



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

Honoring Our History: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

By **Stephany Zhu (I)**
& **Adnan Sayeed (V)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On January 16, Boston Latin School held a school-wide celebration for Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day to honor the legacy of Dr. King and his impact on the civil rights movement.

BLS has celebrated MLK Day for over a decade. The celebration typically consists of two days dedicated to Dr. King: on the Friday before MLK Day, students learn about the themes and beliefs of Dr. King, and on MLK Day, students embody those beliefs through a day of community service.

This year's theme for the celebration was "Honor our History: Speak Truth to the Present, Lead into the Future," which emphasizes Dr. King's vision of justice and equality through remembrance. The theme aligns with BLS's values of showing respect to others through everyday actions that benefit the community.

One of the most anticipated aspects of the school-wide assembly is the stage performances by BLS students. This year's event featured a range of performances from BLS Big Band, BLS Dance, BLS Step Squad, the MLK Dance Troupe, Gospel Choir and Treble Choir. Each one of these performances reflects



BLS Gospel Choir sings "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Dr. King's messages of unity, justice and equality through unique forms of artistic like music, dance and step routines.

The celebration also includes the School's annual poetry, essay and art contests, which allow students to engage with the themes of Dr. King's legacy in creative and meaningful ways. Students submit their work, which is then judged by a committee of faculty members and two students from BLS Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge (B.L.A.C.K.). The committee votes on its top three choices from es-

says, poetry and art. This year's winners are Jemin Seo (V), Hiba El Fatihi (II) and Jose Mari Antonio (II), respectively.

Planning for MLK Day began with a meeting in October, where a committee of staff and students met to discuss the year's theme and events. The committee, led by BLS B.L.A.C.K. advisor Ms. Rose Delorme Metayer and Head of School Jason Gallagher, is responsible for organizing the celebration. Over the years, the planning process has evolved so that students now have a significant role in the planning of the event.

BLS B.L.A.C.K. President Donnell Davis (II) elaborates, "[The committee] goes through the things that went great in the past assemblies, and then [they try] to incorporate it and add new stuff to switch it up."

While it takes many months to prepare for one day of celebration, BLS still finds importance in educating younger generations about the civil rights movement.

Ms. Delorme Metayer explains, "For me, it is always more about pressing forward and not remaining status quo."

The School's MLK Day celebration also emphasizes Dr. King's legacy of service. Various community service clubs come together to provide students with opportunities to carry out Dr. King's commitment to serving others. During the schoolwide celebration of MLK Day, teachers had the opportunity to bring their students to workshops and community service events in the dining hall. BLS also hosted an MLK Day of Service on the following Monday.

Ms. Cheralyn Pinchem, BLS B.L.A.C.K. advisor and AP African American Studies teacher, concludes, "The legacy of Dr. King is something that goes beyond just the African American community. I think everyone can get behind someone who fought for equality for all."

"Operation Absolute Resolve": U.S. Takes Maduro Out

By **Thomas Blanchet (I)**

Contributing Writer

In a shocking move, U.S. personnel captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, on January 3. The operation, code-named Operation Absolute Resolve, involved various U.S. forces and saw large parts of Venezuelan capital city Caracas's power grid shut off.

After months of planning, forces such as Delta Force, an elite unit of the U.S. army known for extraction and high-risk operations, as well as the Drug Enforcement Administration, descended over Caracas by helicopter at around 1:00 A.M. local time. By 3:30 A.M., Maduro and his wife were in U.S. custody on board the USS Iwo Jima.

From there, Maduro and his wife were transported to New York City, where they were jailed at Brooklyn's infamous Metropolitan Detention Center. The detention center has previously held well-known figures, such as Sean "Diddy" Combs and Luigi Mangione.

These actions come following months of escalation in Venezuela by the Trump administration, including increased tariffs, oil embargoes and a large military buildup off the country's coast. President Donald Trump and allies of the administration claim Venezuela and its leaders have been intentionally promoting the trafficking of drugs into the United States in an effort to undermine the nation's stability. Therefore, they say, the capture and arrest of Maduro and Flores was justified.

Boston Latin School American For-

eign Policy teacher Ms. Robin Kirkpatrick explains how these actions were not unprecedented and came as a part of a larger agenda: "We have imposed sanctions on Venezuela for a number of years, interfered with Venezuelan elections and, under the Biden/Harris administration, placed a multi-million dollar bounty on Maduro's head."

Many Trump allies praised the move, although there was far less unity compared to other actions under the Trump administration. Democrat politicians across the board were quick to call out Trump's actions as unnecessary and even illegal, with many outraged by the lack of congressional notification. A senate bill aimed at curbing any further action in Venezuela ultimately failed to pass, with Vice President JD Vance acting as the tie-breaking vote.

Regarding the safety of the U.S. as a whole following these attacks, Ada Karl (III) says, "The actions of the current administration [...] have been making me pretty scared for the future because it shows that the scope of the president's power has the possibility of being extremely unchecked. [...] In short, I don't feel particularly safe, because I don't trust that the leader of our country is considering the ramifications of his choices."

Where Trump did find support, however, was in the large number of Venezuelans living outside Venezuela. Having endured difficult times economically and politically with hyperinflation and a brutalist regime, many Venezuelans who opposed Maduro were happy to see him held accountable.

Angel Angulo Calderon (I) describes



Explosions occur in Caracas, Venezuela during the U.S.' attack.

life in Venezuela prior to U.S. intervention: "Everyday life was deeply affected because basic needs were not guaranteed. There was often a lack of food, and access to essential resources like electricity, healthcare and gas was unreliable or nonexistent. Living under these conditions created a sense of uncertainty and stress, where survival became more important than long-term goals or stability."

Regardless of the pushback received, President Trump has begun to set his sights toward further U.S. actions abroad. In the days following the operation to capture Maduro, Trump suggested that the U.S. could also intervene in Colombia or Cuba.

In the past few weeks, the administration has ramped up its threats to invade

Greenland, claiming that the island is vital for U.S. national security interests. It is important to note that Greenland is a self-governing territory of Denmark, which has pledged, along with several other European countries and fellow North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies, to defend the island from any U.S. aggression.

While there is no definitive way to know what the Trump administration will do next in terms of foreign affairs, President Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio have indicated that they are planning more foreign intervention. Furthermore, while there is little certainty for the future of Venezuela, it appears some Venezuelan officials are open to talks with the U.S. to improve relations.

EDITORS' NOTE



Dear Readers,

In troubling times, it can be helpful to find solace in the familiar. Whether it be seeing a friend for lunch, going for a walk in the park or even reading the *Argo*, turning to routine gives one control over what increasingly seems to be an unsettling world.

Though it is important to take breaks from the news every so often, we all still must pay attention to the issues at stake in our community, nation and world. Here at the *Argo*, we are not shying away from the difficult stories that are needed to understand our current climate. In an era where uncertainty is the norm, we believe that local journalism is more important than ever to report factually and without interference.

We will always strive to provide accurate and timely information, whether it be about a school event or foreign conflict. In moments where people are increasingly getting their information from social media and not reputable news sources, it is more important than ever to objectively report all angles of a story. As long as there is free speech in this country, we must all speak truth to power and publish what we know to be true.

“Congress shall make no law [...] prohibiting the free exercise [...] of the press,” says the First Amendment. At the *Argo*, we will continue to fight for this freedom no matter what.

Sincerely,
Alex and Ross



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.



THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
has proudly supported and funded Boston Latin School’s sports, extracurriculars, music, academics and publications — including the Argo — for over 160 years.

Editorial Board

Alex Le, I	Editor-in-Chief
Ross Wilson, I	Editor-in-Chief
Mary Deng, I	News Editor
Olivia Chen, II	News Editor
Xintong Guo, I	Asst. News Editor
Weian Xue, II	Asst. News Editor
Annie Dai, I	Forum Editor
Fathia Shodeyi, II	Forum Editor
Angelina Wei, I	Asst. Forum Editor
David Wang, III	Asst. Forum Editor
Alice Li, II	A&E Editor
Anneliese Yu, III	A&E Editor
Kenneth Cacho Bermudez, I	Asst. A&E Editor
Bridget Blair, II	Asst. A&E Editor
Rachel Li, I	Sports Editor
Juliet McVay, I	Sports Editor
Dimitra Minasidis, I	Asst. Sports Editor
Sameena Ballal, II	Asst. Sports Editor
Vicky Su, I	Copy Editor
Meilin Sha, III	Copy Editor
Ellie Fung, III	Asst. Copy Editor
Lana Nguyen, III	Asst. Copy Editor
Sophia Fortuin, II	Layout Editor
Ashley Hur, II	Layout Editor
Alan Zhao, II	Asst. Layout Editor
Constance Fang, III	Asst. Layout Editor
Lauren Dong, II	Photo Editor
Isabella Endozo, II	Asst. Photo Editor
Sophia Knobel, II	Asst. Photo Editor

Copy Associates

Vera Pham, II	Kiran Rao, III
Kelly Yang, II	Gabrielle Jang, IV
Harry Dinh, III	Sarah Jang, IV
Urvashi Maharaj, III	

Layout Associates

Delu Chen, IV	Gabriella Wong, IV
Mas Delci, IV	Bella Zhao, IV
Marie Halloran, IV	Ariel Li, VI
Alison Hur, IV	Audrey Zeller, VI

Photo Associates

Brigitte Currier, II	Djourden’s Durocher, IV
David Nguyen, II	Brayden Pandolfi, IV
Alan Zhao, II	Kaiya Platt, IV
Micah Estillore, III	Abigail Wilson, IV
Julianne Jang, III	Christina Li, VI
Frances Upton, III	John Schult, VI
Sebastian Araujo, IV	

Faculty Advisor

Ms. Moon

Special Thanks to

Ms. Ellis	Ms. Safran Turner
Head of School Gallagher	Mr. Hourigan

New Year, New City Council President

By Constance Fang (III)
& Brian Xu (III)
Contributing Writers

On January 5, City Councilor Liz Breadon of Allston-Brighton won the Boston City Council presidency after an unexpected turn of events.

The Boston City Council is a group of 13 elected officials who serve two-year terms with no limit. They create legislation, approve the city’s budget and conduct public hearings, acting as a check to the mayor’s power.

As City Council President, Breadon is able to call special meetings, set the agenda for votes and assign councilors to committees, each with a specific focus. In the event of a vacancy, she will also step in to take over the mayorship. Previous City Council presidents have included current Mayor Michelle Wu and District 2 Councilor Ed Flynn.

Breadon secured her win after District 1 Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata dropped out the day before the election despite declaring victory months before. Her decision came amid her losing key supporters, resulting in the ensuing scramble for power. District 4 Councilor Brian Worrell, who was already running before Coletta Zapata’s decision, seemed to be best positioned to win, although he ultimately lost to Breadon in a six to seven vote.

The narrow margin highlights a divided council. Flynn, who voted against Breadon, described his criteria when deciding his vote: someone who was “independent, had a strong record of leadership [and] has demonstrated their ability to work well with others.”

Critics, however, have called the integrity of the election result into question. Tania Fernandes Anderson, the former District 7 Councilor, wrote a letter to her former advisory council regarding her concerns about the circumstances leading up to Breadon’s appointment.

There have also been allegations that a private meeting at Breadon’s house the day before the election violated the council’s open meeting policy, which



Liz Breadon wins the Boston City Council presidency.

dictates that the council cannot deliberate in private. Flynn elaborates on the situation: “It was a chaotic time. It was a chaotic process, and I am concerned we violated the open meeting laws.”

Despite the controversy, this election was historic. Breadon is the first openly LGBTQ+ woman elected to the council. Originally from Northern Ireland, she worked as a physical therapist for the United Kingdom National Health Service and was politically active as a grassroots activist.

Ami Mai (III), a member of the Mayor’s Youth Council, adds, “I think that she will bring up a lot more injustices that may have been going on in the city for the LGBTQ+ community.”

