faculty alone, but now students have a large role in planning for it. Ms. Pinchem explains, “It’s important to have [the students] at the table [...] because [they] are the ones who are going to eventually take that out into the world and make it.”

The MLK Day celebration featured students from several clubs, many of which reached out to the MLK committee early in the school year to take part in the celebration.

For example, BLS Step Squad has been a part of the MLK Day celebration since its creation, and this year they put on a special performance during the assembly for Classes I and II. Their performance is deeply rooted in African-American culture: “Stepping” originated in Black fraternities and sororities in the mid-20th century and



Lauren Dong (III)

Students from Class I and II “light it up” with their phone flashlights!

is a style of percussive dance using the body and voice to create intricate rhythms.

Captain Suyen Chiang (I) remarks, “When we’re stepping for MLK, it’s a nice way of symbolizing that tradition. It’s also about the cultural significance of it because you get to experience gospel music and other elements that have strong Black representation.”

BLS Dance, another group who performs at MLK Day, takes inspiration from existing dances and powerful lyrics of the song they choose each year. The planning process starts in late August, and after confirming with administrators, they run rehearsals both on stage and during their normal practices.

Gabby Huynh (II), co-president of BLS Dance, has participated and choreo-

graphed for several years. She reflects, “I think it’s important to recognize the way that dance has the power to speak to other people.”

On MLK Day, BLS held their annual Boston Cares MLK Day of Service, in which students and adults from Boston serve the community, make new friends and honor Dr. King.

Beyond Boston, cities around the nation organize marches, parades and service events in honor of Dr. King. These serve as ways to recognize Dr. King’s vision and continue his legacy of justice and freedom. Ms. Pinchem says, “I want [students] to understand that if you’re trying to make a change in this country, it takes more than one person. It takes many, many, many people to make it happen and to keep it going.”

Tick, Tock: Impending *TikTok* Ban



Weian Xue (III)

TikTok returns for millions of U.S. users.

By **Mary Deng (II)**
& **Olivia Chen (III)**

Assistant News Editors

Following a 12-hour long suspension, *TikTok* restored its services for U.S. users after President Donald Trump indicated on January 19 that he would halt the ban.

After a 9-0 Supreme Court ruling in favor of a law banning *TikTok* on January

17, users discovered they were unable to log onto the app the following day. This marked the first time a major social media platform was banned in the U.S. The next day, however, users who had already downloaded the *TikTok* app were notified that *TikTok* would be back in the U.S. as a result of President Trump’s efforts.

“A lot of my friends use *TikTok* to just [...] scroll and just relax after doing homework or whatever. So everyone was just tex-

ting. They were freaking out. [They were] like, ‘Oh, I don’t know what to do now,’” says Tien Ho (II) regarding *TikTok*’s 12-hour hiatus.

The U.S. had originally banned *TikTok*, an app owned by the Chinese company, ByteDance, due to fears that its links to the Chinese government could harm national security. A law passed in April last year had forced the company to either sell a certain percentage of shares of the app to a U.S. company or be banned from the country by January 19.

While ByteDance had not sold any of its shares by this deadline, Trump extended the deadline for 75 days. Boston Latin School Director of Technology Mr. Patrick Hourigan shares, “I hope the Trump administration will use that time to take a thoughtful look at not only *TikTok*, but other current and potentially future technologies developed overseas and create a safe, measured plan to manage their impact and access in the United States.”

The banning of *TikTok* comes with various consequences. In the short term, content creators who built their entire brand on the app were suddenly confronted with the loss of their primary source of income. In the long-term, the banning raises crucial questions concerning the regulation for all overseas technology companies in the U.S.

With *TikTok* banned, many Americans have been trying to find an alternative. Another popular Chinese-owned social media app, *Xiaohongshu*, known in English as *Red-*

note, saw an influx of over 700,000 new users. Chinese content creators have recorded videos, welcoming these “*TikTok* refugees” to the app.

The app itself is struggling to balance between satisfying new American users and aligning with its stringent moderation rules.

As a result, some have expressed their dissatisfaction over the strict censorship on various social media apps. Ho explains, “If you search up anything politics-related, or I think I tried to follow the wildfires in California or the election, it says a warning [...] and it censors some of the videos that you can’t watch anymore.”

For the student body, the ban has both positive and negative effects. Without *TikTok*, students are able to pursue other interests and perhaps spend less time on their phones. On the other hand, students may feel compelled to flood to other apps, such as *Xiaohongshu* (*Rednote*), as they search for alternatives.

The banning of *TikTok* calls into question the safety of social media apps in general. Social media platforms have the capacity to store information about their users, and they often make it unclear about how that data is put to use.

Winnie Chen (III) concludes, “*TikTok* is really addictive, [so] we should look for different sources of media that are not about other people [and] so [...] focused on other people’s lives.”

EDITORS' NOTE



Congratulations, we’ve officially made it through the first month of 2025 and the first half of this school year!

While we could rejoice about how wonderful the start of the year has been, we wouldn’t want to lie to you. It’s cold, mornings are dark and “senioritis” is at its peak. In short, we are seriously going through it. We know many of you are as well.

We hope, however, that the conclusion of January and Term two and the *Argo*’s January Issue provides a little bit of comfort, serving as a testament to our ability to persist.

As we reach our halfway point of Editor-in-Chief-ship as Mannah, we are at a point where we can reflect on the past and look forward to the future. Similarly, we are approaching our last few months as Boston Latin School students.

Within this paradoxical moment, we often feel trapped between reminiscing about what’s happened and fearing what’s to come. As we fall into an endless cycle of going through the motions of daily life, we lose sight of small serendipities that make hard days a bit more bearable. We Argonauts like to remind ourselves that positivity is contagious. So, make an effort to be more kind, present and appreciative.

Additionally, carnation season is upon us! You will be able to buy from any *Argo* editor starting on February 3. Get your cash ready; prices this year are 1 for 2 dollars, 2 for 3 dollars and 5 for 7 dollars. Send your love to friends, teachers and others that you hold near and dear.

Since we don’t publish a February Issue, here is our pre-Valentine’s day message of love, and perhaps motivation: overcoming rejection is easier than bearing the burden of regret.

Keep pushing through it, reader. Soon enough, spring will have sprung!

XOXO,
Mannah



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Buy from any Argo editor from February 3 to 13

1 carnation for 2 dollars, 2 carnations for 3 dollars & 5 carnations for 7 dollars


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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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Donald Trump Inaugurated as the 47th President

By Meilin Sha (IV)
& Thomas Blanchet (II)
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On January 20, Donald J. Trump was inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States.

The inauguration, which has mostly occurred outdoors in the past, was moved into the United States Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C. due to low temperatures. At noon, Chief Justice John Roberts administered the oath of office to President-elect Trump.

This inauguration marked the second time in U.S. history that a president has served two non-consecutive terms, with the first being Grover Cleveland in the late 1800s. Because Trump was convicted of 34 felonies related to a 2017 effort to cover up payments made to adult film actress Stormy Daniels, it was also the first time a convicted felon assumed the office of President. Trump, however, received no fines or jail time for his felonies.

During his inaugural address, President Trump promised to lead the U.S. into a “golden age.” Then, he proceeded to a signing ceremony, during which he signed over 100 executive orders. One order issued pardons for approximately 1,500 rioters who participated in the insurrection on January 6, 2021 and reductions of sentences for 14 people. He also signed an order to suspend the ban on *TikTok* for 75 days, and withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement and the World Health Organization as he did in 2017.

Trump’s cabinet picks, such as Pete Hegseth for the Secretary of Defense and Scott Bessent for Treasury Secretary, have attended hearings before Senate subcommittees. The Senate has confirmed Pete Hegseth while confirmation votes for the others have yet to come. Other cabinet picks who will face Senate confirmation votes include Robert F.

Kennedy Jr. for the Secretary of the Health and Human Services Department and Tulsi Gabbard for the Director of National Intelligence.

In addition to his cabinet picks, Trump has begun highlighting the plans he will prioritize in the first 100 days of his term. In his inaugural address, he commented on taking control of the Panama Canal, which had been transferred back to Panama in 1977 by former President Jimmy Carter.

He has also indicated intentions of seizing Greenland with potential military force, citing defense and national security reasons. Trump claimed that the territories are vital to the nation’s economic future and safety, despite the fact that U.S. ships are currently allowed to pass through the Panama Canal. Greenland, meanwhile, holds a strategic U.S. Space Force Base and is a self-governing territory of Denmark, a North Atlantic Treaty Organization ally.

Boston Latin School U.S. History II teacher Mrs. Robin Kirkpatrick says, “For my part, I think a lot of the rhetoric [...] is political theater. Trump is a demagogue who has found success in sort of deftly playing to his reactionary, ‘America First’ base. Rhetoric like this, whether about retaking the Panama Canal or [Greenland], excites that base.”

Another crucial part of Trump’s campaign and inaugural address is the economy, as he plans to establish the External Revenue Service. This aims to impose tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China, the three largest importers of U.S. goods. Trump has stated that he will increase the prices of goods from Canada and Mexico by 25 percent and increase prices of goods from China by ten percent.

BLS AP U.S. History and Economics teacher Mr. Dominic Rinaldi expresses his concerns: “Realistically, this is going to make the day-to-day cost of living more expensive for every single American, because the cost of the tariffs are going to be passed on to the



President Trump makes his intentions clear during his inauguration.

consumer, which will [...] serve to funnel more money from the bottom of our pyramid all the way up to the top.”

Aiming to limit government spending, Trump has brought Elon Musk and Republican politician Vivek Ramaswamy to co-head the new Department of Government Efficiency, but Ramaswamy has opted instead to potentially run for governor of Ohio. Musk plans to increase government efficiency by shrinking and eliminating certain agencies, while decreasing the federal workforce — a proposed project with an end date of July 4, 2025.

Trump has additionally stated that he would use military force to carry out the largest mass deportation of undocumented immigrants in the country. Ice raids have been reported, included around the Boston area” after undocumented immigrants in the country. Felix Hirsch (II) states, “In Massachusetts, because this is a very blue state, immigrants are relatively safer than those in more conser-

vative areas. [...] Hopefully I’m right, but [...] it’s extremely hard to guess what Trump will actually do.”

Along with mass deportations, Trump has also signed an executive order eliminating birthright citizenship for the children of illegal immigrants, but it was temporarily blocked by a federal judge because it is a direct violation of the 14th amendment. Trump, however, has mentioned an alternative involving the deportation of illegal immigrants along with any children born in the U.S.

Although Trump’s intended policies are projected to affect a wide range of people, it is unclear whether they will succeed in being implemented.

Mr. Rinaldi concludes, “I [...] try to infuse as many current events as [I] can [into the curriculum]. That’s the best I can foreseeably do right now. I’m kind of living through it like everybody else and taking my best swing, and that’s all I ask of my students: just take your best swing.”

Back-To-School Heating Malfunction



Malfunctioning heaters cause temperatures to drop after returning from winter break.

By Amanda Ajdini (I)
& Christina Luo (III)
Contributing Writers

On January 6, Boston Latin School students and staff returned from winter break to a frigid building as administrators navigated miscommunication with Boston Public Schools to determine the cause of the heating system malfunction.

Head of School Jason Gallagher first noticed the problem when he was walking around the building that morning. He explains that everything seemed fine until he reached a certain section of the School, where he noticed that there was no heat coming out of the radiators. With BLS divided into

four heating zones, it was clear that one of those zones was not functioning properly.

BLS history teacher Ms. Meredith Elliott describes a similar experience from her first day back. She experienced a false sense of hope as she first walked into the School and noticed that the hallways were relatively warm. As she approached her classroom that morning, however, she found that the warmth was absent from her side of the building.

Gallagher contacted the district immediately upon noticing the malfunction. There were issues in communicating with BPS, however, as they were unable to send maintenance to the building. After several hours of back-and-forth phone calls, the administration was ultimately able to have personnel come and examine the heating. A small technical problem with the system was resolved within the day, but the

affected zone continued to face lower-than-normal temperatures.

The combination of the old heating system at BLS along with BPS policy made reheating the School more difficult than expected. Due to the age of the building, it takes a while for the radiators to generate enough heat to raise the air temperature significantly. BPS policy also requires that the heat be shut off at the end of the school day. The combination of these factors leaves little time for temperatures to stabilize.

Emma Sullivan (II) recounts her experience with the heating that day: “[I] wasn’t able to focus [on my work as my] hands kept getting too cold [and I] wasn’t able to type or write.” She added that some of her classes still did not have heat for days after.

After making the district aware of this, the administration prolonged the heating period, allowing for more heating time. By the end of the week, the building was back to normal temperatures, finally meeting the minimum required temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

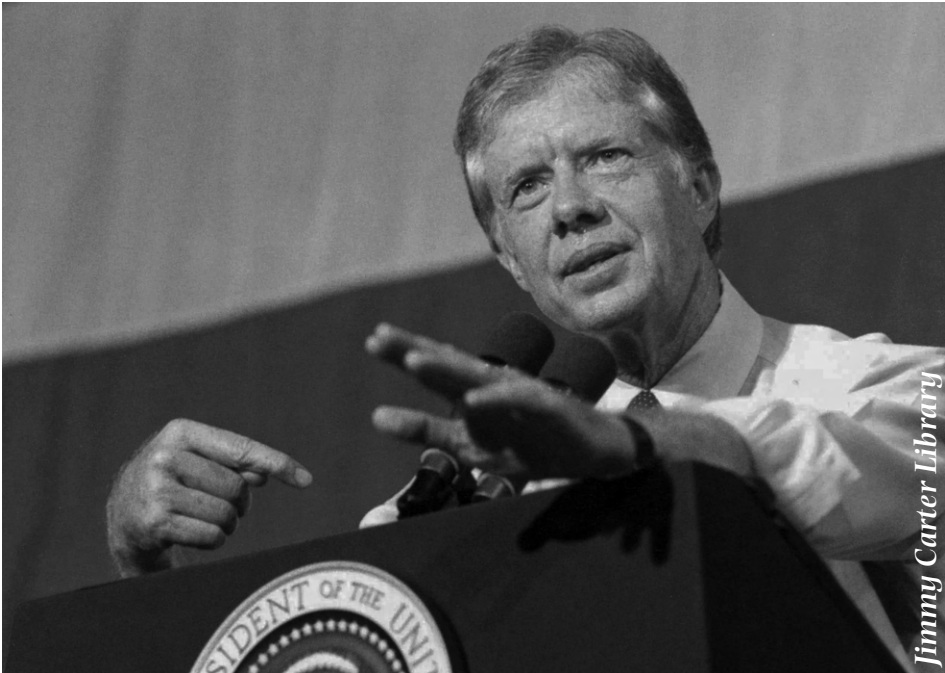
Gallagher expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the custodial staff and other administrators, acknowledging that he would not have been able to come to a resolution so quickly if not for them.