During her time as councilor and chair of the Redistricting Committee,

Breadon was involved in the controversial redistricting of the City Council districts after the 2020 United States Census, supporting the original “Unity Map.” The map was passed by Wu but was later prohibited by Federal Judge Patti Saris in favor of a new map drawn by Boston City Council Member Ruthzee Louijeune.

Despite these challenges, Breadon successfully secured funding for improvements in public schools, such as science classrooms at Brighton High School. She pushed for other policies as well, including for an increase in public housing and protections for immigrant communities.

Her presidency is expected to continue focusing on the “social safety net,” government-funded programs which provide social and economic support to families in need. In particular, she has

emphasized Boston’s role in filling the gaps if federal funding for essential programs are threatened. She plans to work closely with Wu as a key ally, continuing to facilitate citywide initiatives that previously faced opposition. As a result, colleagues may divide their votes on said proposals.

Breadon’s stance on the role of city government is clear: local leadership is the primary holder for civil rights. Within the Boston Public Schools, this could mean more funding for youth workers and more mental health support. Boston Latin School AP U.S. Government and Politics teacher Ms. Ashley Balbian hopes that Breadon will prioritize smaller class sizes, mentioning that “big classes have a negative impact on teachers and student learning outcomes.”

Wu Appoints New Boston School Committee Members



Franklin Peralta is sworn into the Boston School Committee.

By Amy Dai (IV)
& Sapna Malhotra (IV)
Contributing Writers

On January 3, Mayor Michelle Wu announced the appointment of two new members to the Boston School Committee, Lydia Torres and Franklin Peralta, alongside the reappointment of Dr. Stephen Alkins.

These changes followed the departure

of members Brandon Cardet-Hernandez and Michael O’Neill ‘84, marking a new chapter for district leadership as the committee continues its work for the year.

The Boston School Committee is the governing body responsible for overseeing the Boston Public Schools. The panel, which consists of seven voting members, assists with various tasks that include budgeting, defining goals and reviewing district policies. The committee also hosts public meetings

approximately twice a month.

Torres is a Roslindale resident who brings nearly four decades of professional teaching experience within BPS. She began her career teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages and went on to serve as a literacy specialist, Director of English Language Arts and Assistant Principal at the Eliot K-8 Innovation School before retiring in 2018.

Boston Latin School history teacher Ms. Paula Bowles believes that Torres will be able to provide strong insights to the committee: “[As] a teacher, I value people who have been educators because they understand how schools work, whether they’re a full administrator or public teacher.”

Peralta, who currently resides in Jamaica Plain, is a BPS parent and community leader active in educational advocacy. As Director of Business Engagement and Public Policy at English for New Bostonians, he oversees adult English language learning initiatives and is engaged with his children’s schools. Peralta emphasizes his commitment to expanding opportunities for all students and aims to focus on promoting education and language training for adults.

Dr. Alkins, a resident of Mattapan, has served on the Boston School Committee since 2022 and was reappointed for another term. Among other initiatives, he has focused on diversity in education and advocat-

ed for fair access to opportunities for all BPS students. With new perspectives at the table, the committee aims to balance policies with everyday classroom needs, in hope of bringing BPS toward a more thriving future.

In light of the appointment of new members, tasks remain for the committee. Cardet-Hernandez reflects, “There’s a big budget deficit, and so we need to be thinking about the resources of our system. [...] I think we are in a real crisis on how much we spend on transportation, which is pulling away resources from academics.”

In 2025, the BPS budget for transportation was around 180 million dollars. In 2026, however, the projected cost for transportation is 188 million dollars, which makes up 12 percent of the BPS budget. The School Committee last addressed transportation costs in October 2025, but no new policies to address this issue have been proposed since. They, nevertheless, seek to work together to improve other aspects of student life.

Assistant Head of School Steven Chen concludes, “I think the best types of school committees are those where you have a variety of backgrounds, a variety of different experiences and professional backgrounds that are all working in concert for one thing, which is to improve the school system [and] to improve the student learning outcomes for our students.”

Remains at the Tentative 2026 FIFA World Cup Stadium



Several dozen graves have been found near the Estadio Akron Stadium in Mexico.

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

Search collectives and construction workers have discovered human remains near the future 2026 FIFA World Cup Stadium in Jalisco, Mexico.

At least a dozen graves have been located within a ten-mile radius of the Estadio Akron Stadium, one of the three stadiums that will host four of the World Cup games. These sites are all within the vicinity of the Guadalajara metropolitan area, with at least 22 sites located near the massive stadium. In recent months, hundreds of bags of bodies have been found in just four of these graves.

A construction crew unearthed the

first remains last February at Las Agujas, a housing development site a mere nine miles north of the Akron Stadium. Volunteers and families have found similar discoveries since 2022. At least 100 bags were found between November 2024 and January 2025.

This summer, Mexico will host the FIFA World Cup, an international and prestigious soccer tournament. Held by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association since its inception in 1930, the tournament draws massive crowds, with more than five billion viewers worldwide watching the 2022 World Cup.

Boston Latin School boys' junior varsity soccer Head Coach Aaron Osowiecki reflects on the importance of the World Cup: "It's a way for the world to come together and follow a sporting event for a few months

[and] [...] get excited for their own country. [...] It's good for the world again to see other countries and the creativity of the game."

Jalisco is a culturally rich state in west-central Mexico, with its capital at Guadalajara. Rich in natural resources, it is one of the most economically important states in Mexico. Tensions between the government and residents nevertheless remain high, especially due to high disappearance rates and the coercion of local governments by powerful cartels.

Jalisco experiences frequent violence related to cartels, with its crime rate ranking among Mexico's top four. The Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), one of Mexico's most powerful gangs, has a 19 thousand member count and operations spanning across the country.

Even after reports of widespread violence in the region, the issue has received very little media attention. When asked about how the lack of media coverage on the violence might impact the attendance of the World Cup, Noah Liu (I), president of BLS Analytics in Sports and a member of the BLS soccer team shares, "I think that people might know [that] it's something you're not really looking for when you're searching [for news to cover]. [...] If people do find out, they might be a little upset, but I think with how much violence there is in Mexico, they might not be entirely shocked."

The World Cup is expected to generate one billion dollars in revenue and up to seven thousand jobs in the region. Jalisco, however, has not had as powerful a criminal organization as the CJNG since Guadalajara last held international matches in the 1980s during the 1986 World Cup.

In preparation for the presence of such a large event in the region, Jalisco is reportedly installing three thousand security cameras, pushing the total past ten thousand, along with drone jammers and armored vehicles. These measures along with Mexico's "Plan Kukulcán" will help strengthen security during the World Cup.

BLS girls' soccer Head Coach Jon Rudzinski explains, "I think that in general, FIEA above all wants to protect their brand, and the World Cup is by far their biggest brand. [...] I can only assume that FIFA in conjunction with the Mexican government will have the required number of security personnel and have everything thought out." He continues, "At the World Cup level, there haven't been any safety issues. [...] I'd like to think FIFA will take the right steps, but you never know."

Although the impact of criminal violence on the 2026 FIFA World Cup is unclear, the discovery raises questions about providing security guarantees and resolving tension in the region.

Remembering the Holocaust

By Sarah Jang (IV)
Contributing Writer

On January 7, Boston Latin School hosted a Holocaust speaker event in the Seevak Room for students in the Facing History and Ourselves course.

During this event, students heard from a second generation Holocaust survivor who shared personal perspectives and artifacts from the Holocaust. Facing History and Ourselves teacher Ms. Paula Bowles invited guest speaker Dr. Alan Stern, the son of a Bergen-Belsen survivor, to speak. Ms. Bowles organized this event through the Facing History and Ourselves parent organization as an introduction to the class's unit on *Maus*, a novel about the author's father's experiences as a Holocaust survivor.

"The numbers are just so massive. You see the statistics, but these are not just statistics; there's a human being behind every number," Ms. Bowles explains. Since Dr. Stern has a background as a pediatrician who has spoken at schools before, Ms. Bowles felt he would connect with students easily.

Michael Glazkov (I), a student who attended the event, explains how knowing the history behind the Holocaust allowed him to think about its lasting impact, particularly as future leaders at a school like BLS: "When you see these photos in black and white, it doesn't seem as real or vivid as real life. And so seeing these objects in person definitely made it a lot more



Dr. Alan Stern speaks about his father, a Bergen-Belsen survivor, to BLS students.

real and serious."

BLS has previously hosted a Holocaust speaker. Last year, first-generation Holocaust survivor Dr. Irene Butter spoke to AP World History students.

Dr. Butter met with students over Zoom and shared her experience, along with donating copies of her book *Shores Beyond Shores: From Holocaust to Hope*. BLS AP World History teacher Ms. Cheralyn Pinchem recalls it was a wonderful and meaningful time.

Students shared how this year's event was impactful because it offered a different perspective. "If you start seeing things through one lens, I think it's not going to necessarily lead you down the wrong path, but it won't help you forge your own path to your own beliefs," says Caela Thompson (II).

As the number of living Holocaust survivors continues to decrease, Ms. Bowles describes the importance

of second-generation survivors sharing their parents' survival stories. She also notes the significance of honoring their legacy and acknowledging generational trauma and healing.

Ms. Bowles concludes, "I think genocide education in general is relevant because times change human nature and human behavior. If we can interrupt those patterns before they reach the stage of genocide, then we are doing a good job."

Students Weigh In

By Jack Fink (IV)
& Gabrielle Jang (IV)
Contributing Writers

On January 7, Boston Latin School students met in the fiction room of the library during W block for a town hall meeting to discuss results from the annual academic check-in survey sent to students.

This is the sixth year that the BLS Student Council has conducted a survey on students’ experiences at the School. At the meeting, administrators presented data from the survey to students, who were able to voice their opinions on the state of academics at the School.

The survey includes questions focusing on topics such as time management, organization skills and academic experiences, giving students the opportunity to write about changes they would like to see in the School. The survey is administered so that the BLS administration can learn more about students’ perspectives on the School.

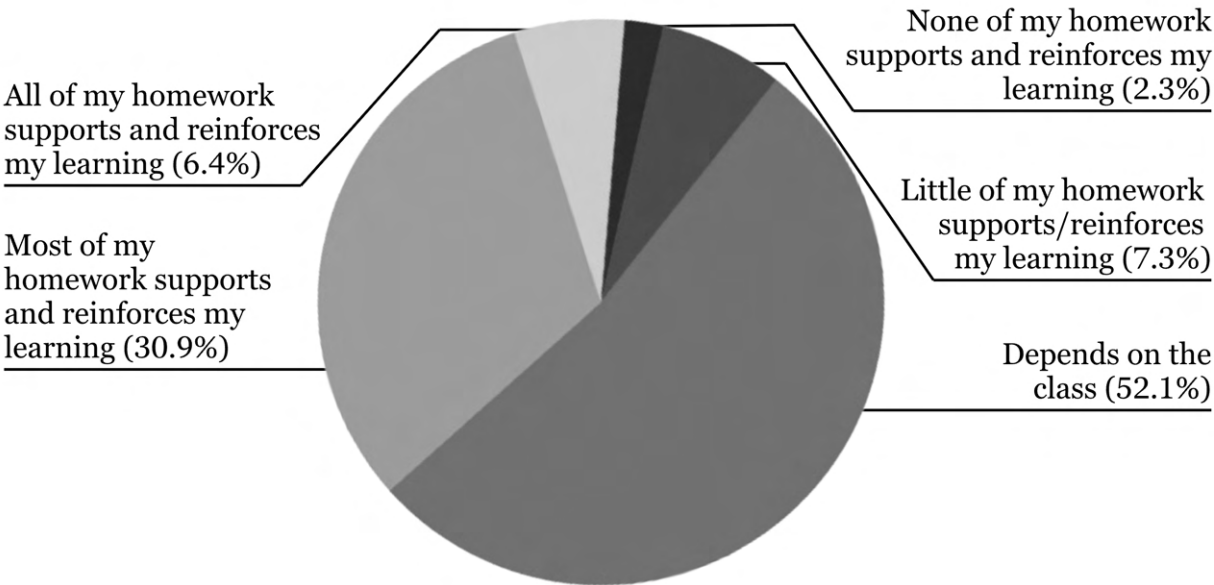
Ashley Alvarez Tompson (III), a student council officer, explains, “We did look over [the surveys] just to get a feel. [...] If they respond with this, we would get a data sample of things going on around the school.”

During the town hall meeting, Student Council faculty advisor Mr. Jim Levesque presented the results of the survey. In total, there were over 400 responses to the survey, representing about 20 percent of the student population.

Overall, 41.9 percent of students rated their academic experience as “mostly sunny” when asked about it on a scale from cloudy to sunny. The results also indicated that students were mostly organized and felt like they belonged in the BLS community.

Between statistics, students had the opportunity to discuss the responses to certain questions

To what extent does homework support and reinforce your learning?



and suggest improvements. For example, in response to a question about whether homework supports and reinforces students’ learning, 52.1 percent of students said that it depended on the class and voiced concerns about having too much “busy work,” which led to discussions about the merits of repetition for certain subjects and the disadvantages of repetitive work for others.

This survey and meeting are especially crucial, giving students a chance to speak out about any challenges. Student Council officer Amor Reid (II) explains, “60 percent of students here don’t feel comfortable speaking out about their experiences in the classroom toward the staff, and [the] town

hall acts as a place where no matter the class, student [or] grade, everybody can have a say.”

Following the town hall meeting, Mr. Levesque presented the data to Head of School Jason Gallagher and the BLS community at a School Site Council meeting. BLS administrators also reviewed the data to determine whether students struggle with certain topics and make plans for improvement, such as establishing new tutoring branches and peer mentoring programs.

Mr. Levesque concludes, “I believe the BLS faculty want to hear from students if they are confused in class, overwhelmed by the amount of homework or in some other way struggling academically.”



The Argo’s

Valentine’s Day Carnation Sale

Buy from any Argo editor
from February 2 to 6

1 carnation for \$1



Gen Z Versus the Job Market



Brayden Pandolfi (IV)

Finding a job has never been more difficult for Generation Z.

**By Hiba El Fatihi (II)
& Stacy Jiang (IV)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

In 2026, the average job receives around 250 applications, yet only about two to four percent of applicants are invited for an interview. For Generation Z (Gen Z), which many current Boston Latin School students belong to, this is the reality they are graduating into: a job market strained by automation, clogged by delayed retirements and impossibly competitive due to degree inflation and rising costs of living. While some other adults of older generations dismiss young people’s struggles as a lack of motivation or effort, the truth is that Gen Z is far from “lazy”: they are entering an economy and world with barriers that simply did not exist for

older generations.

Finding a job has never been easy, but it has also never been so structurally difficult. Today’s teenagers and young adults face hiring systems that automatically reject their applications before a human can review them, as well as entry-level jobs requiring years of prior experience. In the past, entry-level jobs acted as stepping stones to introduce younger, less experienced employees to the professional world and help them rise to more advanced positions. As over-qualification becomes the new norm, however, employers now expect years of work experience and education from new employees just to be able to work at entry-level jobs.

High school students who are supposed to be building their resumes for the first time are told they need experience

they have not yet had the opportunity to gain. Daphne Chen (II) describes her experience bluntly: “The recent job market is terrible. I applied to more than ten jobs and only got a reply to one.” She tried applying everywhere from “fast food [...] through FutureBOS,” yet received almost no responses. Chen adds, “I think they are expecting high schoolers to have a lot more experience than we can get,” echoing the frustration many young people feel. Chen suggests that employers should “set their expectations a bit lower and allow everyone to have an equal chance.”

Although some students may have differing experiences with the job market, they share the same underlying fear. Kylie Phan (II) said the process was smoother for her: “All I did was send in my resume and I got an interview shortly after.” Phan also shares, however, “I worry that I won’t be able to gain enough experience working and that no jobs will take me because of it.” Whether they receive responses or not, young people and teens increasingly feel that one misstep early on could determine their entire career trajectory.

Even though Gen Z faces many challenges in today’s job market, the older generation is also undeniably affected by recent changes. One observable problem in today’s economy is that the minimum wage has not risen comparably to the cost of living. Due to housing becoming less affordable, older employees must continue working to be able to support themselves and their families. Although they certainly face barriers, older generations are unable to retire with the promise of financial stability, leaving fewer positions open for younger candidates.

Several new obstacles that make

job hunting even harder for Gen Z have emerged, one of which is the rise of AI. The capabilities of AI have grown immensely in recent years and are predicted to become even more advanced in the near future. Since companies are now utilizing AI during the hiring process, Gen Z has reduced opportunities to experience one-on-one interviews when applying for jobs. BLS Classics teacher Mr. John Kerpan explains how AI in the workplace can be harmful: “People who hire employees and don’t understand technology think they can [...] replace humans with AI.”

With these mounting challenges, it is no surprise that many Gen Z students are starting to question the value of college education and its true impact in securing a good job. If jobs are scarce now, they wonder, why continue to go tens of thousands of dollars into debt? Nevertheless, Phan believes college is still important, saying, “I think college is useful for experience and networking, which is what a lot of jobs are looking for these days.” Many other young people, however, are starting to feel uncertain about college and whether or not a degree is truly the key to obtaining a fulfilling career.

Gen Z’s frustration with the current job market may be alleviated if employers rethink unrealistic hiring expectations and invest in training rather than filtering out inexperienced applicants. Policy-makers should confront the rising costs of living that force older generations to delay their retirements and block new graduates from entering the work force. Schools should expand access to internships, programs and career readiness to better prepare students for the work force and help them gain the experience they need.

Liberation or Abberation: Venezuela

**By Harry Dinh (III)
& Luca Zikopoulos (IV)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On January 3, the United States’ Delta Force carried out Operation Absolute Resolve in Venezuela, taking President Maduro and his wife and bringing them to New York City on charges of narcoterrorism. Motivated by prospects of gaining Venezuelan oil and removing an authoritarian leader, a Delta Force team had been training in preparation for this mission while agents from the Central Intelligence Agency were spying on Maduro’s movements. The execution of the operation was quick and precise, with “no loss of American life” according to President Donald Trump. Multiple Venezuelan citizens, however, were killed in the process. This operation, while celebrated by some, leaves a huge stain on the United States’ reputation and imparts an alarmingly negative effect on the country.

Most evidently, the Trump administration did not seek congressional approval. The President carried out the plan before Congress found out. By law, Congress must approve armed conflicts involving the U.S. that are not considered war — which this operation was. This bypasses the core system of checks and balances the government is built upon, a blatant threat to U.S. democracy as it indicates the President can do whatever he wants.

President Trump made the argument that, had congressional approval been sought, it may have compromised the mission. That does not, however, warrant ignoring the law. He now states that he is coming after other Venezuelan leaders and that he is running Venezuela. Boston Latin School AP United States History teacher Mr. Dominic Rinaldi describes the opera-

tion as “a rehashing of American imperialism [...] out in the open.”

This operation also greatly undermines U.S. credibility and sets diplomacy back. Many countries such as Mexico and Brazil have spoken out about the clear illegality of this affair and have condemned the U.S. This portrays the US as combative and willing to use force as a model for diplomacy.

This is also a violation of one of the most fundamental rules of international law set by the United Nations (UN): prohibition on the use of force for international relations. For a country that is a permanent member of the UN with so much influence, this decision severely damages its authority and credibility. Other countries may not trust the U.S. anymore and withdraw from relations. The potential consequences of this are clear: the U.S. could miss out on deals in the future that could be beneficial to the country, leading to a worsening economy. Elyssia White-Martinez (IV) agrees, stating that the “U.S. kidnapping such an important leader makes a big impact on the way other countries view us, especially with the way the president behaves toward other countries overall.”

All of this is not to say the operation was entirely negative. Americans and Venezuelans alike were glad that this operation took place because the economy could actually improve due to access to vast Venezuelan oil reserves and that Maduro, a dictator, was removed from power. There were even celebrations taking place in both countries.

The consequences and implications of the operation can, nevertheless, not be stressed enough and will cause more harm than good. Removing Maduro from Venezuela could cause disruptions, like the potential increase in cartel activity and drug



People attend a rally in support of Nicolas Maduro.

trafficking, as many groups vie for power. It will worsen the economy more than it will improve it. The oil in Venezuela is low quality and requires heavy investment to be made usable, so oil companies simply are not interested when they could get better oil in the Middle East, for example, where they do not need to spend extra to purify the already large amount of oil. These effects make this operation’s impacts more negative in the long-run.

Lastly, this event sets a dangerous precedent for the world. Other nations are seeing the U.S., a model for the world, kidnapping the leader of another country by force. Who is to say they cannot do the same? This could lead to an outbreak of international law violations and therefore the devaluation of UN treaties and policies. When leaders resort to force as the main method for conflict resolution and disre-

gard innocent lives, it results in the normalization of bloodshed and mass fear. The operation has led to many American citizens fearing their own country and feeling powerless to speak up about international relations involving the U.S. Congressional debater Ikra Abbasi (II) comments, “I don’t know if there’s much we can do to [...] punish [the U.S. government] because right now, they feel like a dominant power.”

Operation Absolute Resolve is an illegal attack that sets so many consequences for the U.S. in motion. It is a major red flag for the future of this country and begs the question: what else will come? Will similar events now be seen across the globe as a result of countries following in these footsteps? As a person reading this, keep yourself updated on the issue and speak up about it to others. Violence can only come when we decide to be complicit.

Should We Eliminate Early Admission Options?

Yes, We Should Eliminate Early Admission Options

By Atticus Scovel (I)

Contributing Writer

Each year, more than half of high school seniors applying to college decide to apply early action (EA) to at least one college, and over ten percent apply early decision (ED). Both of these application rounds require students to submit their application a number of months before the “regular decision” deadline. ED in particular requires a binding commitment to attend the institution if accepted, making it an incredibly harmful deadline that benefits institutions at the cost of applicants.

The most commonly cited complaint about the ED process is the financial burden that it may pose. Boston Latin School student Alex Jaffe (I) echoes this concern: “I don’t think that [one] should be allowed to commit to a place without knowing how much it will cost them.” The ED commitment in most situations removes students’ abilities to compare financial aid packages, bargain and otherwise improve their financial situation regarding college. Even for students who are not restricted by finances, applying without a precise understanding of the associated costs can cause immense stress and apprehension.

According to Faye Nazarchuk (I), “ED is [...] a symptom of a problem that we have where [seniors] are expected to [...] have [a] ridiculous amount of self-assurance about what [they’re] going to do.” As 17- and 18-year-olds, high school seniors should not be put in the stressful and high-stakes position of committing to an institution during such an early stage of the admissions process. The sense of urgency to submit ED applications costs students the opportunity to gain a more complete understanding of college offerings and of their own preferences in the process.

Though the financial and binding aspects of ED are serious faults, the most significant issue is that the process forces applicants to play the “game” of college admissions. Many competitive schools currently fill as much as 70 percent of their incoming class with those who apply ED. Furthermore, “some programs, such as nursing programs, [...] encourage students to apply early, as there are a limited number of spots,” adds BLS guidance counselor Ms. Andrea Encarnacao.

Jaffe notes that when he chose to apply early to a top school on his college list, he “just wanted to increase the odds.” Applicants clearly feel pressured to apply to ED programs that give them increased chances rather than prioritizing schools that they love and are likely to be accepted into. These actions are harmful because they force students into a restrictive system rather than a process that should be based on genuine interest, curiosity and learning. It ultimately underscores a harmful general trend of prestige-focused academics, which is all too present at BLS.

Many argue that candidates should only apply ED to the school that is their top choice. Aside from the financial and commitment issues of this strategy, it still poses another problem. As Nazarchuk voices, “[If you apply early and] don’t get in, that [...] makes it a lot harder to apply to your regular schools because [getting rejected] is such a hit to your self-esteem.” Furthermore, as many of the schools to which students apply ED are highly selective, the odds of being disappointed by ED results are far higher than those of feeling relief and a much-needed decrease in stress.