Similarly, Ms. Elliott noted the quick turnaround and effort from the administration to communicate with teachers about any developments in the situation. While to some, several days may seem like a long waiting period for a small technical issue, Ms. Elliott states that “this issue [with the heaters] was the quickest [she’s] ever had resolved for [her] classroom,” describing the resolution as a “pleasant surprise” in comparison to issues in previous years.

Unfortunately, BLS was not the only school to have been affected by the lower-than-average temperatures in classrooms after returning from winter break — publications such as *The Boston Globe* also reported on other BPS classrooms with temperatures in the 30s and 40s.

As heating systems continue to face issues across BPS, the greater question of infrastructure updates arises. Gallagher reflects, “We should do a better job of upgrading systems so that this doesn’t happen, [but we appreciate how] the students work through it and how positive the teachers were in really, really tough times.”

The Legacy of Former President Jimmy Carter



Former President Jimmy Carter addresses the nation.

By **Xintong Guo (II)**
& **Trinity Ngo (II)**
Staff Writers

James Earl “Jimmy” Carter Jr., the 39th president of the United States, passed away at his house in Plains, Georgia on December 29, 2024.

At the age of 100, Carter lived to be the oldest former president in American history. Carter’s funeral was held on January 9, 2025 at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. with his family, friends and international dignitaries in attendance. The event also brought together five former U.S. presidents: President Donald Trump and former Presidents Joe Biden, Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

U.S. flags were ordered to be flown at half-mast for 30 days to honor his legacy as per American tradition; however, they rose to full-staff for the inauguration of President Trump.

In the wake of his death, Carter must be reassessed for his service and leadership that extend far beyond the presidential office.

During his candidacy, Carter’s humble beginnings in rural Georgia and military background in the Navy appealed to the people. Boston Latin School AP U.S. History teacher Ms. Ashley Balbian notes, “He was seen as a regular guy who was different from presidents before him. He wasn’t part of the Washington elite; he was from a peanut farm. [...] America needed that.”

Following the Watergate scandal and the Vietnam War — two national crises that left Americans cynical about government transparency and ethics — Jimmy Carter entered the White House in 1977 with the responsibility of regaining the nation’s trust.

One of his most celebrated accomplishments during his presidency was brokering the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt over an intense 13-day

negotiation at Camp David. The agreement marked the first time that an Arab country formally recognized Israel, highlighting Carter’s role as a peacemaker. Carter further cemented his diplomacy by attaining ratification of the Panama Canal treaties and establishing full diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China.

Domestically, the former president created the Departments of Energy and Education, making energy policies and quality education cabinet-level priorities. The Department of Education aimed to improve access to education and administer federal student aid. The Department of Energy was made in response to the rising energy shortages that revealed the nation’s dependence on foreign oil. To emphasize the need for energy conservation and domestic energy resources, Carter installed solar panels on the roof of the White House and advocated for a shift in sustainable energy resources. He even went as far as to appear on national television to tell people to lower their thermostats.

Despite his accomplishments, Carter has long been criticized for his unsuccessful administration during a time of domestic and international crises.

His success was undermined by his failure to combat the stagflation and inability to secure the hostages’ release in the Iran hostage crisis when a group of Iranian students and militants held 52 American diplomats and citizens in Tehran for 444 days. The crisis dominated the final days of his presidency, severely damaging his credibility and the public perception of his legacy.

In addition, the climbing oil prices of the late 1970s led to an energy crisis and increased the cost of living in America, leading to an overall increase in inflation. Although not directly caused by the president, these severely tainted the latter half of his presidency.

Carter left office in 1981 after serving one term, failing to appeal to the immediate concerns of the nation at the time and facing a massive defeat in re-election against Republican candidate Ronald Reagan.

After leaving office, Carter used his platform as a former president and dedicated his time to humanitarian work across the globe.

Simon Chen (II), president of the Global Youth Philanthropy Charter Club, comments, “He definitely spoke beyond his time. He saw and knew the consequences of what humanity was doing to the planet.”

In 1982, the former president co-founded the Carter Center with his wife, Rosalynn Carter, an organization committed to uplifting human rights, addressing public health and promoting democracy worldwide. He initiated the Guinea Worm Eradication Program as part of this organization, nearly eliminating the debilitating disease that affected millions of people through efforts to improve access to clean water.

An avid advocate for affordable housing and volunteer for the Habitat for Humanity, the former president led the Carter Work Project, rallying and working alongside volunteers worldwide in renovating and repairing more than 4,447 homes in 14 countries.

He did not completely step out of the political spotlight, though. In 1994, he visited Haiti on behalf of the U.S. with President Clinton and successfully averted potential war and invasion.

In 2002, Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in international peace negotiations and the fight for human rights.

When asked about his legacy, BLS Civics teacher Ms. Catherine Arnold asserts, “Mr. Carter represented decency and honesty, you know? Take a page from that book, folks.”

2024: A Year in Review

<p>March 10 Poetry Out Loud Ailin Sha (I) wins the Massachusetts Poetry Out Loud Competition with the poem “Self Portrait with Sylvia Plath’s Braid” by Diane Seuss.</p>  <p>David Marshall/Mass Cultural Council</p>	<p> @blsthives</p> <p>March 14 Pi Day Receiving the greatest donation of over 20 dollars, Class VI <i>Caelum</i> cluster science teacher Mr. John Tobin gets pied in the face.</p>	<p>March 17 Boys’ Hockey Victory On St. Patrick’s Day at TD Garden, the BLS boys’ hockey team beats Tewksbury Memorial High School 4-2, claiming BLS’s first Division II State Championship since 2005.</p>  <p>Alex Le (II)</p>	<p> Alex Le (II)</p> <p>May 17 Asian Night BLS Asian Students in Action (A.S.I.A.) presents its annual Asian Night featuring dancing, singing, speeches and more, celebrating Asian culture.</p>
<p>June 12 Student Parent Council Parent Night BLS staff and SPC leaders celebrate long-time volunteer parent leaders for their contributions to the school community.</p>  <p>Yuhong Jia</p>	<p> @blsthives</p> <p>September 5 First Day of School The Class of ‘30 and the B-sie Class of ‘28 enter BLS for their very first day of school, and the Class of ‘25 enters for their very last first day of school.</p>	<p>November 27 Pep Rally Students get excited for the BLS versus English High School football game with performances from the cheer team, Step Squad, the Wolfettes and Pep Band.</p>  <p>Alex Le (II)</p>	<p> Alex Le (II)</p> <p>December 11-13 Winter Concerts Over 1,100 students come to watch the results of a semester’s musical practice in 25 amazing showcases of talent and determination.</p>

Boston’s First Night Rings in 2025

By **Ryan Liu (V)**
& **Eric Zhang (V)**
Contributing Writers

On December 31, 2024, the City of Boston hosted the First Night Celebrations in Boston Common and City Hall to ring in the New Year with parades, ice sculptures, live music and fireworks.

Artist Clara Wainwright founded this celebration in 1976, envisioning the events as a way to bring people together and provide opportunities for musicians to play in venues to celebrate the New Year. Originally an experience paid for by attendees, the events and performances have become free to attend since 2015.

The festivities commenced at 10:00 A.M. with shows ranging from music to dance to puppeteering. Notable performers include the Boston Music Project, Houston Bernard and Chu Ling Dance Academy.

Mr. Chandler Pettigrew, an organizer of the First Night Celebrations, adds, “[There were] local musicians performing in front of thousands of people this year, [and] some new bands that had never performed in front of so many people before.”

After dozens of performances, the First Night Parade began at 6:00 P.M., with groups such as the New Liberty Firetruck, Boston Windjammers and William Diamond Fife & Drum Corps gradu-

ally moving down the streets. People gathered to watch as the performers passed on their walk to Boston Common.

At Boston Common, the Mugar Family Fireworks started at 7:00 P.M. Visitors looked up in awe as brilliant fireworks lit up the sky above.

Carved into the figures of horses, sharks and a variety of other shapes, ice sculptures were scattered throughout the area. In addition, the famous “BOSTON” sign made another appearance this year, with the flags of the world arranged in a triangular form.

Boston Latin School German teacher Ms. Heidemarie Floerke, who has been periodically attending the event for over 20 years, shares, “The ice sculptures were quite disappointing. Some were small and a little bit melted. [...] In past years, they were much bigger and much more creative, [but] the fireworks were more impressive and visited more by people of all ages.”

After the fireworks, shows lasted until 11:30 P.M., when the First Night Countdown began at City Hall and ushered Boston into the new year. The Countdown included live shows and a laser display above the City Hall Plaza.

Meet Boston ended the celebrations and brought the city into 2025 with a dazzling fireworks display over Boston Harbor.

Along with the First Night celebra-



Lauren Dong (III)

Bostonians enjoy the New Year’s Boston Common fireworks display.

tions, Boston hosted several other public celebrations over the winter season, such as Snowport, to boost the holiday spirit and further help the transition into the new year. Snowport, which transforms Boston’s Seaport neighborhood into a winter wonderland, has several similar aspects to First Night, including outdoor activities and a tree-lighting for Christmas.

Overall, the numerous events and outdoor activities at First Night helped engage the community and incorporate visitors from all backgrounds. Additionally, the lack of alcohol at the First Night Celebrations helped encourage a family-friendly environment and atmosphere. Frankie LaMonica (IV) recalls, “It was pretty cold and I was kind of freezing, but [the event] was really cool.”

With this past year being the 49th anniversary of First Night, this coming year’s 2026 First Night celebrations will celebrate 50 years of bringing people together to usher in the New Year.

Meta Fact-Checking Meets Its Maker

By **Kyle Lange (II)**
& **Stephany Zhu (II)**
Contributing Writers

On January 7, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced that the company will end its partnership with third-party fact-checking organizations on its social media platforms, including *Facebook* and *Instagram*.

Third-party fact-checking organizations are independent groups that verify whether information shared online is factual to prevent the spread of misinformation. They work together with platforms to review content and provide accurate information. Now, however, fact-checking will fall to ordinary citizens through a feature called ‘Com-

munity Notes.’ The shift to the ‘Community Notes’ feature is similar to X’s decision to enforce user-driven content rather than using third-party fact-checking organizations. Concerns have arisen about how effective the Community Notes system would be, as users have expressed concerns about those who appear to be fact-checking actually promoting false information.

Tate Lam (III) reflects, “I thought that this [choice] could be both good and bad because Meta’s fact-checking algorithm has not been the most accurate, but ending it would allow more harmful things like hate speech and propaganda to happen. If they were to switch to Community Notes, [it would be] a good way to limit false information, but it does not completely get rid of the problem of false

information.”

Zuckerburg claims that the election was a major influence on his decision to part ways with fact-checking on his social media platforms, resulting from his frustration with the Biden administration’s censorship of content. He believes that fact-checking organizations are biased when choosing what to moderate, and by getting rid of them, he hopes to ensure freedom of speech for everyone on his platforms.

This decision partially stems from Meta’s desire to avoid being regulated by the Trump administration, who often critiqued social media platforms’ fact-checking softwares for suppressing conservative speech.

Boston Latin School Classics teacher Mr. John Kerpan states, “A lot of pressure and

scrutiny is going to be put on media and social media by Trump and his team. The fact that some of the richest Americans are trying to curry favor is revealing.”

The end of fact-checking on Meta platforms will leave a long-lasting impact, and as artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more relevant, the distinction between truth and lie will start to fade. While it is currently still possible to tell the difference between AI and real images and videos, the evolution of AI will soon make the two indistinguishable. Without fact-checkers, people will have a harder time finding information that has not been altered.

Questions of uncertainty are raised by many. Tobias Damon (II) wonders, “Without systems in place to monitor false information, how will I know what to trust?”

Lunar New Year at BLS

By **Amy Dai (V)**
& **Stacy Jiang (V)**
Contributing Writers

As 2025 begins, many people are gearing up to celebrate Lunar New Year, a holiday recognized on the first day of the lunar calendar when a new moon appears.

The date of the holiday, January 29, marks the start of the year for many Asian countries and often symbolizes unity, good luck and a fresh start. Based on a traditional Chinese legend, one zodiac animal from a rotating cycle of 12 is assigned to the new year, and 2025 is the Year of the Snake.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, Lunar New Year is celebrated by multiple countries in Asia, including China, Vietnam, Korea, Malaysia, Cambodia and the Philippines. While there are many overlapping New Year traditions between these countries, each country also has its own adaptations.

In addition to a no-test day on January 29 at Boston Latin School, many clubs offer celebratory events, such as the Vietnamese Students Society’s annual *Tet* Festival. Some of the activities included at the festival are games and karaoke.

Ava Vu (I)

“My favorite event [at the *Tet* Festival] is a game we play called ‘Scoot and Plunge.’ [...] For me, [the *Tet* Festival] is really heartwarming [...] because we’re all very different, but we’re all together celebrating the new year.”

Angela Deng (III)

“My family is from Guangdong in China. The week before Lunar New Year, my family gets haircuts and buys new clothes to wear on Lunar New Year. One of my favorite things during Lunar New Year is lion dancing. [...] I enjoy listening to the drums and cymbals, which are meant to ward away evil spirits and bring good luck to the new year.”