Early decision is a policy with a simple goal: to reduce a college’s acceptance rates and to increase the proportion of admitted students who attend the institution. Both of these factors serve to increase the college’s international prestige through systems like the *U.S. News & World Report*. It is clear that the policy of ED, as Ms. Encarnacao puts it, “benefits the college more than the young person.”



By Brandon Flores (I)

Staff Writer

“STRAND by for big things!” said the Boston Latin School Class of 2026 Commits page for Elliot Strand (I) after announcing his commitment to Northwestern University. Many of these punny messages have populated the *Instagram* profile over the past couple of months as students celebrate their early admissions results, yet others have remained busy with their applications up until the very end of January regular decision deadlines. Early admission processes like early action (EA), which entails an early deadline, and early decision (ED), which entails early deadlines and a binding commitment, have been a part of the college process for decades. They show no signs of stopping either; more and more students engage in these processes each year since they offer, on average, a higher chance of admission. Given the opportunities that these processes af-

ford students and admission teams, colleges should not eliminate their early admissions options.

The *Common App* opens on August 1 for each new application cycle. Some students diligently complete each section during their summer break and even get a head start on writing supplemental essays, while others do not. The pressure of college applications and the desire to perfect every detail can cause these students to procrastinate, waiting until the last moment to start. Early applications allow students to spread out their work into multiple waves and prevent this delay. Instead of working on a dozen supplemental essays at once, students can apply to a few first and then worry about the rest later on. Plus, a positive outcome early on can provide students the motivation to continue working on their later deadlines, and a rejection is not so devastating knowing there is time to modify their application and apply to more schools’ regular decision. All of these can prevent the pressure of perfection, allowing students to actually work on their applications healthily.

College admission teams are similarly able to divide their own workload, making it easier to provide a fair reading of each student’s application. According to BLS Classics teacher Mr. Salvatore Bartoloma, who has previous experience in admissions, early admission processes “take the burden off of admissions officers and allow them to actually engage with people’s applications.” The prevalence of AI in today’s age makes limiting time a bigger risk than ever. With such a rapid alternative at everyone’s disposal, the incentive to automate processes that ought to never be automated would hurt the universities’ credibility just as much as it undervalues students’ effort.

Many claim that ED is unfair to students of less privileged economic backgrounds since they are forced into a binding agreement without knowing the financial burden they are taking on. While the concern is valid, colleges typically make exceptions if the financial aid offer either does not match the estimates available via an online net price calculator or are otherwise insufficient. If documented or proven, a family that has undergone difficult circumstances like job loss can back out of an ED agreement with no repercussions. Still, college advisor Ms. Alyssa Frank emphasizes, “It doesn’t make sense to apply ED to a school if you’re not sure that you want to go and you haven’t put in the time to investigate what it’s going to cost [...], but [...] you can find that using a net price calculator.” Many schools furthermore provide EA programs, which are instead non-binding and carry many of the same benefits as ED applications.

College applications are a source of stress for many students even before senior year. Regardless of whether or not BLS students decide to apply early, they should use the resources the Schawbel Center offers and trust their own abilities in order to minimize this stress. Helen Zhou (I) concludes, “Do not procrastinate. [...] It just builds onto your [already high] workload.”

Why Watch? (701/750 Words)

By Hamdi Mohamed (II)

& Jamie Ramirez (II)

Contributing Writers

You are now at the time in your Boston Latin School career when you are beginning to apply to colleges and universities. You decide to scour the internet, and your search on the college process leads to dozens of posts labeled, “How to get into an Ivy 101.” Needless to say, these videos vary, with influencers telling their audience countless techniques that worked for them, thus luring students into the never-ending trap of the essentials they need to get into college. It is difficult to name sources as legitimate when students are receiving so many of these opinions.

The college process can be an extremely stressful time for students, and that rings especially true at the School. As one of the best public schools in the nation, BLS students are held at higher expectations compared to their counterparts at other schools. This fuels competition and comparison that they have been programmed to feel since their sixth year.

During this stage of their life, students are under extreme pressures from their families, classmates and themselves. This stress is only exacerbated by the vast and almost overwhelming amount of information that students have access to through the internet. One look online and students are bombarded with so-called advice and unsolicited criticism, making that process more stressful.

Madison York (I) explains, “To some extent, it reminded me to get my applications done, but it also can be kind of a lot to handle when you are already stressed. In terms of in-person, people definitely ask you a lot of questions, especially family members, but just take your time and make sure your application is true to yourself.”

Students will often compare themselves to the perfect applicants they see online and try to emulate what they believe is the best student. At some point, it goes from guidance into fearmongering. College influencers have increasingly turned to tactics that garner fear in applicants to gain views and money. Take founder of

the Ultimate Ivy League Guide Elise Pham, the epitome of the commercialization of college admissions, for example. She uses her platform to push the narrative that students are guaranteed rejection if they refuse to pay a ridiculous amount for assistance. In the end, the students that do fall for these scams end up in the exact same positions as the ones that do not but lose upwards of ten thousand dollars.

The internet, however, also has its pros. Laussa Goncalves (I) explains, “I definitely used social media applications because I wanted to get student perspectives, and I found that a lot of people would be posting a day in their lives where they would show the campus from their point of view. [...] I thought that was really helpful, and it also helped me get a gauge at what the social life was like within those schools.” When students use the internet in this manner, it can be extremely helpful. They should, however, still be mindful of how much of this content they consume. Social media allows society to connect in ways like never before. There is, however, one crucial fact that students must keep in

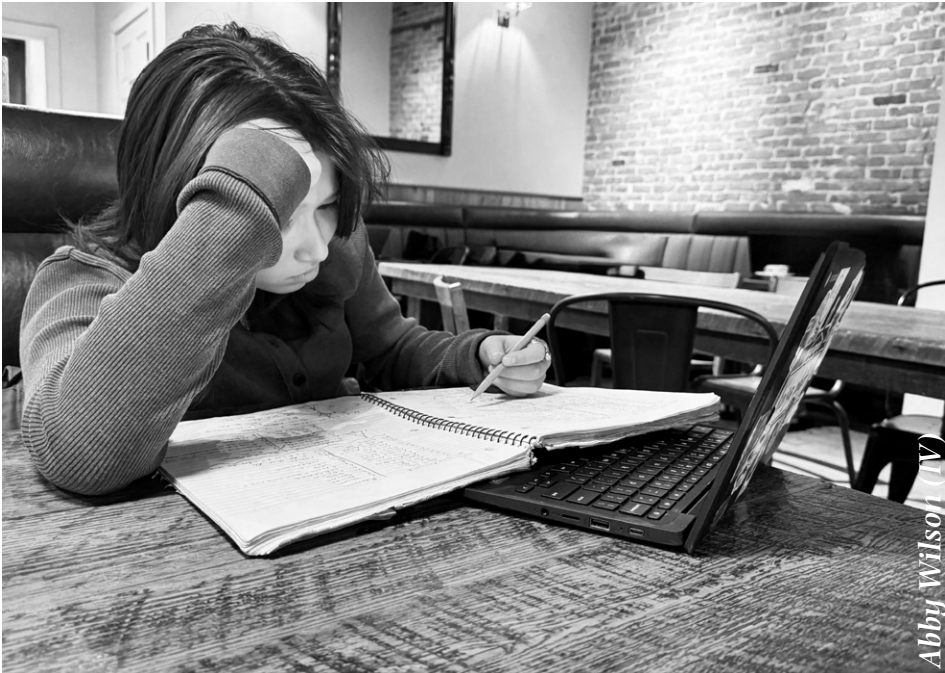
mind: the college process is not one-size-fits-all. In its essence, it is highly individualized.

This is where Junior Forum, a required class for all juniors, comes in. Taught by BLS Schawbel College Resource Center Director Ms. Alyssa Frank, this class exposes students to the basic steps of applying for college. This is a way to access unbiased information about the college process.

Muna Warsame (II), who is currently taking the class, adds, “I find the college process to be scary because of how serious it is. I’m going to be deciding the next steps of my future and career, which is intimidating, but Junior Forum really helps break it down step by step and helps you see everything spread out, making it less intimidating.”

It is acceptable to get information from social media, but the way students take in what they have learned can be detrimental. BLS wants to ensure that the college process is straightforward during the vulnerable time, so take advantage of its resources. After all, this is your own journey, and only you can own it.

Feeling SAD or Just Tired?



A student struggles with homework.

By **Ellie Fung (III)**
Staff Writer

It is only 5:00 P.M., but the sun has already set. Sitting at your desk, you stare at the pile of homework that doesn’t seem to shrink. This is an all-too-common experience for many Boston Latin School students in the winter: less sunshine and cold weather can decrease energy and motivation. While many are quick to label this as “seasonal depression” or “seasonal burnout,” these terms refer to distinct and specific conditions that should be distinguished.

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged and mismanaged stress. Burn-

out only applies, however, in the context of work or school, not other aspects of life. For students, this stress is often tied to school, heavy workloads, constant deadlines and academic pressure that builds throughout the year.

BLS Student Mental Health Advisory (SMHA) Co-President Aliana Kowalczyk (I) notes, “Burnout is definitely something very common, especially by the time you reach senior year. I take a number of AP classes, [and the homework], especially [for] history classes [that] assign a lot of notes, [...] can take hours [to complete]. It just feels like it’s droning on and on, and I’ve heard a lot of my friends say similar things.”

On the other hand, seasonal depres-

sion, also known as “seasonal affective disorder” (SAD), is depression brought on by the change in season. It causes people at the beginning of fall or winter to display symptoms that include changes in sleep or appetite, difficulty concentrating and feelings of hopelessness or pessimism. SAD may require professional support in some cases.

Though these terms may seem interchangeable, using them in that manner can be harmful. When people who are simply burned out describe themselves as “depressed,” the word loses its weight. Using a term for a serious mental health condition as a synonym for being stressed or tired trivializes its significance. This can feel dismissive to people who genuinely struggle with diagnosed mental health issues.

Another potential effect is that SAD becomes overlooked. Someone with depression may label their symptoms as “burnout” because they have seen so much interchangeable usage. On the other hand, someone who constantly feels burnout may diagnose themselves as depressed due to the shared symptoms. Believing one does or does not have such a serious mental health condition can prevent one from finding the right kind of treatment. The lack of differentiation between burnout and SAD also perpetuates the cycle of misused terminology.

Misdiagnosing mental health struggles can make it harder for people to find solutions. Neither seasonal depression nor burnout has a simple cure, but believing you have a mental health condition you do not have may cause you to seek unhelpful solutions. Antidepressants, for example, may be beneficial for clinically diagnosed

depression, but they will likely not be as helpful to someone with burnout from academic stress.

Some, however, believe that the terms can be used interchangeably. BLS Guidance Program Director Ms. Megan Clougherty explains, “I think that the terms can kind of be used interchangeably [...] because I think that they’re really describing the same thing, which is a kind of a biological response to the winter.” It is true that both conditions have similar causes, but they still have key differences. It is vital to distinguish them because mental health is an important part of people’s lives, and finding proper solutions that effectively target the problem is dependent on understanding the causes.

BLS offers various resources for anyone struggling due to the seasonal change. A first step for many may be reaching out to their guidance counselor or another trusted adult. Other resources include the nurse’s office, the BLS clinical team toolkit and monthly PAWse Spaces hosted by SMHA. BLS nurse Ms. Sally Almeida notes, “[The nurse’s office] can help coordinate care with both in-school and out-of-school mental health providers. We also can help create in-school support plans to help support those with mental health challenges.”

It is important to remember that burnout and seasonal affective disorder are distinct and thus require different solutions. Everyone’s mental health journey looks different, and no two winter slumps are identical. Using the right context to define mental health is a step toward helping people find the best solutions for their situation.

Burned Out? Here’s Some Advice

By **Abigail Becker Cocks (IV)**
& **Chiao Wang (IV)**
Contributing Writers

Ringggg! Your alarm goes off for what feels like the tenth time this week. You miss your bus and have to wait in the cold. You’re swamped with assignments and lacking the will to complete them.

Being a high school student is always stressful. As the cold days during the densest parts of the year’s curriculum drag on, this stress can cause students to become burned out and unmo-

tivated.

The reality that students often face is one that many adults do not understand — they will tell you to “stop complaining” or to “just keep pushing forward,” but this is exactly what will burn you out. Instead of simply working harder, be kind to yourself. Maximize your productivity rather than running yourself into the ground.

The key is balance and variety. While the monotonous routine of going straight from your classes to completing all of your assignments in one sit-

ting may seem productive, not only will you eventually become burned out, but you’ll be unhappy. In addition, you are more likely to submit an assignment you are not proud of since you are rushing through your work. Instead, boost both your efficiency and mood by balancing physical, mental and social activities. Whether it is stretching, chatting with a family member, attending a club meeting or simply playing the daily *Wordle*, bringing variety into your daily routines can fight dullness in your life.

Be more conscious of how much

time you spend and what you spend your time on the most. Putting off homework to play video games or scroll on social media may result in short-term happiness, but they are not real solutions to any problems. Be honest with yourself on how you use your time, and work on using it more wisely.

You’re not alone in what may seem like a constant uphill struggle. Communicate with others around you because chances are, they’re going through the same thing. Spring will be here before you know it!

Ask the Teachers: How Can Students Combat Burnout?



Ms. Katharine Archer

“My best advice would be to try to do one [non-academic] thing a day [...] to boost your mood: [...] something just for fun, just for you [or] something you love to do.”



Mr. Salvatore Bartoloma

“Get outside and move some snow around. If you’ve got a driveway, shovel it. If your neighbor has a driveway, help them shovel it. Just try to stay active.”



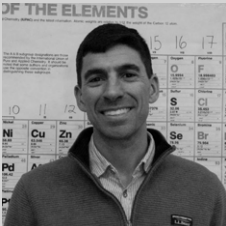
Ms. Catherine Foley

“Acknowledge that it is tough. [...] Take a ten-minute brisk walk to decompress from the day, and [...] be more mindful about how much time you are spending doomscrolling or playing video games before the whole day has gone by.”



Mr. Robert Oakes

“Prioritize sleep [...] and figure out a good system to tackle your homework early rather than leaving it too late.”



Mr. Philip Pietrangelo

“Do something that has a positive impact short-term that might actually be able to compound into something positive and good momentum moving forward. [...] Taking advantage of that weekend [...] might change the trajectory of your entire term. [...] Even the smallest moment can make a big difference.”



Mr. Jesse Southwick

“You gotta keep moving, even when it’s cold out. [...] Keep your eyes on the prize. Everybody will be surprised how quickly the spring goes. [...] We’ll look back, and we’ll be appreciative that we worked hard.”

Night Knight, Sleep Tight: The Death of Chivalry

By **Ada Jiang (IV)**
& **Bella Zhao (IV)**
Contributing Writers

In the 12th century, a knight would boldly risk his life to save his lady. In the 21st century, many argue that men shouldn't even pull out a chair for a woman to sit on because women are capable of doing it themselves. In today's world, chivalry is a dying art. In the 14th century, chivalry became romanticized, largely due to romantic novels, poems and songs promoting the notion. Through this romanticism comes our modern-day definition of chivalry: polite, honest and kind behavior, especially by men directed toward women.

By far, the largest factors in the decline of chivalry have been technology and the quickening pace of our everyday lives. One of the advancements in modern dating is the rise of dating apps. Although these apps make it simple to meet others, the action of swiping left or right on someone has made it too easy to dismiss others without truly getting to know them. Boston Latin School English teacher Mr. Mark Sanford remarks, "Chemistry can't be understood, acknowledged or realized by an app. It has to be experienced face-to-face." The reduced opportunity for first impressions in-person automatically makes our romantic relationships less intimate.

As texting has become an increasingly popular means of communication, interactions have become more shallow and detached. Chivalry is hard to show when people are building connections and communicating through screens for the majority of a relationship. When texting,

people are unable to express their tone of voice or read body language, increasing the chances of miscommunication. Small misunderstandings can turn into bigger conflicts and eventually create a disconnect between both parties in the relationship.

Social media only deepens this disconnect. These apps are often filled with two extremes: the over-romanticized idea of the "perfect relationship" that people base their ideals on without knowing the full picture or the mindset of dropping someone as soon as they exhibit what social media deems a "red flag." Both extremes are equally harmful, as they encourage unrealistic and unhealthy expectations, misleading people on the indications of a long-lasting relationship. Chivalry relies on patience and kindness, but when relationships are compared to curated posts and short clips, we become impatient and unwilling to give others a chance to be imperfect.

As women are given more equal opportunities such as voting, careers and education, there is a rising demand for equality in relationships. Amara Ings (IV) states, "A lot of people, especially men, are putting less effort [into relationships]." Chivalry was originally created when women were treated like trophies. Traditional acts of chivalry function on the assumption that women need men as protectors, but as women gained independence, these gestures can feel like condescension rather than kindness. In a society pushing for equality, it may seem like women no longer need men for little gestures like opening doors. These acts, however, should still be done as a way to show care and respect for



A student holds the door for a friend!

one's partner. Independence does not erase the need for effort in relationships. Small gestures like offering your jacket or walking closest to the street are appreciated because they are thoughtful. Maintained effort and consideration are key ways of building healthy long-term relationships.

Some argue that chivalry has not died and has only changed to encompass today's society. Henry Davis (II) states, "Respect is the replacement for chivalry." The definition of "modern chivalry" is honorable behavior toward everyone, regardless of gender or familiarity. This definition, however, is still hardly practiced. Common respect has left relationships as cheating, ghosting and lying have become normalized. People have resorted to doing bare minimum actions, such as liking some-

one's *Instagram* story to signify interest. Many hesitate to perform these respectful gestures because it may seem too intense or inappropriate in today's society.

Although chivalry is dying there is still hope to revive a version of chivalry that simultaneously promotes a new era of feminism. Chivalry historically assigned specific roles with men as protectors and women as the protected. The redefined version of chivalry should be based on mutual care, effort and accountability. Actions like doing romantic things for your partner, working through conflict maturely and communicating honestly bring back the core values chivalry once stood for. Through these actions, chivalry can be reborn with a more healthy, intentional and equal foundation.

New Year, Same You



A student designs a vision board for the new year.

By **Elaine Lin (III)**
& **Christina Li (VI)**
Contributing Writers

Every January, people repeat the phrase, "New Year, New Me!" Since people rarely keep these resolutions, however, there is no reason to create them. It would be more ideal to create separate, realistic goals throughout the year rather than one large, continuous goal that is never followed.

According to "The History of New Year's Resolutions," New Year's resolutions date back four thousand years ago to Babylonia, where Babylonians made promises to gods in exchange for their favor. The Romans later followed in their footsteps when Julius Caesar established January 1 as the first day of the year. Similar to the Babylonians, the Romans offered sacrifices and promises to Janus, the god of beginnings and endings, giving name to the month of January.

We make resolutions for ourselves nowadays, yet people are becoming increasingly unsuccessful in maintaining them. Although most people come up with New Year's resolutions, statistics show that the majority of people do not usually keep them. Insideout Mastery shares that despite about 40 percent of American adults setting New Year's resolutions every year, more than 20 percent quit within the first week, and less than ten percent actually keep their resolutions. Felicia Wong (VI) agrees, stating, "Last year, I didn't keep most of my resolutions, and I stopped somewhere around the February mark."

New Year's resolutions are like trends. When you see others fail, you are likely to follow them. In contrast, setting up goals throughout the year allows you to work toward them independently, without negative external influences. Creating goals during the year also eliminates the anticipation and procrastination of waiting for it to be a new year. Waiting for January 1 creates bad habits and procrastination before New

Year's, and telling yourself that you will fix it next year already sets a negative precedent. This mindset makes people overly reliant on calendar dates, treating time as the solution to all their problems. If you have an idea for a goal, it is better to take initiative and start immediately.

Most New Year's resolutions, additionally, follow the same generic ideas, usually relating to monetary or physical wellbeing. These generic resolutions are typically repetitive and unmotivating. It is also a tactic for companies to sell subscriptions and make money through gym memberships and premium apps. Creating resolutions ends up as a waste of both time and money.

Some may argue that it is good to create goals and set a deadline, as they are positive motivations. New Year's resolutions, however, foster more pressure than motivation. When New Year's comes around, people have the vision that by the end of the year, they will become a better person.

The goal of transforming yourself into a completely new person with new habits in a short amount of time is nearly impossible, creating unnecessary stress. When setting larger goals, it is better to be more realistic and give yourself small, consistent tasks with longer deadlines. People should furthermore pursue goals as they come up, rather than forcing themselves into chasing ones that do not align with their lifestyle. Livia Ho (V), a student who does not create New Year's resolutions, but rather comes up with goals, explains, "I mostly keep these goals until I fully complete them. [...] If I don't coenmplete it at that time, [...] it is just not the time yet." Resolutions add unnecessary pressure to complete goals in a specific time frame. When this pressure is removed, people are better able to focus on genuine progress.

Self-improvement should not be limited to a singular day on the calendar. Boston Latin School Classics teacher Mr. John Kerpan summarizes this, explaining, "People can drastically change their life almost whenever they want. It's a shame that we gatekeep it to one day of the year for people to seriously consider doing that." Rather than following trends and making unsustainable goals, people should focus on consistency and meaningful, continuous, long-term growth. Dramatic changes are not the best form of transformation!

Boston Baroque’s New Year’s Concert



Boston Baroque performs Handel’s *Messiah*.

**By Alice Li (II)
& Bridget Blair (II)**

Head and Assistant A&E Editors

Boston’s music scene is full of variety and life, but few things are as unique as Boston Baroque, a six-time Grammy-nominated classical orchestra. From December 31 to January 1, Boston Baroque performed their annual New Year’s celebration concerts in Harvard’s Sanders Theatre, featuring guest conductor Marc Minkowski and mezzo-soprano singer Samantha Hankey.

Originally known as Banchetto Musicale, the group has been performing on period instruments throughout Boston and beyond since 1973 as the first period orchestra in the United States.

The rise of baroque music spanned from the 1600s to 1700s and was intertwined with the Protestant Reformation. Boston Latin School AP World History and AP European History teacher Ms. Clara Webb adds that some of the music “was [intended] to instill [...] the reverence for the Church [in fear of] losing [people] converting to Protestantism.”

Although the group was not formed for religious purposes, Boston Baroque was founded by conductor, composer and music professor Martin Pearlman, introducing an authentic sound to modern audiences. From the group’s inception, Pearlman has served as the musical director, bringing his vision and expertise to every performance. Just this season, however, Pearlman stepped back from his role as conductor.

Taking this in stride, Boston Baroque has quickly adapted by inviting a variety of guest conductors to lead each performance

this season. This change has brought both new perspectives and liveliness, but also logistical complexities to the planning process.

Planning for a performance usually starts a year before the intended date with the coordination of dates and venues. Once a guest conductor has been invited, the visionary planning and repertoire selection can begin.

Boston Baroque consistently delivers sophisticated and spectacular performances. The recent New Year’s performance, consisting of music from classical composers Mozart and Handel, was no exception. The group first performed Mozart’s Symphony No. 1 in E-flat major, which reflects the blending between Baroque and Classical era-style music.

The next few pieces they performed are parts of Mozart’s larger works. “Parto, Parto” from his opera *La Clemenza Di Tito* is an aria sung by the character Sesto, who accepts Vitellia’s request to lead an uprising against Emperor Tito. The aria features a bass clarinet interwoven with the vocal line, capturing Sesto’s internal conflict as he is torn between his love for Vitellia and his loyalty for Tito.

The overture from *Der Schauspieldirektor*, a short, comical singspiel — a German drama — is about two arguing sopranos.

“Dove sono i bei momenti,” from *Le Nozze Di Figaro* and “Mi tradi quell’alma ingrata” from *Don Giovanni* are two of Mozart’s arias, or solo songs, that highlight the human’s complex emotions, exploring anger and empathy in the backdrop of love and betrayal.