Jessica Tran (V)

“In Vietnam, we call it *Tet*. We eat foods like mooncakes, and we give out money to kids for good luck. We eat vegetarian food once in a while every year, and we eat it for the start of *Tet*. We’ve kept it the same ever since I grew up.”

BREAKING NEWS: Luigi Mangione Is ... Too Hot?



Timmy Truong (I) poses with pictures of the #HealthcareHottie.

By **Angelina Wei (II)**
& **Louis Nguyen (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Luigi Mangione, the man accused of killing the CEO of UnitedHealthcare — allegedly in protest against the injustices of the American healthcare system — has become an internet sensation overnight, but not because of the reasons he had allegedly sought to highlight. The spotlight has instead landed on his appearance, his charisma and his “bad boy anti-hero aesthetic.” This wave of publicity has raised awareness about economic disparity and the healthcare system, potentially inspiring newer generations to take initiative in addressing systemic inequality.

Mangione’s alleged shooting of Brian Thompson is believed to stem from frustration with issues within the United States’s healthcare system: denied claims, soaring premiums and inaccessible care

are all-too-common realities for millions of Americans. Mangione’s reported grievances with UnitedHealth Group — a corporation that has faced criticism for profiting while their patients suffer — embodies the general discontent with a system that many feel is failing them.

The action could have sparked powerful critiques of corporate greed, but it has instead transformed into thirst edits and viral memes. Social media platforms are now flooded with hashtags like #HealthcareHottie and #JusticeForLuigi, overshadowing the message of reform that lies at the heart of Mangione’s alleged actions. Boston Latin School history teacher Mr. Dominic Rinaldi states, “By focusing on the superficial, it keeps the conversation just that: superficial. It makes something very serious, basically, another gossip magazine quote.”

So has the media’s portrayal of Luigi Mangione and his alleged crime trivialized this protest?

While the thirst traps may seem superficial, they have undoubtedly launched Mangione to stardom, allowing his core message of reform to reach the masses. Healthcare disparity has now been spotlighted as a current issue, and discussions about insurance claim denials and economic inequality are suddenly trending online and in-person. Audrey Howell (I) remarks, “It is a shocking event that got people to consider what a company was doing. It represents a bigger issue that companies like UnitedHealthcare are a part of, which will definitely be talked about.”

Thousands of people post commentaries on his looks, but this also drives many to delve deeper into the issue and discover more about Mangione’s alleged motives. Tiana Nguyen (III), an active social media user on many platforms, comments, “I first [...] saw memes and edits of him on *Instagram*, which ultimately pushed me to learn more about the circumstances around the situation.”

While it is true that media coverage helped bring Mangione’s story to light, it is also important to note that social media has distorted serious issues in the past. The media’s portrayal of Mangione has faced criticism from many sides; some argue it overlooked the systemic issues he represented, while others feel it disrespected his family by sensationalizing his story.

It is worth questioning whether Mangione’s appearance played a role in the attention he received: would people have cared as much about the issue at hand if Mangione were not attractive? “Pretty privilege” is a common societal bias, and while it may have amplified the reach of his story, it arguably also detracts from the real issue at hand.

Media attention often sparks public discourse, which is essential for creating change. Rather than focusing on wheth-

er the media’s approach was appropriate, the real concern should be on whether or not the attention led to meaningful action. In this case, it definitely has.

Mangione’s case has become a catalyst for the younger generation to take action and engage with this issue. Cynthia Francis (II), a member of BLS’s chapter of Amnesty International, an organization that fights to preserve and defend human rights, adds, “I’d say that [the] media portrayal is overall beneficial, or else I don’t think awareness of this entire situation would have been to the same extent as it is now.”

With Mangione’s case now representing the overshadowed voice of the lower class, it has shed light on the need to improve healthcare. Conversations about Mangione’s actions have already sparked up across the country and a protest has appeared outside his courthouse hearing in New York City, uniting not only in support of Mangione, but also regarding their concerns with healthcare inequality.

Two pressing issues are ultimately captured by Mangione’s story: the urgent need to address healthcare inequality and the media’s tendency to sensationalize people rather than the issues they represent. While his image and charisma may have captured public attention, the message he’s allegedly trying to convey — the need for justice in healthcare — must not be overshadowed.

In the end, the challenge lies in channeling the publicity into meaningful change. In Mangione’s case, his moment of attention was leveraged into discussions of change through the many protests and discussions on healthcare inequalities. Rather than fading into a fleeting trend or another viral sensation lost to the digital realm, his story has become a symbol of justice. His case demonstrates how, when used correctly, media attention can inspire powerful movements for change.

From “Delulu” to “Demure”: The Impact of Brain Rot

By **Hiba El Fatihi (III)**
& **Fathia Shodeyi (III)**

Contributing Writers

“Rizz,” “fanum tax,” “skibidi toilet,” “huzz.” Although meaningless at first glance, these words, among many others, are ways of communication for Generation Z (Gen Z). This vocabulary is collectively known as “brain rot,” the use of specific social media terms and memes during conversations. The creativity of Gen Z has led them to create somewhat of a new global language that many other generations do not have, as brain rot is integrated into pop culture references all around the world. It is the language we didn’t know we needed.

Since it doesn’t take much brain power, everyone seems to understand brain rot in some way, as long as they are exposed to it. This makes people more connected, no matter their personal background. Marwah Oulalite (III) comments, “[Brain rot] is not simply shared nationally but also universally amongst young people.”

Brain rot also helps explain news from around the world in a way youth can understand more easily. For instance, former Vice President Kamala Harris used the slang term “femininomenon” during her presidential campaign to connect with her younger audience. Other phrases from the election era also helped young people stay engaged.

After the pandemic, teenagers have been less social and more isolated, often worrying about saying the wrong things,

which is a symptom of “cancel culture.” To help with this, brain rot can provide an icebreaker, lightening the mood and helping people make connections based on a shared sense of humor. Some students have opposing views, however; Oulalite says, “[While] there is brain rot that is funny, [...] there is brain rot that is [also] actually causing a rot in my brain.” Though some may find brain rot language corny or unamusing, this simply lets one know that they and that other person likely won’t get along. Those who enjoy the same brain rot slang are more likely to develop a better bond because of their shared sense of humor.

Brain rot humor additionally offers a refreshing break from the real world without requiring significant emotional or intellectual investment. It can be used as an escape from a stressful and emotionally draining reality, decreasing the chance of developing depression. Someone in a bad mental space may use apps like *TikTok* to consume less serious content, like brain rot, and experience a more positive side to life. These apps almost always make people laugh because the constant exposure to funny, relatable content they provide uplifts spirits and reduces stress.

Brain rot also serves as a creative outlet and a form of self-expression. People take trends and make them their own, turning jokes into something more personal. Eva Kelly (III) remarks, “When there’s a brain rot joke that’s kind of underground and your friends know it, [...] it’s a good bonding experience and you get a good laugh.” Inside jokes between



Students watch the viral *Skibidi Toilet* series.

friend groups often start as brain rot humor but evolve into something unique that strengthens their connection. Brain rot pushes people to think outside the box when expressing themselves.

There is, of course, a fine line between using brain rot as a joke and letting it take over your entire personality. Too much brain rot may flatten individuality and can be detrimental to developing one’s individuality. Cristina Lopez Tran (III) adds, “[Brain rot] doesn’t really affect people in a negative way unless it’s really all that they consume.”

It is important to be very mindful and very demure when using brain rot. Overindulging in it may distract people

from being serious in dire situations. Laughing at brain rot terminology may be a fun way to deal with stressful current events, but when it becomes constant, we risk turning into shallow observers of the world. There are many political and economic issues surrounding our lives today, and constant joking can desensitize us to the gravity of those realities.

Brain rot, ultimately, should be balanced. Although it can be a useful instrument in creating connection, creativity and laughter, it should not replace thoughtful dialogue. At the end of the day, it is all about using brain rot wisely. #staywoke.

Is Tourism Sustainable?

Yes, Tourism Is Sustainable

By David Wang (IV)

Contributing Writer

Tourism offers more than a chance to relax; it is also an essential driver of global economies and personal growth. The reason so many people love traveling the world is because these experiences are transformative, and they deserve to be promoted and protected.

The mass tourism industry is crucial to the livelihoods of thousands of communities around the world. The World Economic Council found that travel and tourism makes up 7.6 percent of global gross domestic product and 300 million jobs.

It's not just hotels and airlines that depend on this industry though: tourism also drives revenue for local businesses, ranging from scuba diving companies in the Florida Keys to fish tooth jewelry shops in Alaska or even small restaurants in Texas that sell home-cooked and generational barbeque. Colombia is a prime example of the industry's success: tourism has managed to turn previously struggling economies into lucrative cultural wonders of the world.

Travel also allows people to step out of their comfort zones. Visiting a new country allows people to learn about the history, traditions and lifestyles of different types of people. Boston Latin School English teacher Mr. Kamissa Barry recounts, "My [most recent] trip was Turkey. It was, wow — you have a melting pot in every sense of the [phrase]. Any place you can find someone [who] speak[s] a multitude of languages. [...] The food, the scents and flavors too — I want to go back."

In fact, museums, festivals and historical landmarks play a vital role: seen as typical tourist attractions, they are crucial in promoting global awareness and understanding. Conversing with locals in Spain, participating in a traditional Chinese tea ceremony, going to German Christmas markets or even attending an Italian pasta-making workshop gives experiences and insight that a classroom cannot provide.

Benjamin Southwick (IV) adds, "I've been going to Canada [for many years]. [...] I think that [travelling there] opens up possibilities for others to explore, get to know each other as well as the culture and [discover] its beauty." By stepping into other people's worlds, travelers become more empathetic, informed and accepting.

But mass tourism also has its negatives. One of the most common arguments against travel is the disruption it poses on local populations. This can be mitigated, however, through thoughtful planning and preparation. For instance, off-peak tourism can prevent overcrowding and allows for a more authentic experience. Instead of visiting Miami Beach only during the winter—thousands of tourists flock to the warm coastline to escape freezing temperatures back home—consider going there closer to a spring vacation, such as April break.

Governments can also limit the amount of visitors. Mr. Barry comments, "Tourism as a concept isn't bad, but governments have to be deliberate about it. [...] Bhutan limits the number of tourists coming [through a fee] and there is no plastic. Their towns aren't overwhelmed by interested tourists. One cannot just be desperate about fiscal revenue and not structure it."

Ultimately, responsibly planned tourism can bring immense joy and economic benefits, and it allows students to gain new educational opportunities that are otherwise impossible to experience in the classrooms of BLS. When planning your next vacation, consider how your actions can contribute to a better form of tourism, whether it be choosing an eco-friendly hotel or car, visiting during the off-season or simply respecting local traditions. Any small change can have a big difference overall. The question remains: what kind of traveler do you want to be?



Lauren Dong (III)

No, Tourism Is NOT Sustainable

By Shefali Hurwitz (IV)

Contributing Writer

Have you ever felt like your living space is just too crowded? Well, living in a popular area of the world can make its inhabitants feel that way all the time. This phenomenon is called "overtourism," when a place becomes so frequently visited that it becomes almost unlivable. Overtourism is a growing issue in many places around the world, posing many problems, such as environmental degradation, overcrowding, infrastructure strain and the all-around discomfort of locals.

The main problem with mass tourism is overcrowding, which happens when there are too many people in one place. Boston Latin School Latin teacher Mr. Brian Livingston reflects on a similar feeling: "If you're walking down the street in Boston and you know where you're going and there's a big group

[in front of you], it can get really annoying." Mr. Livingston also adds that the crowding due to overtourism is the worst during the summertime and the holiday season — to the point where the sidewalks were blocked.

Some may argue that tourism is essential because it benefits the government and local businesses financially, with tourists spending money at restaurants and hotels during their stay. If locals themselves cannot enjoy living in their own homeland, however, there are greater issues at hand than gaining revenue. Isn't quality of life more important than government benefit?

Emily Yu (I) comments, "A lot of the funds being made [in other countries] aren't being sponsored by the government. They are going to a lot of private tourist companies, which doesn't trickle down to the local people of the country." This suggests that even if restaurants and shops benefit from tourism, the quality of life deteriorates for locals.

Tourists also exacerbate infrastructure strain in the countries they visit by overcrowding transportation, housing and other aspects of daily life for locals. BLS English teacher Ms. Sophia Campot, who lives in a very tourist-heavy part of Boston, reported being uncomfortable around big groups of tourists: "It can be very annoying and sometimes frustrating when large tourist groups [...] don't [...] know the rules of being in a city and on trains I normally take. [...] That can sometimes cause me to run late for work."

People all around the world struggle with similar effects of tourism, with many scrambling to get to their destinations on public transport. Add in whole buses of tourists and scores of *Airbnbs* and *Zillow* rental homes that displace local families, and the streets become mayhem. The infrastructure strain is disrupting daily life everywhere, including frequently visited locations like Italy, Spain, Hawaii and Iceland. Many residents of these locations have expressed outspoken opposition to the tourism industry and fervently discourage continued visits.

Mass tourism also contributes to severe environmental degradation, stemming from overreliance on emission-heavy transportation like planes and other environmentally harmful activities. Lisa W. Foderaro from the *New York Times* found that, during the pandemic, transportation-related air pollution decreased by roughly 14.7 percent and carbon dioxide emissions by seven percent, demonstrating how global pollution decreased dramatically without excessive travel.

These scenarios are only some of the many reasons tourism is unethical and a current global issue. While it may be a way to learn about other cultures, we must find a method to do so without harming the environment, infrastructure and daily life of locals in these coveted areas.