The final part of the program, Han-

del’s complete Water Music, consists of three suites in F, D and G major. The suites were commissioned by King George I as an accompaniment to his 1717 royal water party. Horns and trumpets deliver the grand F major and D major suites, while the flute and recorder featured in the G major suite contrast them with a lighter tone.

In addition to the main ensemble, the group has recently formed the string chamber ensemble X-tet to further explore different types of repertoire together. The chamber group originally focused solely on baroque and classical music but has recently expanded to working with composers from around the world.

Executive Director Sarah Radcliffe-Marrs comments that the collaboration “builds on the original idea of the X-tet, which is [about] musical connection [and] collaboration.”

Although many enjoyers of baroque music are older, Boston Baroque welcomes young people to involve themselves through their Young Maestro Program.

An avid fan of Boston Baroque herself, BLS German teacher Ms. Heidemarie Floerke explains why students should take interest in classical music: “Like anything else that takes us outside of [...] what we are expected to like, [classical music] widens our horizon. It may require some background information and repeated exposure, but [...] it would be very worthwhile.”

Boston Baroque’s commitment to celebrating the past serves an important purpose in the wider music scene. Those who are interested in Boston Baroque’s upcoming performances can find further information on their website: <https://baroque.boston/>.

Spotlight on... Ms. Walshak

Boston’s Graphic Designer of the Year



**By Audrey Day (III)
& Urvashi Maharaj (III)**

Contributing Writers

Boston Latin School Graphics Arts and Foundations of Visual Art teacher Ms. Elizabeth Walshak recently won Graphic Designer of the Year at the Boston Music Awards! The local Boston arts community recognized her incredible work designing t-shirts, flyers, logos, poster art, social media graphics and album art for local musicians, which she has been working on as a freelance graphic designer since 2012.

Ms. Walshak feels honored winning this award, saying, “It feels very validating to know that your work means something to one person, let alone an entire community.”

Her mother’s encouragement of hands-on learning nurtured her artistic interest and love for drawing at a young age. Ms. Walshak’s dedication to art increased during high school, when her ninth grade art teacher complimented her talent for it.

Ms. Walshak knew that a creative career involving working with and assisting others was the right fit for her. As a result, she decided on teaching to help students embrace their own identities and creativity.

She pursued this interest further, attending the School of Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, where she received her Masters of Arts in Teaching. While in school, her projects included drawing, printmaking and graphic design.

At BLS, her Graphic Arts class entails using software to create mobile apps, movie posters and book covers. The class is currently examining the rich history of vinyl record covers as part of their album art project. In the Foundations of Visual Art course, students grasp techniques in drawing, painting, clay sculpting and linoleum block printing.

Ms. Walshak hopes her students learn skills such as creative problem solving, taking risks and the process of creation, not perfection. Ms. Walshak reflects on the importance of these skills: “Creativity is so important in this world; we need to make space for it in our lives.”

Romance Reigns Supreme

**By Katie Hurley (I)
& Francheska Ortiz (III)**

Contributing Writers

As the year begins anew and the romantic month of February is around the corner, the popularity of romance media has seen an uptick, with many people cozying up for a good love story. In recent years, social media has largely contributed to the exponential rise in the production and promotion of romance novels, with the popularity of “BookTok,” a hashtag used on *TikTok* to discuss and recommend books, often including romance novels. This push in the cultural landscape is backed up by the numbers, as according to *The Guardian*, “Print sales of romance fiction in the U.S. have doubled in the last five years.”

The rising anticipation and popularity of romance shows, including *Netflix’s Bridgerton* and *Emily in Paris*, additionally begs the question many romance enthusiasts and critics debate: is romance media quality entertainment?

Classics, like *Star Wars* and *James Bond*, are greatly praised for their intricate plots and intelligent storylines, which include romance. So what makes these stories so different? One thing that differentiates these franchises from the romance genre is their audience, which is largely male dominated. Despite the usage of romantic subplots to further develop narratives, these highly respected franchises have not been as vastly or harshly ridiculed as modern fanbases made up largely of women.

Former Boston Latin School Book Club member and romance novel enthusiast Pet-

ula Sheehan (III) adds, “A lot of people just criticize what women enjoy in general [and] most of the time the people who are reading romance are women. [...] I think it’s seen as lesser [...] subconsciously.”

Women have historically been considered less educated than men, and remnants of this stigma still linger today. The idea that women can dominate a type of media leads to the assumption that it must be shallow and one-dimensional in order to fit the stereotype of a woman being less educated. This is contradicted, as most pieces of well known romance media address deeper messages, such as issues of sexism, classism and intersectionality.

So why romance? What does romance offer that has taken audiences by a storm that other genres lack? These stories advertised to audiences focus on idealistic love, where the

relationships set unrealistically high standards for readers. This representation of love in the media has led to a widespread “if they wanted to, they would” mentality. Happy endings, minimal conflicts and a sense of mutual respect are the leading characteristics that readers search for in stories. BLS AP Language and Composition teacher Ms. Blake Barich says, “I believe romance in [the] media is appealing because it is an escape. Often, romance in literature and film ends in a happy ending.”

As the world grapples with violence and threats to democracy, people are desperate for a perfect romance to sweep them off their feet and shelter them from reality for a little while. A good love story is the escape they are longing for. In Ms. Barich’s words, it embodies “a bit of happiness and hope, even if it is unrealistic.”

End of Original Cinema? *Avatar: Fire and Ash* Review

By Shirlyn Wang (II)
& Kaya Ertan (III)
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

The third in a series of billion-dollar grossing movies, *Avatar: Fire and Ash*, directed by the critically acclaimed James Cameron, was released on December 19. The movie rounded out the generation-defining commercial success that is the *Avatar* trilogy.

The science fiction movie series follows Jake Sully, a human turned Na’vi — the native inhabitants of a planet named Pandora — his wife Neytiri and their children as they meet different clans of the Na’vi and face various conflicts.

Avatar: Fire and Ash continues the conflict between the protagonists of the story and the Resources Development Administration (RDA), a money-hungry business that wants the natural resources of Pandora, specifically the planet’s reserves of unobtainium. The sequel also introduces a new antagonist, the Mangkwan clan led by Varang, a Na’vi group that has lost the connection the other tribes have with Eywa, the entity they worship and follow.

The third movie starts a few weeks after the events of *Avatar: The Way of Water*, where the audience saw Jake and his family head to the domain of the Metkayina clan, to which the RDA followed them. In the second movie, questions about the couple’s adopted daughter, Kiri, the biological daughter of Dr. Grace Augustine, an empathetic scientist who treasured the Na’vi and died in the first movie, were left open for the third. Sully and his family additionally carry their unrequited grief over the death of Neteyam, one of the Sully children, into *Avatar: Fire and Ash*.

The movie has gained mostly positive reviews within the Boston Latin School student body, although the consensus is that the first two movies have not been topped. “I think that the first two movies were a lot better than this one, but it doesn’t mean that this one was bad,”

says massive *Avatar* fan Connie Wu (II). “I would recommend it to a friend.”

In the month since its release, the science fiction epic has yet again proven to be one of The Walt Disney Company’s most successful “cash cows,” raking in 1.23 billion dollars as of January 11. It is also one of the most expensive films ever made, with an estimated budget of 350 to 400 million dollars. The huge amount of money invested into this project makes Disney’s confidence about the film’s success evident.

A great deal of the budget went into the visual effects, which are just as stunning as the previous two movies, the technical wonder which is the trilogy’s original claim to fame.

Kamille Fisher (II), another fan of *Avatar*, comments, “by the end of the movie, I felt like I was literally there.”

The *Avatar* franchise is one of the most successful, if not the most successful, franchise of all time, with the first and second movies being the first and third highest grossing movies of all time respectively. Plans for a fourth and fifth *Avatar* movie have already been revealed.

Beyond *Avatar*, the success of sequels have been made clearer and clearer over the last few years. Disney’s most profitable movie this year, *Zootopia 2*, is a sequel to the highly successful *Zootopia*, which was released over ten years ago. Of the top ten highest grossing movies of all time, nine of them are sequels. Franchises such as *Marvel* and *Star Wars* are entirely based on the idea of a continuous story taking place over multiple movies, creating a group of casual viewers, a rabid fanbase and lots of money. When done right, a sequel can help to propel a billion-dollar cultural phenomenon.

But as sequels rise in popularity, original ideas are not allowed as much space to be received, and the question is raised of just how sustainable this repetition is. As Owen Gleiberman, a film critic, said in his 2024 *Variety* article “Is Hollywood’s Addiction to Sequels Cannibalizing Its Future?,”



“The contradiction of sequel culture, and the threat of it, is that if all you rely on is concepts from the past, you’re not going to produce enough of a future.”

The fact of the matter is that the average viewer is much more likely to watch a movie in a franchise they are familiar

with rather than take a risk with their money and watch a movie they may potentially not like, which drives companies to invest first and foremost into sequels. Hence, *Avatar: Fire and Ash* is likely not the last that the BLS community will see of this franchise.

Matcha Madness



Matcha Cafe Maiko gains popularity among Bostonians.

By Julia Morellato (II)
& Griffin Hastings (II)
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Why is matcha everywhere and how did it come to be that way? Across social media, matcha has popped up everywhere. Mainly seen on *TikTok* and *Instagram*, matcha drinks have gone viral for their vibrant green color and cool combinations.

Young consumers view matcha as a healthier alternative to coffee due to its antioxidants and caffeine content. As the matcha

empire has expanded, it has evolved from a traditional tea to a trendy ingredient that has been incorporated into mainstream cafes, skincare and other food products.

Having opened this past December, Mizu Matcha is a new matcha ice cream shop on Newbury Street. It sells matcha ice cream across five different intensity levels, with Level 1 containing 2.9 percent matcha content and Level 5 containing 17.9 percent matcha content. Along with matcha soft serve, they also serve hojicha, taro, black sesame and vanilla flavors.

Given the recent rise of matcha cafes,

Mizu Matcha markets their sweet treats as particularly unique, utilizing higher-grade matcha in order to create an authentic experience for consumers. Beyond ice cream, they also sell matcha lattes with different flavor combinations like red bean, strawberry, brown sugar and chocolate.

So, what makes a good matcha? Aside from its popularity, one must consider the quality, price and taste. The quality of the matcha powder directly correlates with its price. Naoki Matcha explains how to make matcha, commenting, “Producing matcha tea is a process which requires skilled labor at each stage.” Thus, higher quality matcha products will be more expensive due to the fact that the product is made with higher quality powder, requiring a more laborious process.

Despite its surge in popularity, matcha is not favored by everyone within the Boston Latin School community. Maxwell Mook (II) states, “I don’t like matcha at all, but I have heard that people love Blank Street because of their unique flavors, but their prices have increased by at least a few dollars since 2023.”

Zooming in on Boston, many other cafes specialize in matcha, such as Matcha Cafe Maiko, Kyo Matcha, Blank Street and more. Prices and taste, however, can vary significantly. For instance, a matcha from Starbucks can be upwards of seven dollars, while Dunkin’ sells matcha at around five dollars. Although both drinks are iced matcha lattes, they taste considerably different and can be made with varying levels of complexity and ingredients.

It is clear that the price fluctuations of matcha have been noticed by a multitude of people. Adaeze Adiele (II) remarks, “I can attest to the fact that matcha prices have increased a lot because of the hype train. In places like Starbucks and Dunkin’, the prices are fair, but I know that in more authentic matcha stores, the prices have risen for sure.”

At more authentic places, however, matcha becomes increasingly expensive. A single scoop of hard matcha ice cream at Mizu Matcha can total almost eight dollars. This price, disproportionate to the amount of ice cream in a scoop, is quite costly for the average consumer. BLS AP Economics teacher Mr. Patrick Boor provides some insight from an economic perspective on the rise of matcha prices. He notes, “Demand has surged, largely driven by marketing and *TikTok* influencers, while supply has tightened due to rising fertilizer costs and a declining number of farmers.”

Beyond the growth of cafes dedicated to serving matcha in Boston, several places around the city also have incorporated matcha-flavored items into their menus. Beard Papa’s, for example, now makes puff pastries with matcha filling, adding variety to their menu but also displaying how businesses across the food industry are also profiting off of matcha’s popularity.

Although matcha’s spike in popularity has caused a major change in price and availability for the average consumer, it still provides new opportunities for businesses to open up and flourish, providing new, innovative foods and cafes such as Mizu Matcha.



By **Kenneth Cacho Bermudez (I), Hanna Flynn (I), Trinity Ngo (I) & Jivan Tai-Dawson (I)**
Creative Consultants

How do you tell someone that’s bothering you to leave you alone (as a people pleaser)?

KCB: Fellow people pleaser here! It’s a curse and blessing (it can help you become VP!). If someone is truly getting on your nerves, you really gotta tell them. I’ve been in situations where I’ve been annoying people, and I had no idea. They probably don’t mean it and just think you guys are just friends. So go up to them and have a conversation,ww and it’ll hopefully clear things up.

How long is too long for him to hide me from his parents?

HF: Bro ... this is a lot of pressure for your school newspaper columnists. He’s probably making sure it’s safe enough to tell them without getting in trouble. If the wait is bugging you, talk to him about it.

My friends keep getting buzz cuts. How do I tell them they look really stupid?

TN: This!! I don’t know why, but when one person gets a buzz cut, everyone else gets one too. If you’re close to them, I would just tell them straight up that they look a little silly. If not, then maybe reconsider if you are the right person to break the news. Plus, there’s no use in making them feel insecure about their hair since they can’t magically grow it back. At the end of the day, as long as they like how they look, who cares?

HF: Totally agree with Trinity. Don’t ridicule them, hype them up even if you don’t love it!

JTD: As someone who has had a buzzcut (and it looked awful), I think I could have used a bit more honesty. I genuinely thought I looked good when I looked like a bald mouse. Sometimes you gotta be honest, even when the truth stings.

How do you ask someone to prom? Is it really just “do you want to go to prom with me?”

KCB: Maybe the wrong person to speak because I got asked out to junior prom (yeah, I’m the prize), but I would definitely try to ask their friends before making any move. Some people really like promposals which take some planning, and you wouldn’t want it going to waste. So see if you have a good chance, and then try to plan something. But I guess “do you want to go to prom with me” could also be valid. You gotta take a risk either way!

I’ve been in a situationship with this guy for several months now (although I don’t think he would consider it a situationship...). I’m pretty sure that he’s leading me on, but I can’t let go because every time I see him my feelings and memories resurface. What should I do?

JTD: Situationships are the worst. There is nothing less rewarding than all the troubles of a relationship without the reward of a label. Any man who knows how you feel about him and hasn’t been clear to you about what he wants IS leading you on. On the other hand, if you haven’t been clear and are assuming this is a situationship then it’s kinda on you. Be clear if you haven’t been, and if you have been, this guy is kinda a jerk, then I think it’s time you cut him off for good.

Would you rather wear pants that are constantly on fire (they burn other stuff but not you) or kiss the president (on live TV) every time one is sworn in?

HF: This is definitely one of the most random Would You Rather questions I’ve seen. If I had to choose, I’d go with pants on fire. Seems like I’d be fireproof!

How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

TN: 67; **KCB:** Trinity ... it’s 2026.

Lemon Shortbread Cookies



By **Bridget Blair (II)**
Assistant A&E Editor

Combat the endless days of winter with a bright and citrus twist on traditional sugar cookies.

Ingredients:

- ☐ 1 cup unsalted butter
- ☐ ¼ cup powdered sugar
- ☐ ¼ cup sugar
- ☐ ¼ tsp salt
- ☐ zest of 1 lemon
- ☐ 2 cups flour
- ☐ 2 tbsps corn starch

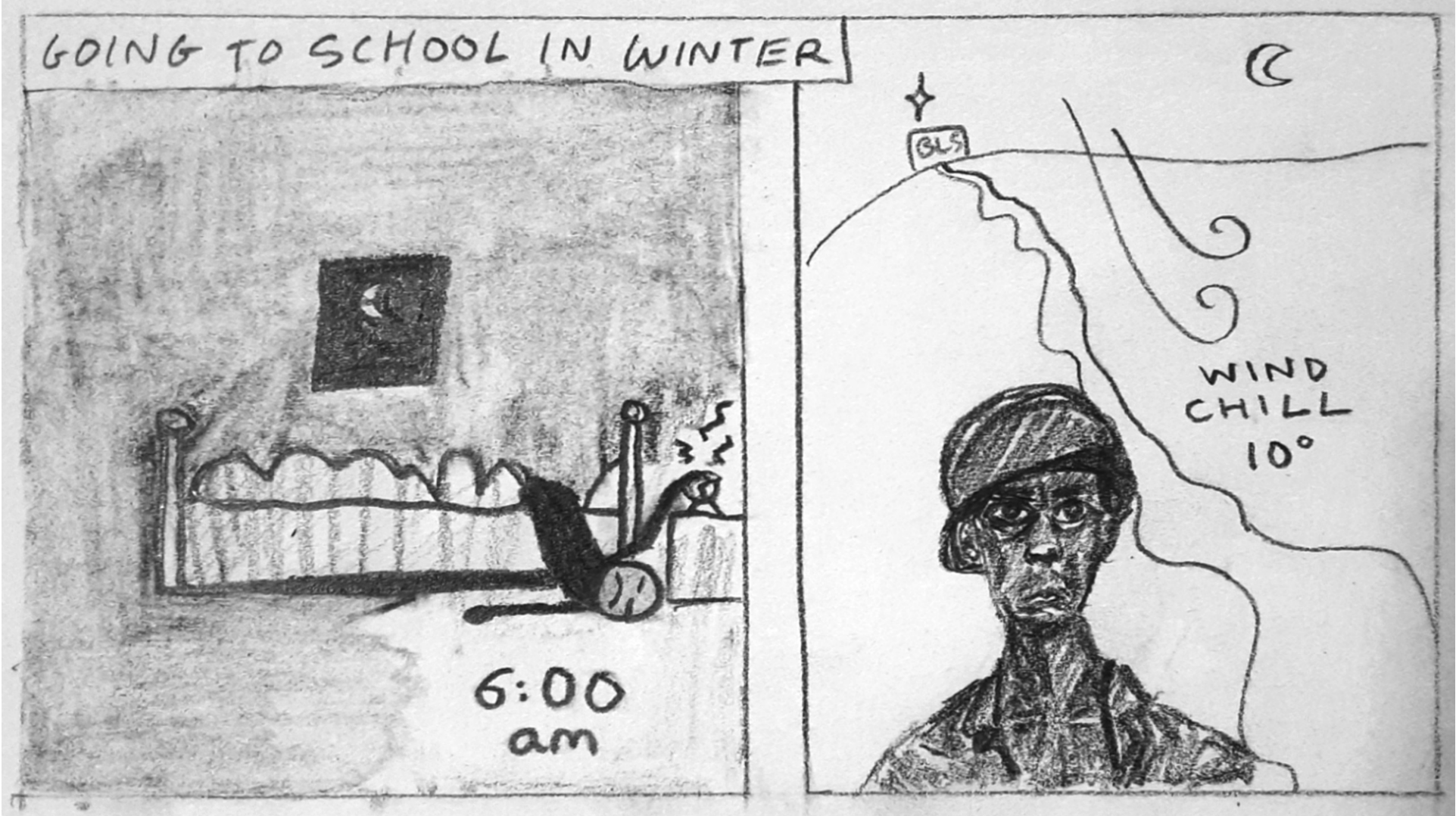
Directions:

1. Beat butter, powdered sugar, sugar, lemon zest and salt until creamy.
2. Mix in flour and cornstarch until fully incorporated.
3. Wrap dough in plastic and refrigerate for 20 minutes.
4. Roll out dough to ¼ inch thickness on a lightly floured surface; cut out shapes using cookie cutters.
5. If you do not have cookie cutters, roll dough into a log, chill for 10 more minutes and slice into ¼ inch rounds.
6. Place cookies on a parchment paper lined baking sheet at least ½ inches apart. Bake at 300 degrees for 8-10 minutes or until firm to the touch and barely golden on the edges.

Adapted from the Cambridge School of Culinary Arts

January Comic: Winter Warfare

By **Fiala Kraman (II)**
Comic Artist



Lux by Rosalia: Album Review



LUX

by Rosalía
November 7, 2025

Genres: Classical, Pop

Highlights:
“Berghain,”
“Reliquia”

Rating: 8.5/10

By **Rei Purwaha (IV)**
& **Elias Valencia (IV)**

Contributing Writers

When Rosalía announced the release of her album *Lux* on November 7, many fans wondered whether the artist, already famous for her reinvention of Latin pop with releases like *MotoMami*, could produce such a unique album again. The answer, from both critics and everyday listeners, was a definite yes.

Lux is a bold melting pot of genres spread out over 18 tracks. The album blends elements of pop, flamenco, the avant-garde and, most notably, classical music. Rosalía worked with Daníel Bjarnason, an Icelandic conductor who conducted the London Symphony Orchestra for every song on the album. In an interview with *Rolling Stone*, he describes the album’s production, noting, “I was surprised by how big a part the orchestra played in all of the songs. They were not there as added shine, but they were an integral part.”

Described as a reimagination of pop music, the songs are sung in multiple languages, including Ukrainian, Portuguese and Catalan. *Lux* is also uniquely divided into four movements, further exemplifying Rosalía’s fearless and artistic vision.

The lead single, “Berghain,” features renowned artists Björk and Yves Tumor, who composed the song “Lim-erence.” Beyond “Berghain,” the careful collaboration of the three artists is reflected throughout the entire album by evoking a dramatic tone and sense of desire, magnified further by the intense orchestra in the background.

“Berghain” was released before

Lux and is still considered one of the most cinematic and daring tracks on the whole album. The song opens with dramatic string arrangements and choral elements from the London Symphony Orchestra, which Lucca Miranda (IV) describes as giving off “a very renaissance, French-y vibe.”

As the track continues, the production gradually builds in intensity, layering electronic beats with the orchestra. Rosalía’s vocals move between restraint and release, while Björk’s unique voice adds a mystical feel that heightens the song’s emotional impact. Yves Tumor’s influence is felt in the song’s darker edges, through distorted synths and unpredictable changes in rhythm.

Lyrically, “Berghain” leans into intense themes of human emotion, such as longing, intimacy and obsession. The themes reflect the song’s namesake: a club in Berlin famous for its unique way of curating the specific vibe within. There is constant tension in the song, which makes it feel both seductive and unsettling. The orchestra is ever prominent throughout the entire track, growing louder and quieter, acting as a partner to the vocals. “Berghain” sets a tone of boldness for the rest of *Lux* and shows Rosalía’s willingness to take creative risks.

The second track, entitled “Reliquia,” is a heartfelt, vulnerable effort. Rosalía puts herself forward, explaining her own feelings about sympathy and the importance of leaving behind a part of herself once she is gone. The song is a tribute not only to her vulnerability about her internal struggles but also to her ability to triumph over those very same hurdles.

Rosalía is no stranger to speaking

about her own obstacles. According to long-time listener Javier Gonzalez (IV), however, this release was different: “The song felt more powerful and strong[er] compared to the rest of the album. The song encapsulates what this whole album felt like.”

“Reliquia” is one of Rosalía’s most triumphant and fervent efforts to date. Throughout the track, Rosalía expresses her desire for a “relic” and to be remembered after she’s gone. After this performance, however, it is clear that a part of her life will stay with everyone who has been inspired by her words.

“*Mio Cristo Piange Diamanti*” stands out on *Lux* as one of the album’s most spiritual tracks. The song feels intimate from the opening moments, blending minimalist production with soft, echoing vocals. “*Mio Cristo Piange Diamanti*” means “My Christ Cries Diamonds” in Italian, evoking a sense of beauty through pain. The track explores themes of devotion and emotional endurance.