Say "Yes!" to Senior Capstone

By Ellie Fung (IV)
& Natalie Laterza (IV)

Contributing Writers

The Daily Bulletin rolls around after school every day, bringing with it a slew of application links, testing dates and, sometimes, Senior Capstone surveys. These surveys are just one small element of the entire process a class of seniors takes to create and present a project on a topic of their choice. While it was once proposed as a potential graduation requirement, the program has now been left as an elective for over a decade. Regardless of its status as an optional course, Senior Capstone is a vital aspect of a student's personal development and future readiness. Making the class mandatory would thus guarantee that all graduates have the skills they need to thrive.

For many, the idea of choosing a major and career can be daunting. A Capstone project encourages all students to explore what it would be like to work in a field they are interested in. Jonas Ings (III) comments, "Students can often find what they are truly

passionate about and what they will want to study in college or do in their career."

Unlike typical school projects, Senior Capstone is independent, granting students the freedom to explore personal interests. This builds independence and time management skills, since students have to monitor themselves to ensure they stay on track. This independence also allows students to explore niche fields that may not have other opportunities available. If one is not sure about whether they should pursue a career in a certain field, Capstone is a method to test if it is a good fit for them.

In the event that one is set on a specific career, pursuing a Capstone project would allow them to explore that field. Seren Banner-Goodspeed (IV) remarks, "I think Capstone is a very important class to take for many reasons. It gives students a chance to explore something they're actually interested in, take their hobby a step further and [learn] how their passion could be used in the future."

A Senior Capstone project could also assist with college preparation, teaching students valuable organizational and executive functioning skills.

Boston Latin School Capstone teacher Ms. Kathleen Bateman explains, "Students [...] should sign up for the course because we can support them in the executive function skills they need to set their own schedules and manage their own projects."

Several colleges and universities also require graduates to complete a similar project, typically called a senior thesis. For this reason, completing a Capstone in high school, where students can receive more personalized attention and mentorship, would be very beneficial for the many students who will be required to complete a similar course later on, though with less guidance.

Making Capstone mandatory would also ensure that all BLS students are better prepared to enter the workforce. Since many Capstone projects involve surveys and interviews, students would become confident in taking initiative and reaching out to strangers. This would benefit them in their future careers, where they would inevitably be required to contact someone unfamiliar to them or take the lead on a project.

Despite its benefits, some argue that Capstone is too time-consuming because it is a year-long project that requires significant in-class and out-of-school commitment in an already-stressful senior year. This time frame, however, would help students learn to commit to a project and not give up on their passions. The ability to choose their project topic would provide motivation, encouraging students to spend more time on the project.

Capstone student Manuela Rios Castañeda (I) explains, "I really like[d] [...] that I would have a whole school year to do something that I really wanted to do, because you don't get that many choices in your classes until the end. This was one of the classes where I could really do whatever I wanted."

A mandatory Senior Capstone project would ultimately allow every student to retain a lasting memento from their high school experience. The completion of a long and complex project — all on their own — would represent the culmination of their learning at BLS, showing students just how far they have come.

CNN Dropped the Ball This New Year’s Eve



Students watch as TV broadcasters take shots of tequila on air.

By Hamdi Mohamed (III)
Contributing Writer

The freedom of speech and the freedom of the press — rights protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution — are the pinnacle of American expression. We can say what we want, when we want and how we want without censorship by the law. There are, however, times when censorship is necessary, particularly on live national television.

Whenever censorship is mentioned, society often associates it with a negative connotation. Many people think of things like banning books that discuss more sensitive topics such as racism, gender roles or LGBTQ+ rights. No matter what our feelings surrounding censorship in other areas are, however, it is necessary on certain live television broadcasts to maintain a level of appropriateness, especially

when the footage is being released for all ages to see.

If you have ever tuned into the *Cable News Network* (CNN) New Year’s Eve broadcast from Times Square, then you are most likely familiar with the yearly show. The broadcasts begin a couple of hours before the clock hits midnight. Up until 12:00 A.M., there are all kinds of events, like musical performances and interviews. Throughout the broadcast, however, many people, including the hosts themselves, Andy Cohen and Anderson Cooper, tend to make inappropriate jokes while drinking heavily. Their humor entails topics like sex and others our society has deemed taboo.

Though some may view this as a positive breaking of oppressive societal norms, one must consider that these live television broadcasts are intended to be viewed by the entire general public. This means that a significant num-

ber of people, including children of all ages, watch the broadcast. When inappropriate material is openly displayed, it portrays very mature themes as suitable for exposure to young people.

To make matters worse, the reporters’ drinking has gotten out of hand. In the past year, CNN put a ban on any alcohol during the New Year’s Eve broadcast for this exact reason. CNN executives explain that as clips of their top anchors taking shots, acting wildly and saying things that should not be repeated on a school newspaper go viral, the credibility of their news source bears the brunt of the damage. Consider this: what image does it paint, when these are the same reporters that inform viewers of crises across the world?

This ban did not hold up for very long. TV talk show host Cohen, desperate to drink, went as far as to beg CNN reverse the ban. Despite the damage done to CNN’s legitimacy and the young children who witnessed the inappropriate scenes on live TV, Cohen remained adamant that they need to “give the daddies juice.” CNN eventually gave in, but they should not have.

In situations like this, America must be careful. There is a time and place for everything, especially when it comes to making sex-centered jokes and taking shots on a well-renowned national news channel. If the channel in question was *Home Box Office*, or another similar program, then this would not be an issue, because it is designated for a mature audience. CNN, however, is seen by the general public, and this type of content is not only impressionable on children, but also distracts from the whole point of the channel — news.

Maya Tran (I) expresses, “I think it is in the hands of the parents to know the best time and place for kids to be watching something.” If something inappropriate is playing, then parents should know to not have their kids in the room, but as Tran adds, “If it is a holiday broadcast like Thanksgiving Parade, Christmas or New Year’s, then [CNN] should know children are most likely watching those, so they should monitor what they are saying.”

Boston Latin School history teacher Ms. Clara Webb gives a unique perspective. As the internet and the media evolve and change, so do the regulations on it. She says that “some of these issues were so big, like ten or 20 years ago, because everyone watched TV [...] but now it’s blown up, because there’s so many different media sources that aren’t regulated.”

This does not mean that we can say whatever we want on a national broadcast. BLS theater teacher Mr. Joseph Gels explains, “It comes down to what the intended audience of any given program is. If [...] it’s a family-friendly event, then yeah, you shouldn’t be making sexual jokes.”

This is a decision that ultimately falls into the hands of CNN and its producers, but as the generation that was exposed to the trenches of the internet far too early, we can not let the same happen to the next. Ms. Webb goes on to say that when children are exposed to this, “it normalizes certain behaviors or activities,” but that “kids [should] be able to think critically about what they see, [...] who’s producing it and why.”

CNN and other producers need to be more mindful and realize that, in this case, censorship is the way to go.

Hit the Gym, Get Those Gains

By Juns Ye (II)
& Darshan Riveratan (VI)
Contributing Writers

Weightlifting is one of the best things us teens can do! With regular sessions, the gym provides students with near-instant results. They not only get more physically fit, but also learn about the importance of consistency and discipline.

Students may have noticed an increase in the number of their peers going to the gym, which can be attributed to the increasing prominence of bodybuilders on social media. While some argue that it may cause body dysmorphia and hurt teens’ self-esteem, these negatives are not from bodybuilding itself. The activity promotes confidence; the harmful effects are instead from problematic creators.

Boston Latin School is stressful, especially with midterms coming up. Luckily, weightlifting is a path to relaxing and “getting into the flow.” The joy of thinking about the iron you are pumping clears everything from your mind. Weightlifting becomes a moving meditation — suddenly, everything is not so stressful, the world seems like a better place and you feel like a better person.

The confidence that lifting and bodybuilding brings is superb. With weightlifting, you achieve results by making a little progress every day that you and others are able to see. The feeling of your body shaping to your will is one that you have to experience to understand.

Weightlifting is great because it is one of the few endeavors where you can see your future progress before you get there. There is something in weightlift-

ing called the “pump.” The pump is when straining the muscles causes more blood to flow to them. Another benefit is that your muscles will look huge! Seeing the pump provides instant gratification, encouraging novices to keep going.

BLS English teacher Ms. Keri Orellana, who has coached basketball for 20 years, believes that strength training is “something that everyone should do.” She recommends progressing gradually and starting with calisthenics or body-weight exercises.

While achieving results is a part of weightlifting, it also teaches one to be more accountable in other areas of life. Students who lift often have healthier diets and a more organized schedule so that they can include workout sessions in their day.

If you are still hesitant to start lifting, you are not alone. You might have been given the impression that when you join lifting, you need a clear goal or a vision of your future accomplishments. Mr. Eric Cordeiro, coach of the BLS powerlifting team, remarks, “Everyone is a little different. Most don’t know what they’re necessarily getting into, and I don’t think they necessarily have main goals originally.”

He also remarks that students who lift “learn to have confidence in themselves and work as a team together.” Powerlifting promotes teamwork and trust, as there are spotters you rely on to help you with your lifts and members of the community cheering you on.

You may have seen the switch between powerlifting and weightlifting throughout the article and wondered, “what is the difference?” Powerlifting is



Lifting creates a positive environment as athletes spot one another.

a type of weightlifting that seeks to maximize strength using the heaviest weights. Aidan Mak (II), a member of the BLS powerlifting team, says, “I started doing bodybuilding stuff at first, but then I found that I really liked maxing out and lifting heavy, so I looked into powerlifting and decided to join the school club.”

Concerns about the cost of gym memberships and trainers are valid, but this is mitigated by the fact that BLS and many universities provide gym facilities for students at no cost. Those who want to lift when school facilities are closed can use homemade dumbbells or help with chores that require lifting of some kind, like carrying groceries.

Many, especially parents, may be concerned that weightlifting stunts

growth. This notion, however, stems from a faulty study in the 1970s, and has since been disproven by scientists. Not only does weightlifting not stunt growth, but it actually strengthens your growth plates and allows you to grow marginally taller. Your bone density also increases, which means you are much less likely to get injured.

Some may say that lifting is toxic and drug-ridden, but in reality, when you lift you become empowered. You can see your progress and feel the blood rushing through your veins. There is purity in the simplicity of lifting that is hard to replicate. Although some of the lifting community is problematic, the vast majority is positive and endlessly supportive. At the end of the day, try lifting and see if you like it!

To Buzz or Not to Buzz

By **Jamie Ramirez (III)**
& **Harry Dinh (IV)**
Contributing Writers

Returning from winter break, something about the School was decidedly different. Gone were the luscious locks and carefully-maintained hairstyles of many classmates, and in were the buzz cuts, which trim the hair uniformly close to the scalp. The halls of Boston Latin School are now more reminiscent of a strict military academy than a vibrant public school. Such a transition ultimately undermines each person’s unique expression and identity.

For starters, buzz cuts are boring and merely an excuse to not take care of one’s hair. People have the privilege to express who they are based on their hairstyle. Students should not waste such a valuable opportunity by chopping almost all of it off. As Adriana Depina (IV) comments, a good haircut “accentuates the face card and can also be tied in with your personality.” Clearly, removing so much hair limits one’s sense of expression and individuality.

In fact, different hairstyles make different impressions on people. For instance, curly hair has been shown to signal creativity, while smooth hair and well-groomed hair can often signal a sense of control and precision. Buzz cuts, on the other hand, give the unpleasant impression of a rigid and uniform style, similar to that of a soldier. Such harsh, robotic imagery has no place in a school, which is not as restrictive as the military.

Considering the heavy connotations of a buzz cut, it is no surprise that many people can distinctly remember coming into school the day after getting one. Peers look up, whispering about the new look. Everyone is taken aback and almost do not recognize them. Cormac Ryan (IV) says,



Science teacher and buzz cut apologist Mr. Michael Galego shows off his fresh buzz!

“It’s kind of weird. You see someone [...] [with] all that hair. [...] Then you see someone with no hair, and people [think] it’s a different person.” Such an audible reaction may be a sign that the decision to get a buzz cut is an unwise one.

There are, however, people who get buzz cuts because their old hairstyles were not working for them, or so that they may liberate themselves from the consumerism of the modern world. While maintaining hair is admittedly expensive and often time-consuming, the abundance of hair products, such as curling creams, hair masks, serums, treatments and leave-in conditioners guarantees that everyone has multiple ways to style their hair and express

themselves as they wish. Such products could also help one’s hair become more desirable, instead of having to resort to a buzz cut as a way to “save” their look.

Getting a buzz cut to avoid regular maintenance of normal-length hair is not an effective solution. A buzz cut still requires care, which arguably may be even more demanding. Caleb Kohn (I) shares, “You have to buzz [your hair] at least once a month [...] [which] can be potentially costly.”

Many students tend to get buzz cuts during winter break, but, ironically, buzz cuts are especially impractical for Boston’s cold winter months. BLS science teacher Mr. Michael Galego comments, “In the

winter you lose a lot of heat through your head.” Hair helps keep humans insulated during the more frigid temperatures. By having a buzz cut during the freezing season, students lose the main source of insulation on their head.

So, do not get a buzz cut! They are unfashionable and hinder one’s expression of individualism. A buzz cut is also not more cost efficient, and coupled with the loss of freedom in styling that hair products provide, the decision to get a buzz cut is not a wise one. In fact, it may even be a danger to your health during this time of year.

So, what are you waiting for? Show off your luscious locks and be confident in your body in the new year!

Consolidation is Key: Close Dilapidated BPS Schools



BPS schools shut down due to a lack of student enrollment.

By **Elaine Lin (IV)**
& **Bella Zhao (V)**
Contributing Writers

Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper, with the support of Mayor Michelle Wu, recently announced the closure of four schools: Community Academy in Jamaica Plains, Dever Elementary School in Dorchester, Excel High School in South Boston and Mary Lyon Pilot High School in Brighton. This decision was based on a long-term facilities plan that aims to provide the BPS community with improved learning and teaching environments. With declining enrollment, closing schools and consolidating resources would enhance the quality of

education of the remaining schools.

The average cost nationally that schools spend on each student is around 16,000 dollars. Schools in Massachusetts, however, typically spend more. According to a 2022 report from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, districts such as Lexington, Worcester and Newton spend about 23,000 dollars per student. Boston, moreover, spends about 30,106 dollars per student, almost double the nation’s average.

The budget is allocated to many different expenses, including building facilities, heating, staffing salaries, food services and transportation. BPS’s larger budget often results from spending excessive money on schools that are unable to offer quality edu-

cation rather than supporting institutions that can.

According to the Boston Teachers Union, about 96 BPS schools are without ventilation systems, and since 1980, only eight of Boston’s 23 neighborhoods have built new buildings. Without ventilation and other basic necessities, it is difficult to maintain sufficient quality of learning and health for students and teachers. Skipper described how the selection of which schools to close was influenced by factors such as low enrollment, underutilized space and the inability to provide sufficient education for students.

Vinson Ngo (IV) notes, “Even at [Boston Latin School], we see constant problems with bathrooms, the heater not turning on some days and not the best cafeteria food.” Although BLS is one of the most highly-funded schools in the district, many students who attend still complain about the condition of school facilities. Instead of spending money on empty, dilapidated buildings, BPS could be using its resources for schools that have produced excellent education for its students.

Another reason that school closures are necessary is because student enrollment is declining. Head of School Jason Gallagher, explains, “Because the number of students in BPS has declined by 8,000 students over the past decade, there are schools that are under-enrolled and therefore cannot offer everything that a school should be able to offer to make the experience a great one for students.” The BPS budget is not able to support the high costs of running under-enrolled schools that are unable to provide quality education, making school closures an important step in allocating resources efficiently.

Although many benefits will come from these schools shutting down, many


local BPS students have concerns. These school closures will interfere with students and their families’ daily lives. New routes for public transit must be arranged, and students must adjust to the culture of a new school environment. “Integrating into a new school isn’t easy and can definitely affect students’ confidence and well-being, as well as adapting to a new curriculum,” explains Justin Huang (IV).

Many communities in which schools will be closing are being forced to face changes, so students and families throughout the district worry that these closures will disrupt not only their education, but also the sense of community that the schools have fostered for students. Sheldon Bol (IV), a BLS student from South Boston, reflects, “I think that the closing of Excel High School is a huge loss to the whole community of South Boston. Our schools are the building blocks for teenagers, and losing these schools only hinders the development of these students.”

While disappointment and controversy are inevitable, these closures are necessary for the district as a whole to evolve. As BPS proceeds with its plans, these closures offer an opportunity for the district to finally address long-overdue infrastructure issues and effectively focus its resources on enhancing the quality of education. Head of School Jason Gallagher remarks, “My hope is that BPS will work closely with families to ensure they have access to a quality school close to their home [...] I have faith that the BPS team will step up and help these students and families.”

Although the transition will be challenging for affected communities, these school closures are ultimately a crucial step toward a brighter future for Boston’s educational system.

Diamond Album: SZA’s LANA



LANA

by SZA
December 20, 2024

Genre: R&B

Highlights:
“30 for 30,” “Crybaby,”
“Scorsese Baby Daddy”

Overall Rating: 9.2/10

By **Julia Morellato (III)**
& **Michael Nguyen (III)**
Contributing Writers

On December 9, 2022, Solána Imani Rowe, more commonly known as SZA, released her album SOS, which contains songs such as the vulnerable “Open Arms,” enchanting “Shirt” and the ultra-popular “Kill Bill.” After multiple teasers and two sold-out stadium tours, SZA released the much anticipated LANA, the reissue of SOS, on December 20, 2024. In an interview with *Variety*, SZA states, “It’s called ‘LANA’ — my name, but it’s [also] the first tattoo that I ever got when I was 13. It was ten bucks a letter and I only had 40, so that became my nickname for no reason.”

Since early on after its release, SOS has remained on the Billboard 200 for over 100 weeks. It stayed at No. 1 for ten weeks and has never left the top 20 ranking since. LANA claimed its No. 1 spot starting on January 4. LANA is one of the only R&B albums by a female artist to hold the No. 1 ranking spot for so long, and it is now close to surpassing Whitney Houston’s 14-week streak from 1986.

Although LANA is the deluxe version of SOS, there are also very similar beats and themes from her earlier albums *Ctrl* and *Z*. In LANA, SZA embarks on a journey of self-discovery, reflection and understanding.

“No More Hiding,” the album’s opener, contains a gentle and lush bossa nova guitar beat and synth, leading listeners into a deep hypnosis. SZA also includes soulful

and sensitive melodic lyrics: “No more hiding / I wanna feel sun on my skin / Even if it burns or blinds me / I wanna be purified within.” With her narrative storytelling and emotional themes, “No More Hiding” is sure to resonate with listeners, touching on topics of self-acceptance and growth. “No More Hiding” sets a tone for the rest of the album, amplifying its introspective themes of finding one’s true self and shedding away past burdens.

Most notably from LANA, track five, “BMF,” previously known as the unreleased “Boy From South Detroit,” has gained the most traction. With interpolating melodies from Antônio Carlos Jobim’s 1964 bossa nova jazz hit, “The Girl From Ipanema,” “BMF” is a lighthearted blending of modern pop with influential jazz. Eden Stewart (III) notes, “SZA’s spin on [“The Girl From Ipanema”] really brought jazz into more of pop culture.” “BMF” quickly rose in popularity following her free show, held in Brooklyn in early September of 2023. With the song’s catchy lyrics, “Young and he fine and he tall and he handsome / Talkin’ so fine, I might hold it for ransom,” SZA was sure to have its lyrics stuck in everyone’s head!

Similar to SOS’s “F2F,” “Scorsese Baby Daddy” is a playful indie rock song and definitely a hidden gem within LANA. Her shouty lyrics, “I’m crash out, baby, don’t slow me down / I hate to be the one (Be the one) / Hate to be the one doing the most,” expresses SZA’s overwhelming emotions and chaos in previous relationships. With the track’s vibrant vitality and lyrical play, “Scorsese Baby Daddy” is a refreshing and

unique track.

From “Doves in The Wind” to “All The Stars,” LANA would be incomplete without a feature from Kendrick Lamar. Track three, “30 For 30,” is an affirmation of their strong bond and musical synergy. Arguably, the song contains the most unique instrumental and beats, with a sample from the 1979 song “I Call Your Name” by Switch. Moreover, the track’s soulful and upbeat R&B funk tunes paired with Lamar’s reflective lyricism make track three a standout. With production from J. White Did It, who previously produced songs for Cardi B, Beyonce and J. Cole, the song uniquely blends hip-hop and R&B tunes.

Track ten, “Crybaby,” is a testament to SZA’s musical growth and opulent production, deserving our No. 1 out of the 15 tracks. SZA’s ability to perfectly articulate the pressure to suppress emotions and the challenges of guilt further symbolizes her profound mastery of transforming struggle into art. “Crybaby” embodies an aimless duality between self-awareness and heartbreak.

Griffin Hastings (III) describes his interpretation: “It brings a sense of unity to herself, her relationships with others and the artist she has become through SOS.” The most striking lyrics of “Crybaby,” “Cause all I seem to do is get in my way / Then blame you, it’s just a cycle, I’m so psycho / You so sick, I’m so sick of me too,” reflect an incredibly deep and relatable wave of self-reflection. Moreover, the instrumentation of soft melodies symbolizes this intense yearning for self-understanding and adds a very intimate energy to wrap up LANA.

Banana, Banana on the Wall

By **Lauren Dong (III)**
& **Sophia Knobel (III)**
Contributing Writers

As you’re scrolling through your feed, a striking headline catches your eye: “Viral banana artwork duct-taped to wall sells for \$6.2M.” Obviously, the components of this installation, titled *Comedian*, are not worth 6.2 million dollars — grocery stores sell bananas for 20 cents each, and a roll of duct tape costs nine dollars. Is contemporary art too simple after all?

Pieces like Maurizio Cattelan’s *Comedian* are part of a growing trend of conceptual art, which challenges traditional notions of value and meaning by emphasizing concept over material. This shift from traditional art began in the late 19th century with the modern art movement, inspired by the growing impact of the Industrial Revolution. Society’s rapid modernization caused artists to step away from traditional idealistic imagery, choosing to focus on realism. Today, responding to new social, cultural and technological changes, new types of impressionism, abstract expressionism, minimalism and conceptual art are emerging, which some regard as “too simple” because they don’t appear to require artistic skill. Others argue, however, that despite surface level simplicity, they are valuable because they push the boundaries of art.

Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) intern David Nguyen (III) comments, “I think it’s really cool because you get to see more [of] a feeling. [...] I feel it’s more expressive [rather] than what you’d usually see in regular museums.”

Along with positive reactions such as Nguyen’s, criticism has increased tremendously. People critique paintings by artists like Agnes Martin, Donald Judd and Frank Stella — minimalists whose work is often “just a blank canvas” — for lacking depth and technical skill. Some artworks seem so basic that people consider them pointless.

Sold for 60 million dollars, Kazimir Malevich’s *White on White* perfectly exemplifies this sentiment. A diagonal white square painted onto a white canvas, this work claims “to create a sense of floating and transcendence,” as stated by the Museum of Modern Art. When stripped of this description, however, Malevich’s work is near-meaningless.

Boston Latin School AP Studio Art teacher Ms. Elisabeth Walshak says, “I feel conflicted about some art, like the banana duct-taped to a wall that sold for 6.2 million



Viewers photograph Maurizio Cattelan’s *Comedian*, the viral banana duct-taped to a wall.

dollars. [...] Is it just one big troll of a hyper-inflated art market that caters to extremely wealthy people in an age where wealth inequality is at its highest in human history?”

While it is be easy to dismiss contemporary artworks as pointless or meaningless, contemporary art often expresses messages that are unable to be expressed through representational art. Many artworks that are “only a solid color” like Yves Klein’s *Blue Monochrome*, which is displayed at the Museum of Fine Arts, challenge the nature of art itself. Walshak explains, “Yves Klein developed a new shade of blue paint using newly available pigments such that the process is interesting and these paintings challenge our preconceived notions about what painting and art should be.”

Although some viewers may find the art lacking depth, the creation process requires much more effort. According to a statement from the gallery displaying “Comedian,” “Every time [Cattelan] traveled, he brought a

banana with him and hung it in his hotel room to find inspiration. He made several models: first in resin, then in bronze, [then] in painted bronze, before finally coming back to the initial idea of a real banana.”

Tyler Lum, a former youth worker at the ICA now focusing on film directing, explains the importance of the creation process: “While contemporary art may be seen as too simple or too effortless, each piece can potentially hold more stories than ordinary paintings you may see at a museum.”

What resonates with one person may not with another, and that diversity of thought is what makes the nature of art so powerful and ever-evolving. BLS Visual Arts teacher Mr. Stephen Harris encourages students interested in art to visit the Thursday Club, an after-school program on Tuesdays and Thursdays, where students can learn to use the ceramic pottery wheel, experiment with painting, drawing and more to create either modern or traditional art.

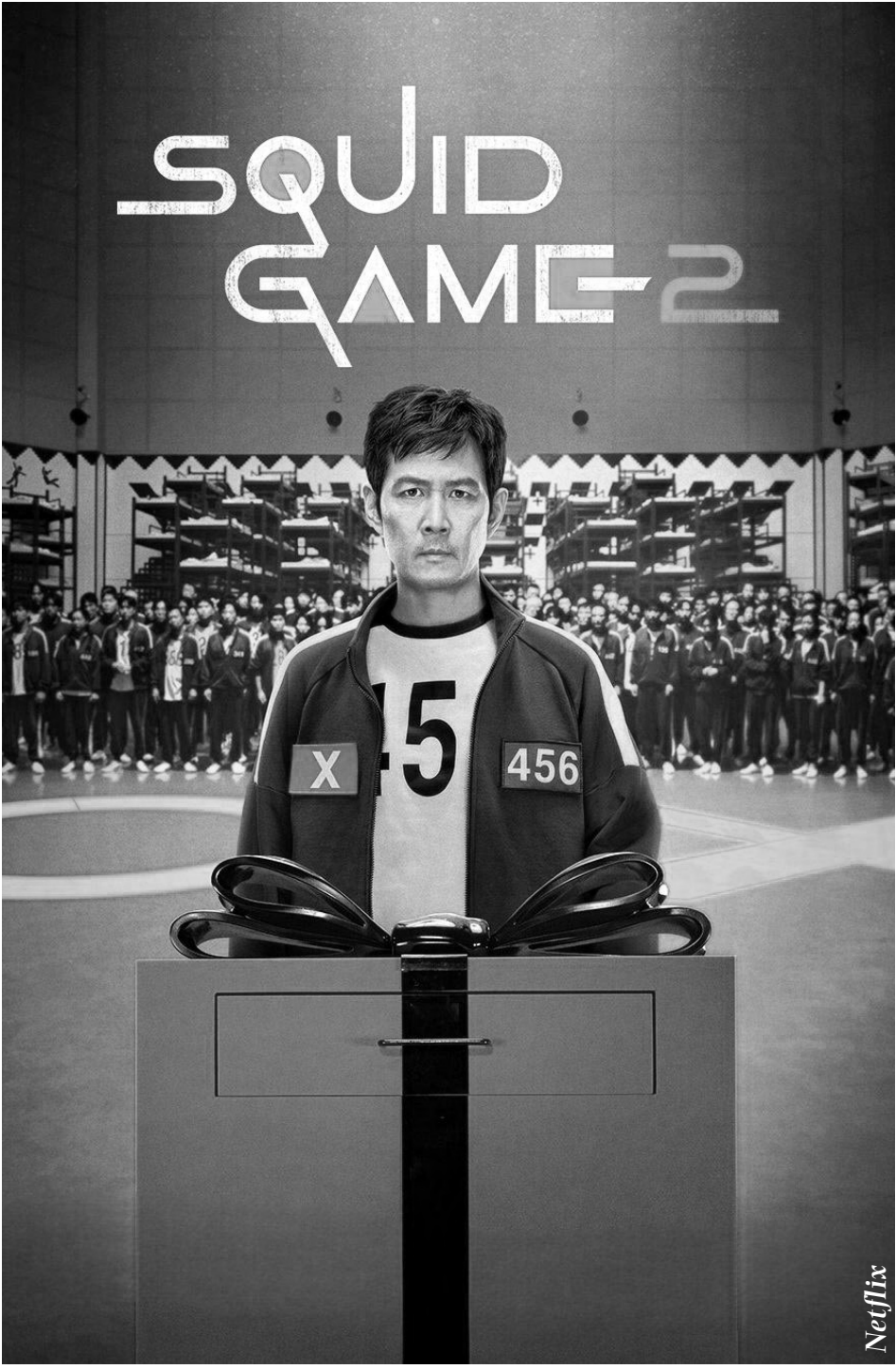
A Sequel Worth 456 Million Won, *Squid Game* Season 2

By **Kaya Ertan (IV)**
Contributing Writer

On December 26, the second season of the South Korean thriller *Squid Game* was released, following up the uber-popular first season released back in September of 2021. The show depicts people with heavy debt participating in childhood-mimicking games to compete for 45.6 billion won, with one minor twist: if a player is eliminated, they are killed. Throughout these horrid chances at redemption, rich VIPs are betting on the winners of each game. During the show, players are given many chances to leave and return to their lives, claiming the accumulated money up until that point, if a majority votes to do so. The fact that, for many, competing in death games for money is preferable to living in debt feels dystopian, yet incredibly resonant with certain societies today.

The first season sits at 95 percent on Rotten Tomatoes and brought *Netflix* 900 million dollars, cementing *Squid Game* as their most profitable series to date. “The producers did a really good job promoting the show,” explains Theo Neri (V). “The first season was good, so why not watch the second?” In the second season, the big winner of the first season, Seong Gi-hun, is spending all of his money to track and take down the Squid Games. After confronting the Front Man, who runs the games, he agrees to be sent back as a contestant. When asked about how the second season compares to the first, Johnny Liang (III) shares, “I liked the diversity [...] and the action-type thing [in Season Two].” Although Season Two’s characters aren’t able to reach the highs of Season One’s, the new group of characters is incredibly diverse and works well together, including Jung Bae, a character who made

a quick appearance in Season One as Gi-hun’s close friend. Although Cho Hyun-joo parallels the character of Oh Il-nam (in Season One), as both are elders who attempt to lighten the mood throughout the show by caring for the contestants, she has completely different motives: to pay off her son’s debt. The show introduces some new ideas as well. Choi Su-bong, or Thanos, played by Choi Seung-Hyun, is a fan favorite, being a bodacious rapper that got caught up in a crypto scam. Actor Choi Seung-Hyun was a K-pop idol in South Korean boy band Big Bang and got sentenced to prison in 2016 for smoking cannabis at home. His appearance in this show serves as his return into Korea’s entertainment industry. In this season, the Front Man decides to participate in the game in an effort to stop Gi-hun’s operation to shut down the games. The games also take a different, more co-operative direction this season. Aside from “Red Light, Green Light,” these games are completely different from the ones presented within Season One. When asked about what he thought of the games in Season Two, Mack Losi (IV) immediately shares: “The six-legged race was very interesting, and the Front Man snapping someone’s neck during mingle was pretty metal.” The ending of the show is considered less appealing, however. Neri shares, “The ending was kind of predictable as the Front Man was always going to be bad, so it wasn’t that much of a surprise.” Although the second season of *Squid Game* may not reach the thrill and sensation as Season One, it does everything a good sequel should by trying new ideas that iterate upon things that initially worked and adding new ideas to the table. Given the fact that Season Two was written in three years, in comparison to the decade it took Season One to air, it is a relatively big success.



New Bookstore Brings Romance to Cambridge



Cambridge’s first romance-only bookstore leaves readers lovestruck.

By **Risa Goldfeld (III)**
Contributing Writer

This past December, Harvard Square welcomed Lovestruck Books, Cambridge’s first brick-and-mortar romance-only bookstore. Since its opening, it has gained substantial attention with romance novels from various subgenres and for all ages. Owner and founder Rachel Kanter says that she wants it to be a community and more than a bookstore. She hopes it can nurture customers’ interests and help them feel safe, especially when reading romance, a genre that has been traditionally considered illicit or shameful.

Boston Latin School Keefe Librarian Ms. Deeth Ellis remembers that, back when e-readers such as Kindles were first released, “people were reading [romance] on their Kindles so no one [else] could see they were reading it, whereas now, people are more open to, ‘oh yes, romance, I love it.’” In recent years, the romance genre has experienced a huge surge in popularity. In high school, where everyone seems to be looking for their perfect happy ending, romance books can be an outlet to satisfy that. Romance novels are about companionship and finding someone who appreciates and loves you no matter what. Loneliness is so

widespread that the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy acknowledged it as an epidemic. This, paired with the isolation people felt during the COVID-19 pandemic, leaves many desperate for that kind of connection, leading them to turn to romance novels as a source. Lovestruck caters to that exploration. Additionally, the rise of “BookTok,” a subdivision of *TikTok* focused on recommending and reviewing books, has aided the growth of the romance genre. It has become a major force in driving reading trends; authors publicize for free, and books that become popular on “BookTok” tend to bring in sales and gain readership in real life. Romance is one of

the most popular genres on “BookTok,” and that is reflected in physical book sales. With this knowledge, Kanter is confident that her store will be a success. With the increase of social media and the decline of reading rates in the modern world, it is important that places like Lovestruck, which offers popular genres that cater to the general public, exist. BLS Book Club president Fei Li (II) comments, “I personally think it’s great that romance books are getting recognition! For many, romance may help them get more reading in general. I’ve had many friends get into fantasy and sci-fi through social media and romance novels.” Bookstores like Lovestruck can help keep the writing and reading community alive. On January 17, Lovestruck Books held a book signing with Chloe Gong, as part of an all-day celebration of the bookstore’s opening. Gong is author of the *These Violent Delights* series, a popular young adult fantasy series inspired by Shakespeare’s tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*. This signing brought exposure to the store and showed that it has all kinds of romance books, even ones where romance isn’t even the main plot, appealing to a wider audience. Ikra Abbasi (III) shares her favorite layout of a novel, saying, “My favorite is when it’s a horror book, but then there’s a group of friends, and within that group of friends there’s like two people [in a romance].” This bookstore is an interesting and exciting new addition to the shops around the Cambridge area. It appeals to romance readers of all kinds, and will hopefully grow into a beloved community where people can find books they love and read them knowing that the people around them share the same interests.



By **Hayden Cooper-Dupont (I)**,
Islay Shilland (I)
& **Milda Miranda (I)**
Creative Consultants

How do I get over embarrassing moments that keep coming back to haunt me?

M: It’s like this question was made for me. If you spend at least 20 minutes a day in the shower reeling in your past self (def not speaking from experience!), the best remedy is to remember you’re no longer that person. Those embarrassing moments literally make up the mosaics of who we are, so a fall in front of your crush in sixie year or a snot bubble during your freshman year declamation is not the end of the world. Wipe off that mucus, pick yourself up off the ground and lock in with the most improved version of yourself! If that doesn’t work, scream. Really loudly.

I want to restart my entire wardrobe. Where do I begin and how do I maintain confidence when shifting styles?

I: *Step 1:* Go through your closet and take out all the clothes you have not worn in the past year. Find a home for them (give them to your siblings, donate them or throw them away if they’re in bad shape).

Step 2: On *Pinterest*, look for clothes that match your desired style and aesthetic. Use this inspiration to find items online or in-person that will help you embody it. Do not buy too many things at once — start slow in case you find you don’t like this new style. Consignment stores are a good option if you’re trying not to splurge.

Step 3: If people point out the fact that you’re dressing differently, gaslight them: “I’ve always worn these clothes, what are you talking about?”

On a serious note, we’re in high school. It’s a perfectly normal time to experiment with personal style and find out what *you* like, which is the only thing that matters. Unless what you like involves galaxy print...

M: And for the love of all that’s good ... NO PATTERNS ON PATTERNS.

How do I cope with being alone on Valentine’s Day?

H: Best course of action: own it. Valentine’s Day isn’t about having someone to spend it with. It’s a day where you should be feeling nothing but love. Love yourself, your friends or your family. Love the heart-shaped box of chocolates you buy for yourself or the mediocre *Sweethearts* decorated with nice messages that kind teachers give. Treat it like a day of shameless indulgence: nap, watch your favorite movie, ransack the CVS candy aisle for all your favorite candies and eat them until there’s a mountain of wrappers. Just remind yourself that while couples are out there stressing about overpriced dinners and the perfect *Instagram* caption, you’re living your best, drama-free life, where your happiness isn’t dependent on another person. Being alone on Valentine’s day doesn’t mean you’re unloved — it means you get to have all the candy without interruption and the stress of someone else: a win-win.

How do you plot on someone for prom?

I: *Materials needed:* trifold poster, glitter gel pens, megaphone and flowers.
Instructions: Follow the person of interest around for a week so that you can get to know their schedule. Find out which lunch they have. Use your megaphone to get everyone’s attention and “prompose” as passionately as you can, in front of everyone, using your poster with big sparkly letters and your bouquet of their favorite flowers. Make sure everyone is looking at you and also taking videos. The worst they can say is no. If they do, remember: rejection is redirection!

How do I deal with “senioritis?”

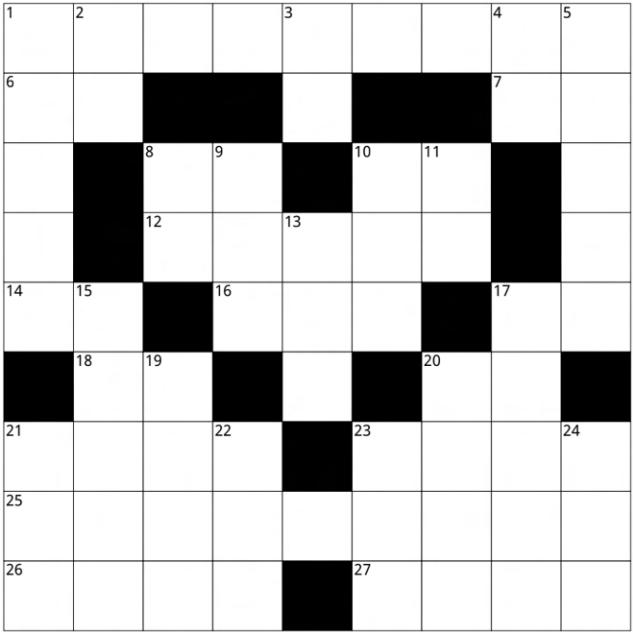
M: Coming from someone who misses at least one day of school a week, there’s no getting out of “senioritis.” It’s an evident fact: You’re at the end, and nothing feels like it’s worth getting up for. But, that just means you need to make stuff to look forward to! Live for that person who you pass once a day on your way to R5, live for those days where your least favorite teacher is absent and most especially live for the sweet, sweet day that you can kiss these brown and rusted walls goodbye.

If I’m struggling in a class, how do I ask for more support without making a teacher hate me?

H: First off, I wouldn’t assume that there is a teacher in this building sitting around plotting on your demise because you need help. From my experience, teachers actually dislike know-it-alls. The simple act of asking for help shows that you care about your learning, a.k.a. the very reason they drag themselves out of bed five days a week. Show them that their efforts mean something to you: Catch them after class and say something like “I’m struggling on this, could you help me?” Be sure to acknowledge that you genuinely are struggling, bonus points if you mention some of what they already taught you. This way, they don’t think that you completely ignored them during class. The key is showing that you care not just about your grade, but about actually learning something. Insider secret: Teachers go crazy over the “love for learning” talk, a good tool to gain some quick brownie points. Never will they consider it a bother; you’re just giving them another chance to do what they signed up to do. Just don’t lead with “this is a stupid question” or “you might hate me for asking this” because then, they just might start to.

January 2025 Mini Crossword

By **Ailin Sha (I) & Alex Le (II)**
Cruciverbalists



ACROSS

- 1. “Seize the day!” in Latin
- 6. An informal greeting
- 7. “__ be or not __ be”
- 8. Undergraduate degree for arts and humanities
- 10. Acronym for retired Patriots football player GOAT
- 12. Picture holder
- 14. Our state
- 16. Don’t drink and drive!
- 17. The “__ you want” of *Si quieres*
- 18. “A young acquaintance” in slang
- 20. Drake’s record label __ O Sound
- 21. Hand out cards
- 23. Playwright George Bernard ____
- 25. “Will you be my _____?”
- 26. “The ____ of March”
- 27. Adore

DOWN

- 1. To sweet-talk, attract
- 2. *ChatGPT* computer
- 3. -Ar, __, -Ir verbs
- 4. “__ tu, *Brute?*”
- 5. Recurring theme
- 8. Significant other; abbr.
- 9. Dull finish?
- 10. “I didn’t need to know that!”
- 11. *Esse*
- 13. “How cute!”
- 15. In front
- 17. Peter the Great’s co-czar
- 19. Bundle of hay
- 20. “Skibidi ____ rizz”
- 21. Half of MXII
- 22. ____ *Misérables*
- 23. MLB Cardinals letters
- 24. Tiny

More Culinary Creations: Lettuce Taco-bout It!

By **Madelyn Buksbaum (II) & Kierstin McMahon (II)**
Culinary Consultants



Chickpea Salad:

Ingredients:

- ☐ Canned chickpeas (or cooked from dry)
- ☐ 2-3 tablespoons of plain greek yogurt, tahini, tzatziki or dijon mustard
- ☐ 1 tbsp olive oil
- ☐ 1 tsp lemon juice
- ☐ ½ tsp garlic powder (or half a clove of minced fresh garlic)
- ☐ Salt and pepper to taste

Optional extras/flavor variations:
Chili flakes or chili crisp (*Lao Gan Ma* is very tasty in this)
Capers and chopped herbs
Finely chopped celery or other vegetables
Lemon zest

Directions:

- 1. Drain chickpeas.
- 2. Add all other ingredients, including any extras, and mash with a fork.
- 3. Serve on toast, pita bread, crackers, rice cakes or with cut-up veggies.

Vegetarian Tacos:

Taco Ingredients:

- ☐ Tortilla (warm on stove or in microwave)
- ☐ Sliced tomatoes
- ☐ Black beans or chickpeas
- ☐ Lettuce
- ☐ Guacamole
- ☐ Grated cheese of choice
- ☐ Optional: sauteed onions or mushrooms

Black Bean/Chickpea Seasoning:

*Consider adding sweet corn for a sweet surprise!

- ☐ 2 tbsp chili powder
- ☐ 1½ tsp garlic powder
- ☐ 1 tbsp dried onions
- ☐ 1 tbsp salt
- ☐ ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ☐ 1 tsp cornstarch

Directions:

- 1. Using a frying pan, line with oil or butter.
- 2. Add your protein to the pan and then add ¼ cup of water followed by the seasoning.
- 3. Stir until thick.
- 4. Add more water if needed for consistency.

Resources For Students Experiencing Food Insecurity:

Project Bread:

Food assistance hotline:
+1 (800) 645-8333

Daily Table:

Non-profit grocery store with 50 percent discount on produce for SNAP/EBT users.
dailytable.org

Fair Foods:

2 dollar produce bags (10 lbs produce).
fairfoods.org

Glaser at the Golden Globes

By Shirlyn Wang (III)
Contributing Writer

January 5, 2025 witnessed the 82nd Golden Globe Awards, an award ceremony for both esteemed television and film. The categories of the awards range from Best Motion Picture to Best Director to Best Actor to Best Original Score. The event, which took place in the Beverly Hilton this year, has been held annually since 1944 to celebrate the different roles in the film industry.

Nikki Glaser, a stand-up comedian with numerous specials on *Netflix* and appearances on reality shows, hosted this year's Golden Globes and made history, as it marked the first year that a woman hosted the ceremony by herself.

The audience viewed the star-studded red carpet, with celebrities such as Ariana Grande, Leighton Meister, Kylie Jenner and Margaret Qualley attending. Actress Demi Moore notably won a well-deserved Golden Globe for her role in *Substance*, and actress Zendaya sported a ring, which confirmed her engagement to actor Tom Holland. Glaser's effective routine, however, seemed to be the highlight of the night.

Glaser made several notable jokes that evening, with knocks at Ben Affleck, P.Diddy, *Wicked*, *Joker: Folie à Deux* and Benny Blanco. Glaser also made several other pop culture references, highlighting memes like Ozempic and *Wicked*'s "Holding Space" during her time on the screen. Kamille Fisher (III), one of many Boston Latin School students who tuned into the Golden Globes this year, found that Glaser was "referencing a lot of pop culture in just a relative and funny way." Glaser kept her jokes lighthearted, although some referenced deeper issues like sex work and human trafficking.

Other positive feedback for Nikki Glaser includes a comparison to last year's host, Jo Koy. AJ Pimental (II), who watched the Golden Globes, noticed a clear difference:



Nikki Glaser performs stand-up for a star-studded audience at the Golden Globes.

"The jokes that were made compared to last year were less harmful and less of a direct personal attack and more [of] what I would expect from a host."

Koy, who hosted the 81st Golden Globe, made several misogynistic comments on both Taylor Swift and *Barbie* that sparked backlash. Koy's sexist remarks included comparing *Oppenheimer* to *Barbie*, regarding the seriousness and impact of the movies, and the National Football League to the

Golden Globes, with a number of shots at Taylor Swift.

While she definitely performed better than Koy at last year's ceremonies, did Glaser do a satisfactory job however? It would seem so, as critics such as Emma Specter at *Vogue* have given shining praise: "None of her barbs at people in the room felt over the line."

Since hosting the awards show, Nikki Glaser has gained glowing reviews from a

variety of people, both within and outside of the BLS community. She was clearly one of the highlights of the night, with some even calling for her to return to the stage in other events of the year, such as the Oscars.

Glaser will be going on tour soon, performing stand-up comedy in shows all over the country, starting on January 30. Make sure to watch out for her, and let's all hope for a reappearance to award ceremonies for Nikki Glaser!

Nosferatu: Vampires are the New ‘Fang’



Ellen Hutter, played by Lily Rose Depp, is frightened by a menacing silhouette.

By Isabella Connelly-Dow (II)
Contributing Writer

The modern horror audience is difficult to scare. Cheap jumpscare, flimsy practical effects and cringe-worthy computer-generated imagery don't really hit the average fan the way they used to back in the early days of gothic cinema. Audiences entered the theater wondering if Robert Eggers' 2024 rendition of the 1922 film *Nosferatu* can turn a 20th-century classic into a contemporary screamer.

The short answer — yes. Between Bill Skarsgard's performance as the dreadful Count Orlok, also known as Dracula, and the eerie Victorian landscapes and foreboding tone of the movie, there are several times where audiences

must cover their eyes, and if they dare, peek through their fingers.

Set in Germany in the 1830s, the film follows real estate broker Thomas Hutter, portrayed by Nicholas Hoult, as he is sent on a journey to Transylvania, where Count Orlok has insisted that a new property deal takes place. Hutter's wife Ellen (Lily-Rose Depp), however, is plagued by gruesome nightmares of what will come if her husband accepts the assignment. Blinded by the promise of a promotion, Hutter sweeps her concerns under the rug. Arriving in Transylvania, Thomas soon discovers that Ellen's visions were correct and that Orlok is, in fact, a bloodsucking fiend.

The most immediately notable element of the film is Orlok's picturesque castle, filmed in Prague with the Carpathian Alps overhanging in the background. Iris Cabot

(II), who watched the film, shares, "Those first thirty minutes where we get to see Thomas lose himself in the wilderness and castle were totally time-warping and probably one of my favorite parts of the movie."

But it is following the first act, when the snowy mountain tips fade into a bleak night, that the terror and dread really begin. Having caught sight of a picture of Ellen in Thomas's locket, Orlok decides he must have the maiden for himself and follows Thomas back to Germany to woo her. Upon his arrival, he gives Ellen an ultimatum: either she marries the Prince of Darkness (him), or he wreaks havoc on those around her. The typical Bram Stoker Dracula is depicted as a bachelor, but in this adaptation, Orlok is a hideous, almost rat-like monster, making Ellen's choice particularly nauseating to think about.

Critics of *Nosferatu* say this is where the film failed to portray the plot of the original in a more modern light, as Depp's character is a typical madwoman in the first half, but a mere victim of Orlok's lust in the second. The fact that a part of her actually loves Orlok, furthermore, can be taken as what the *Washington Post* calls "the old 'female desire unleashes evil' hoodoo."

While the film does not do much to include women more in the plot than the original, it certainly places more emphasis on Ellen as a character. While Thomas, on paper, is the main protagonist, she is the real center of the story.

"I'd say that Ellen's role is more prominent because she's the only character that interacts with every single person in the film [...] she's the one that saves the city. Even though Count Orlok is trying to take her, she is remembered as the most important character in the movie. The movie can exist without Orlok but it cannot exist without Ellen," shares Oriana Dunker (I).

As put by the *New York Times*, the 2024 version of *Nosferatu* "dares you to feel seduced and sick over the seduction." It's the kind of film that audiences must pay close attention to; it is not a film to put on while doing homework or making dinner.

Cabot adds, "Even if you're not interested in the plot, though, I still think it's worth watching as an aesthetically gorgeous movie."

Boys’ Basketball Dribbles Towards Success



Max Mendoza (II) shoots a free throw at a home game against Concord-Carlisle.

By **Simon Hay-Sutton (II)**
& **Joseph Day (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

After 11 games, the Boston Latin School boys’ basketball team continues to excel and is charged to earn a top spot in the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) State Tournament bracket. Standing at a record of 10-1, the team has put itself right at the top of the highly competitive Dual County League (DCL) and looks to make a push for the conference title.

Head Coach Jerry Etienne has taken the helm and built the team up “brick by brick,” helping them dribble past obstacles and achieve success. Since his appointment four years ago, the team has demonstrated growth,

patience and resilience, all culminating to this season’s stellar overall record and 4-1 conference record. The team is currently led in scoring by Will White (III), who averages 18 points a game, and Yakub Fiin (I), who averages 15 points a game. On the other side of the court, center Evan Dalmanieras (I) locks down the court on defense, leading the team in rebounds.

The team’s momentum and progress is reflected by the level of effort brought to each game and practice. The Wolfpack does not shy away from a challenge and works hard on and off the court to achieve success. When asked about his most memorable moment, Coach Etienne says, “Every day with these guys has been memorable. Everyday we get to be together, every day I get to be with the coaches. It’s an

opportunity [...] for us to get better.”

The team’s perseverance throughout the years and collective attitude to always improve has created a platform for success and unforgettable moments, like drowning out crowds or nailing a game-winning three-pointer on a Friday night.

Jadon Berkson (I) describes his most memorable moment of the season so far: “Yakub drove the ball and kicked the ball out with ten seconds left. We were down by two and Dennis hit a big three for us.” The Wolfpack pulled out a thrilling 43-42 win against DCL opponents Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, a strong team looking to make a run for the MIAA Division I title.

Following their heartbreaking loss at the buzzer to Waltham High School, Michael Tran (II) states: “[The

team] bounced back against Newton South High School” in a convincing 60-52 home win that showed the team’s flexibility to respond to adversity.

The string of positive results come at no surprise because it directly reflects the leadership and wealth of knowledge that their coach brings to the court. Coach Etienne began his coaching career in 2008 and has experience working with all levels — from other schools to college programs and even to National Basketball Association athletes. He comments on the team’s two main goals: “[to] win our conference, the DCL, which is a very competitive conference, and [...] to qualify for our state tournament.” In order to attain these objectives, Coach Etienne has implanted discipline and strategy through his three-pronged approach: “We’ve got to make our free throws, we’ve got to guard defensively consistently and then we’ve got to take advantage of our opportunities on offense.”

In addition to stellar coaching, the team’s current success is also the result of off-season practice. Captain Jackson Prinn (I) emphasizes, “Everyone got better over the off-season and we’ve gained more chemistry playing in a lot of summer leagues and pre-season games.” The team’s collective improvement has not only allowed individuals to shine, but also for the team to gain more depth and versatility with players from all grades stepping up and contributing in key moments.

As the playoffs approach, the boys’ basketball team is completely focused on winning the conference, making a playoff run and relishing in the unmatched feeling of earning a hard-fought victory. This year’s boys’ basketball team is a testament to the hard work and dedication that has given the BLS community plenty to cheer about. As the team prepares for challenges ahead, one thing is clear: this is just the beginning.

BOS Nation Soccer Scores Deal in Franklin Park

By **Chelsea Bateman (III)**
& **Maya Lanfer (III)**

Contributing Writers

On December 23, the City of Boston leased the beloved but deteriorating White Stadium to Boston’s new professional women’s soccer team. The lease began a whirlwind of preparation as work to repair White Stadium starts this month. Demolition and reconstruction are set to occur at an accelerated rate, as Boston hopes to finish in time for the 2026 season of the National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL). Mayor Michelle Wu and many of Boston’s sports fans, in the meantime, are enthusiastically awaiting the arrival of the new team, officially named BOS Nation FS.

Leila Ohashi (II), a captain of Boston Latin School girls’ varsity soccer team, supports the idea of renovating the stadium. She says that she is “very excited about the renovations” and hopes that “they will help to increase the awareness of women’s soccer while also upgrading a space that has needed repair for a long time.” It is certainly agreeable that a professional women’s soccer team in Boston would be an inspiration for young athletes while also leading to an increase in publicity.

Cleo Woodcock, Head Coach of the girls’ junior varsity soccer team, agrees with Ohashi about how beneficial it will be for the youth and for NWSL awareness. She suspects “that the impacts of construction

will grow, but [that] they will be temporary” and that the field’s renovation is desperately needed as the current white stadium field is “not safe to play on.”

The plans for the stadium renovation have already affected the BLS varsity football team, as they had to find alternative venues for their games this past season. When BLS varsity football Assistant Coach Timothy McQuade was asked about the switch of home fields, however, he was quite positive, stating that his players “were excited to play our home games so close to BLS.” and that the “home field advantage played a big part in our win against Cambridge.”

While building plans are moving forward, so is a lawsuit filed by the Emerald Necklace Conservancy. Heralded by Roxbury and Jamaica Plain residents, the lawsuit looks to hinder or even prevent both the renovations and the arrival of a new women’s soccer team. While most parties agree that White Stadium in Franklin Park needs renovations, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy believes that planning was not done with the proper counsel of community members in the surrounding area. They are concerned that it will inhibit access to the park for the community and BPS sports teams that have been using the space for decades. There are also concerns about insufficient parking in the area and if the team will even be profitable, given the failure of the last women’s soccer team in Boston.



Wolfpack Football plays at White Stadium before the lease.

Although there is some truth in their concerns, in reality, the plan is to share the space with both the community as well as BPS sports. The soccer team will only have access to the field for 40 days a year, with the rest of that time going to BPS teams. Furthermore, the vast majority of the 527 acres of Franklin Park (which contains White Stadium) will be left free for the public to access year-round. Additionally, with the sharp uptick in NWSL’s popularity, both parties of the lease are optimistic about the

future success of BOS Nation FC.

Boston must address issues related to parking and construction, but these problems can be solved. The stadium is going to be a great opportunity for Boston to show that they value women’s sports and for people all over New England to become involved in this beautiful game. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done before a new NWSL team graces the pitch at White Stadium, but when all is said and done, it will be worth it.

Winter Sports Overview

**By Trevor Gracombe (II),
Eliza Knight Bairstow (II)
& Mariam Abdulle (IV)**
Staff Writer and Contributing Writers

Boys’ Hockey

The boys’ varsity hockey team has a lot of pressure on them as they look to repeat their heroic Division II state title run last year, which culminated in an unforgettable comeback win against Tewksbury High School at TD Garden. The team started the season well by winning the Michael “Gio” Giordano Tournament, but have recently suffered three losses in a row.

Girls’ Hockey

After losing five seniors, moving up in leagues and sustaining some major injuries, the girl’s hockey team looks a little different this year; however, the girls have taken the changes in stride, coming out with a few key victories against St. Mary’s High School and Lincoln Sudbury High School. Angela Wells (III), a star sophomore on the team, commented that the new league poses a challenge compared to previous years. She says, “We are working towards continuing our team chemistry on and off the ice, working hard to improve. We hope to get some big wins in our upcoming games and continue preparing for the state tournament.” With states in mind, the Wolfpack is pushing harder than ever to gain some more victories and end the season with a winning record.

Boys’ Swim

The boys’ swim season is well underway as the team has already qualified for states and sectionals with their times. Captain Caleb Kohn (I) says that despite “a very packed schedule, we’ve been able to adapt and found that we have responded well to adversity and continue to push each other to work harder.” The team has shown improvement in the water, but for six-year BLS swimmers like Kohn, Cal Hale (I) and Tony Zhang (I), the team is more like a family. Kohn, who also plays soccer for the Wolfpack, claims, “There are few teams at BLS with such a supportive atmosphere [likely because] the intense nature of swimming means that we stick together and become a family.” These long-term friendships that the team has created have been an essential part of their success this season.

Boys’ Basketball

The Boston Latin School boys’ basketball team has been off to a fantastic start as their record is currently 10-1 after going eight games without a loss. Json Skelton (IV) notes that just after winter break, the team “unfortunately had a heartbreaking game where we lost on a buzzer-beater to Waltham.” The team has bounced back, however, and most recently won an electric overtime game against Westford Academy, a Dual County League rival. Yakub Fiin (I) had a game high of 19 points. Fiin says, “The team is so connected, chemistry wise, we put in the hard work in practice, and the coach makes sure we run every day. But when it’s game time, we’re locked in.” On every team, it is important to have strong leadership and experience, and that is especially true for the boys’ basketball seniors. Fiin says he is eager to leave his mark on the program and show his capabilities, a sentiment that is shared by all the seniors on the team as the squad continues their push for a run into the Division I playoffs.

Girls’ Basketball

Since the team lost only one senior last year, the BLS girls’ varsity basketball team has remained largely the same. This continuity has been a key factor in their success, allowing the team to build on last year’s foundation. With a thrilling one-point win against Waltham on January 17, aided largely by Chisom Jones’s (III) 36 points, the Wolfpack looks ahead to the rest of the season with determination. Mia Saravelas (II), who has been a part of the program for four years, comments, “We are proud of the hard work we’ve put in so far and we’ve seen major improvements so we’re looking forward to what the rest of the season brings!”

Cheer

The cheer team has had an exciting start to their season as they make the transition from football games to basketball games. Lina Walsh (III) shares, “The season has been going well, we’ve been supporting the basketball teams at their games and working hard to prepare for the upcoming competitions!” With their electric chants, the girls have been a constant source of support for the basketball programs. Determined to replicate the success of their fall season, the team has been working hard. Off of the court, the girls are putting in work to perfect their routines for the upcoming competition season.

Boys’ Track and Field

The boys’ track and field team has had an amazing start to their season with a strong 3-1 record. They have seen a lot of promise from their younger athletes supported by the experience of their upper-classmen. On December 17, the boys’ distance medley relay qualified for nationals with a showstopping time, currently ranked eighth in the nation this year. The boys’ long jump relay also had a great day, with a school record from Lateef Lawal (I) and overall placement of eighth at State Relays. Team captain Bilal El-haji (I) comments, “The season’s been going well so far. Keeping everyone focused has been important as we’ve come off a few good wins. We’re looking forward to the bigger, more important races to come in the championship season.” Following a dominant win against Waltham on January 15 and the addition of more qualifying times for the upcoming conference championship, the boys are optimistic about securing their third consecutive indoor conference title.

Girls’ Track and Field

The girls’ track and field team wrapped up a strong regular season with a 3-2 record, highlighting their hard work and determination. Rachel Starr (I), one of the three captains, expressed pride and admiration for the unity within the team. This season, the athletes made a concerted effort to support one another across both track and field events. With the addition of a new throws coach, the team is stronger than ever. The shot put squad has swept the event at two meets for the first time in program history, further showcasing the team’s growing depth. Starr remarks, “Finishing with a winning season would be a great reflection of the depth we’ve built this year in throws, jumps, sprints and distance.” Now, the focus shifts to the postseason as the team prepares for the conference championships and looks ahead to divisionals.

Wrestling

The wrestling team has started this season off admirably under Head Coach Jeffrey Gibbons. The team came back from break strong as they competed in the Weymouth Invitational tournament. James Snape (IV) says the team “placed fifth out of 22 teams at the Weymouth Invitational. Despite losing many seniors last year, we’re coming back strong this year.” Landing in the top quarter of schools was certainly an impressive performance from the Wolfpack. The Wolfpack is having a good season and will likely only improve in the coming years.

Wellness Wins, Thanks to the BLS Athletic Trainer

**By Alice Fragasso (II),
Julianne Jang (IV)
& Eleanor Park (IV)**
Contributing Writers

In an environment like Boston Latin School with many highly competitive and physically demanding sports, having an athletic trainer is a huge advantage. Athletic trainer Courtney Mulkerrin recently joined BLS to help student-athletes with injury prevention and rehabilitation, and as an athlete, she understands the importance of taking care of mental and physical health. Mulkerrin had been involved in sports throughout her whole life — particularly rugby. During COVID-19, when contact and team sports were put on hold, Mulkerrin began testing her strength and “playing around with how heavy [she] could lift.” She developed a passion for powerlifting, sharing how she “loved the environment and how empowered it made [her] feel,” which led to it becoming her main sport rather than a hobby. As she continued to pursue the sport, Mulkerrin participated in many powerlifting competitions, with the most recent being the USA Powerlifting Massachusetts State Championship. This meet was particularly successful for Mulkerrin, as she set a new state record squat for her weight class, surrounded by fellow powerlifter Mr. Eric Cordeiro and BLS pow-

erlifting students who ran the meet and cheered her on. “Similar to watching film or looking up another team’s record, I do a lot of reconnaissance to know who I’m up against. I also know there is a lot that is completely out of my hands,” states Mulkerrin, regarding her pre-competition routine. For her, these actions help ensure that she performs to her fullest. Such achievements do not come easy, however, and require a great deal of mental and physical preparation, even for the most elite athletes. At the same time, keeping a realistic mindset is also important for an athlete to set reasonable goals for themselves and stay focused on their personal growth as a competitor. This mindset helps Mulkerrin, as well as the students she works with, to be the best they can be. Emmanuella Gustave-Paul (IV) shares, “I always see [Mulkerrin] working hard every day, helping others prepare for or recover from sports.” In addition to helping students with their physical injuries, an athletic trainer who is also an athlete herself can also provide insight into the mental blocks and challenges that come with being an athlete. In competitive sports, physical and mental demand is equal, and Mulkerrin provides a shoulder to lean on when times become tough. Varsity Indoor Track Captain Benny Pierre Louis (I) says, “One thing Courtney has taught me is that an injury is a minor



Athletic trainer, Courtney Mulkerrin, supports Student athletes.

setback, and that rest [time] doesn’t have to be the end.” Her constant dedication towards both students and powerlifting not only displays her commitment to athletics, but also serves as a reminder that it is possible to have a career and still participate in sports. This is an extremely important reminder for student athletes: successes both on and off the field should be valued and strived for. Having a trainer who is involved in athletics herself, Gustave-Paul shares, “It shows me that aside from having a busy career, [Mulkerrin] is also a committed athlete and a truly kind person — and that I can do that too.” Mulkerrin’s impact on the BLS athletic community affects far more than just the students’ physical health — she is also an inspiration and a role model to look up to. Educators, coaches and trainers at BLS set themselves apart by being more than what their job titles entail. They inspire, encourage and ultimately push BLS students to be the best version of themselves, even in the smallest ways. Thanks to the passion of Mulkerrin and other BLS athletic and academic staff, our school community thrives in all aspects.

Student Managers Keep Winning!



Girls’ varsity basketball team manager Donnell Davis (III) supports the team from the sidelines!

**By Sameena Ballal (III)
& Ladan Mohamed (IV)**
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

The successes of sports teams and iconic franchises are often thought to be based on the talent of the players and the intelligence of the coaches. However, is a common misconception. Behind the scenes of every successful team are team managers working hard to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

Team managers play critical roles in shaping their team and creating an environment to nurture suc-

cess. They are leaders, problem solvers, organizers and also the team’s biggest supporters who cheer from the sidelines. They bring community and friendship to the team, developing an environment that leads to success. From taking photos, doing the book and showing up to games, team managers play an important role in the success of sports teams.

Donnell Davis (III), team manager for the girls’ varsity basketball team, shares, “I attend most of the games of the season. During the games, I attend to the book, which keeps track of the score and fouls, I help communicate between coaches

and players, and I make sure the team has everything they need.”

These tasks are key to securing the team’s success, and they have a positive effect on each and every player on the team.

Girls’ varsity basketball captain Michelle Tossoukpe (I) discusses the effect of team managers like Davis: “Without our team managers, a lot of things fall apart, especially when we have games. After a tough game, they help us laugh on the bus ride back to school; they support us during our ups and downs of the season.”

Despite not being the ones scoring the points, team managers are

critical players in growing and shaping the direction of the team.

When thinking of what makes a good sports team, the image of athletes shooting goals or making a touchdown may come to mind. On the contrary, Alexis Kiley (IV), manager of the wrestling team, says, “Team managers help keep the balance and peace on the team.” As a prime example of this, Kiley works to relieve the pressure off the coaches by being a pillar of support for her team: “I help the team out with uniforms, setting up equipment and tallying the scorebook. I’m here to help out and make sure the team is performing. Being one of the only girls there, I feel a need to connect with others and make a community.”

Not only does a team manager help support the team, but their position also provides potential for personal growth. For team managers themselves, this experience allows them to develop leadership and problem-solving skills. There are also rewarding aspects of being a team manager, whether it is winning games or simply making new friends.

A team manager’s tasks go beyond just helping the team. The organizational and logistical aspects would be left in pieces without them. Their leadership and problem-solving skills allow the players and coaches to focus on their core responsibility of creating thriving teams. The impact of team managers stretches outside the simple tasks that they perform; they are the glue that keeps a team together, making them just as important as any other player. Team managers go above and beyond to continuously support their team members and coaches.

BLS Wrestling Grapples with Takedowns and Triumphs

**By Elizabeth Noronha (II)
& Aurora McLaughlin (III)**
Contributing Writers

Boston Latin School’s wrestling team is making strides this winter season. Despite facing setbacks following the graduation of many athletes last spring, they have been persevering through challenges, and the team continues to compete with a blend of experienced upperclassmen and growing athletes.

According to wrestling Head Coach Jeffery Gibbons, practice is the most important aspect of the team’s consistent growth. He says, “[Transformation happens] when practice starts. Our job is to get better every day. [We need] hard work and lots of it.” Gibbons’s leadership — a key factor for a successful team — is the driving force that helps all of the students reach their individual goals.

Last season, the Wolfpack won the Dual County League (DCL) title for wrestling. This was not just an impressive accomplishment, but also their first league win since the 2020 to 2021 season, making the victory all the sweeter. They hope to keep the momentum going this year and are looking to win the league as well as individual titles. The team has been successful so far this season, placing high at recent tournaments in both Framingham and Weymouth.

As a team, they have faced many challenges. BLS varsity wrestlers August Groh (I) and Myles Le (II) have suf-

fered shoulder injuries, affecting their ability to compete. The shared weight room and gym have also proved to be difficult for the team because of the compromises made with other sports. They have been able to adapt, however, and train adequately.

Members of the team require more than an ability to adjust after setbacks; wrestling involves a mix of both skill and strength due to the many rules and moves. Each match lasts six minutes and is split into two periods. The wrestlers are divided into separate weight classes to protect the players and ensure equity. Pinning the opponent grants an automatic win.

Varsity captain Quinn Bowles (II) has been a part of the wrestling team since sixth year and has set ambitious goals for himself and the team. He states, “I want to place at the Massachusetts Interstate Athletic Association’s All States and New England Tournaments. As a team, we want to solidify our varsity lineup and have a winning record in the [DCL] this season.”

In addition to training on the mats, the team looks to make efforts to improve teamwork and communication, an important step in the success of the team.

The wrestling team succeeds through more than hard work alone. The team has thankfully been practicing rigorously, starting with explosive anaerobic warmups, followed by speed drills to build strength. Then, they slow down to work on their technique, focusing on the smaller changes, and they finish with live rounds, where they



BLS wrestling team prepares for the winter season.

wrestle with their drill partners as if in a real match. They cool down with resistance push-ups and a run. Each practice is a little over two hours long, taking place in the Lower Gym, and is consistent proof of the team’s dedication.

A tradition the team participates in is the annual 3.5-mile Martin Luther King Jr. Day trail run to the summit at the Blue Hills Reservation. Bowles remarks that this is an excellent way to bond as a team and helps them push each other through a hard workout. The run continues no matter the weather, demonstrating their determination. This ritual has lasted for over 15 years

and will continue for many more.

As a display of their commitment to the sport, students also take their wrestling skills beyond BLS. Head Coach Gibbons notes, “Five wrestlers post-graduation [are] continuing this sport at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Roger Williams University, Case Western Reserve University, Bridgewater State University and Naval Academy Preparatory School.”

The BLS wrestling team is now striving for more victories and titles. They are ready for a successful season and have been rigorously preparing themselves in hopes of bringing home another DCL banner.