Rather than building toward a dramatic climax like “Berghain,” the track remains restrained, allowing silence and space to carry weight and emotion. There are subtle guitar lines and faint sounds of the chorus drift in and out, creating a fleeting sense of serenity. Rosalía’s voice sounds almost prayer-like, making the song feel more like a confession. “*Mio Cristo Piange Diamanti*” slows the album down, offering a reflective pause that deepens *Lux*’s emotional impact.

Rosalía sings in a multitude of languages throughout the record. Even if you cannot understand fully, the music itself does just as much speaking.

2026’s Albums and Books

By **Michael Nguyen (II)**
& **Isabella Cachay (III)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Erykah Badu

Singer Erykah Badu is set to release her new album *Abi and Ali* soon. Known for her unique blend of spiritual Black soul with hypnotizing lyricism, Badu’s work has historically challenged musical norms. Badu also announced that her release would directly collaborate with The Alchemist, a legendary producer, rapper and DJ. This album has been highly anticipated, especially due to Badu’s long break from releasing music, as well as her recent presence in media walking the Thom Browne and Valentino runway shows and being featured in *Vogue*, highlighting her artistic and musical house and unique fashion style.

Álvaro Enrigue

Álvaro Enrigue, winner of the 2013 Herralde Prize, is a Mexican author famous for his works in historical and political fiction. On March 3, his historical fiction novel *Now I Surrender* will be released. Taking place on the Mexico-United States border, this book will include perspectives of an apache warrior, a runaway woman and a local general. Not only will this book bring us into the past, but it will also emphasize the importance of knowing the history of the land one walks on.

Matt Haig

Author of the *New York Times* Be-

st Seller *The Midnight Library*, Matt Haig started his career as a journalist and later became an author. He is known for his exploration of speculative and contemporary fiction, focusing on themes of mental health and hope. His new book, *The Midnight Train*, coming out on May 5, is about a man named Wilbur who comes aboard the midnight train to explore his past and delve deeper on his rues pertaining to his past lover, Maggie.

Bruno Mars

Debuting in 2010 with his single “Just The Way You Are,” Bruno Mars continues to deliver countless hits. His uses of rock, R&B and funk are heard through his music, even while experimenting with different styles like jazz or reggaeton. Back in 2021, Mars, alongside Anderson Paak, released *An Evening With Silk Sonic*, a music album that explores R&B, soul, funk and other unusual genre combinations. On January 7, he announced his new album *The Romantic*, set to come out February 27, alongside a tour for this album in April. He will bring this tour to Gillette Stadium on September 5 and 6. Listeners should expect a lively and romantic vibe as they listen to this new album.

Jennette McCurdy

Since the release of her debut memoir, actress, director, podcaster and now best-selling author Jennette McCurdy is set to release her second book, *Half His Age*, later this year. Unlike her first book, *I’m Glad My Mom Died* — a collection of her real-life childhood sto-



Bruno Mars announces his new album *The Romantic*.

ries grappling with abuse, eating disorders and addiction — *Half His Age* is a darker and more humorous fictional story of a 17-year-old girl’s inappropriate relationship with her married English teacher.

Jordan Ward

Since his debut album *FORWARD* in 2023, Jordan Ward has launched his musical career to new heights. With his blend of soul and snare beats in “White Crocs,” to his electric funk and lyricism in “FAM-JAM4000,” Ward brought a refreshing wave to the music industry. In October 2025, Ward announced his sophomore album *BACKWARD*, set to drop on January 30. Fans can most likely expect a similar vibe from his deb-

ut album and possibly a deeper exploration into Ward’s creative mind and identity.

Charli cx

From beginning her career in 2008 publishing music on *MySpace*, to 2013 where her debut album *True Romance*, released, Charli cx continues to create music that her fans love. As of November 2025, she announced her new album, *Wuthering Heights*, set to come out on February 13. This album is said to be featured in the book-to-movie adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* by Emerald Fennel. This album will resemble the “dark” and “gothic” themes of the book, hopefully helping the story come together.

The Danger of ACL Injuries in Female Athletics



ACL tears are common occurrences for soccer players.

**By Maya Lanfer (II)
& Sofia Orozco Arango (II)**
Staff and Contributing Writer

One of the most devastating experiences an athlete can face is a serious injury that forces long-term separation from their sport. Unfortunately, the increasing prevalence of anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries over the past two decades has made this scenario especially common for female athletes.

Anterior cruciate ligament injuries occur when a person tears their ACL, which is a band of strong tissue that connects the thigh bone to the shinbone. The majority of ACL tears occur in the deceleration phase where the knee is almost at a fully extended position, such as landing from a jump, changing direction or decelerating to a stop. This is why the injury is most

common in sports like soccer, basketball, football and volleyball.

Female athletes specifically are three to eight times more at risk of injuring their ACL than male athletes. This discrepancy is due to a combination of factors, including hip structure, ligament size, muscle distribution and hormones. There is a statistically significant correlation, for example, between the stage of menstrual cycle and the probability of ACL injury. Furthermore, ACL injuries occur more often in young athletes whose bones, muscles and ligaments are still maturing. The injury has become so prevalent that female soccer or basketball players have a five percent chance of tearing their ACL each year they play that sport.

For student-athletes that have torn their ACL, stepping away from their beloved sport is a tough yet necessary decision they must make to re-

cover. Elle Sullivan (III), a member of the Boston Latin School girls' soccer team, talks about her ACL tear in the 2025 fall season, saying, "[As] an active person, such a sudden and severe injury severely changed my daily life socially, physically and [mentally]." For student-athletes, the disappointment of having to take the required nine-month break from their sport, along with the pressure to recover quickly, can cause them to experience heightened levels of anxiety during the recovery period. Many athletes also struggle to return to high levels of competition due to the persistent fear of reinjury.

While these injuries can sometimes seem unavoidable and unpreventable, they are not. In fact, there are tested, proven and accessible methods that athletes of all kinds can use to prevent ACL injuries. For example, for the past two years, the BLS girls'

soccer team has been using an ACL targeted warm-up to prevent injury. The exercises they use were tested in a 4.5 thousand-person randomized trial of young female soccer players and have proven to be 64 to 83 percent effective at preventing ACL injuries. The warm-up incorporates five different exercises, including squats, lunges, pistol squats, one-legged jumps and a plank, and it is done just twice a week. Girls' soccer Head Coach Jon Rudzinski reflects on injury prevention in the program, saying, "In the past decade or so, strides have been made in both developing ACL injury prevention protocols and increasing awareness of the risks and of the ways to mitigate those risks." By consistently practicing these exercises, athletes not only strengthen key leg muscles but also develop a stronger core, improve balance and proper jumping and landing technique.

The BLS soccer team is not the only one implementing ACL targeted warm-ups, as the BLS girls' basketball team is also implementing preventative measures. Basketball player Lia Ogando (III) states that the "basketball team is encouraging new drills and stretches during warm-ups to help prevent future ACL injuries."

The devastating physical and mental toll of an ACL injury combined with how common it has become among young female athletes makes it essential that sports programs across the country take injury prevention seriously. Teams have a responsibility not only to develop athletes' skills but also to protect their long-term health by implementing proven preventative training strategies. For young female athletes or anyone who knows and supports one, now is the time to be intentional about ACL injury prevention. These strategies are easy, evidence-based and effective, and they can make the difference between a season cut short and a career that continues safely and confidently.

Niese Sets the Standards for the Girls' Hockey Team

**By Christina Luo (II)
& Isabella Gates (III)**
Contributing Writers

Over the course of two consecutive nights, the Boston Latin School girls' varsity hockey team hosted the annual Michael "Gio" Giordano Christmas Classic, dominating the ice at Murphy Memorial Rink. With family and friends spectating from the crowds, the Wolfpack rose to the occasion and defeated Ursuline Academy 4-2 in the opening game before winning against Westford Academy 5-0 to take home the championship. The atmosphere inside the rink was intense and exciting, creating an electric environment that fueled the team to a win.

The championship marked another win for what had already been a competitive season for the girls' hockey team. The team plays in one of the toughest leagues in Massachusetts, and as of recently, is ranked No. 22 in the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association Power Rankings. Compared to previous seasons, this year's team is younger and consists of only three seniors. Coach Tom McGrath states that it has been important to teach "the younger players that high school hockey is a different pace of hockey compared to where they

play in the fall at the youth level." The team has already shown tremendous growth; they are learning how to push themselves harder even when trailing behind in games.

One of the biggest highlights of the tournament was when captain Phoebe Niese (I) was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player (MVP). Coach McGrath praises her as a "solid two-way player" and "unstoppable in the tournament." Phoebe grew up playing hockey, taking part in the South Boston and Charlestown hockey programs. She started playing club hockey in 2021 with the Boston Junior Eagles, attending the USA Hockey National Championships twice. She states that winning MVP after such a successful tournament was "like a cherry on top," becoming a special memory for her. She is "proud and appreciative of the positive recognition" and excited for the success of the program. Niese's teammate Lia Szocik (II) describes her as "very inspirational and always a team player."

In the future, she hopes to play club hockey in college and give back to younger players. Due to the shortage of ice hockey referees in the country, Phoebe works as a referee because she knows it is extremely meaningful to players, and she hopes it will bring them the same positive experiences she



Phoebe Niese (I) accepts her Most Valuable Player award.

had growing up. As a defenseman, she has learned how to handle challenges, stay calm in high pressure situations and make quick decisions. Hockey has taught her to avoid "panic[ing] or dwell[ing] on mistakes because the game always keeps moving, as does life," she says. Hockey has taught her more than lifelong lessons; it has given her lifelong friendships and an unbreakable support system.

As the season continues, the team aims to improve each game and fight for a spot in the state tournament at TD

Garden. Both Coach McGrath and Niese have proven to be instrumental to the team's success so far and have helped spread the spotlight throughout the rest of the team. From bringing younger players onto the team to helping pave the way to the state tournament, BLS girls' hockey has gone to show that they are not being held above the surface by one or two single persons. This team of powerful and goal-oriented young athletes will rally to keep on climbing the ladder that they have already shown to be experts at.

A Slippery Slope Leading up to Superbowl LX

By **Chelsea Bateman (II)**
& **Isabelle O'Donnell (II)**
Contributing Writers

Boston is a city with a vibrant sports culture, and the New England Patriots have formed an impressive legacy that Bostonians can certainly be proud of. The Patriots, often known as the Pats, are tied with the Pittsburgh Steelers for the most Super Bowl wins by a National Football League (NFL) team, a feat which they accomplished entirely within the 21st century.

This pride is not without pressure, however. The New England Patriots certainly feel pressure from the media and their fans to succeed as they move through the playoffs to another Super Bowl in the 2026 postseason. This external pressure complicates how the team might need to handle criminal wrongdoings by some of its members.

The question is, what should Patriots management do about the situation with Stefon Diggs and Christian Barnmore? Stefon Diggs, one of the team's best wide receivers, stands accused of attacking his personal chef in December 2025, while defensive lineman Christian Barnmore was accused of domestic assault against his girlfriend back in August 2025. Diggs allegedly assaulted his chef in a conflict about pay, with possible strangulation involved. Since these accusations have not yet seen their day in court, however, the New England Patriots are hesitant to act, especially with so much riding on the team's performance

leading up to the Super Bowl.

Brian Perez (II), a Patriots fan, states, "The possible charges are really bad, but [I'd] love to see the Pats in the Super Bowl this year, so I hope they aren't true," emphasizing how much the team — and the fans — depend on the two players for success on offense and defense. Both of their attorneys have denied the allegations, and Patriots coach Mike Vrabel made a statement acknowledging the seriousness of both allegations.

The arraignment for Diggs has been scheduled after the Super Bowl, but Barmore's will take place before the huge game on February 8. There has been some controversy surrounding whether it was fair for Digg's legal team to postpone his arraignment. Jared Acevedo (II) mentions, "It is definitely important that they both get a court decision on whether or not they are guilty, but as long as they do have scheduled arraignments for after the Super Bowl, it would be good to have them helping the team." It is notable that since the cases have not been decided yet, the players are still permitted to continue participating in games. Some fans are thankful, since their absence could be detrimental to the team's success. If the NFL reviews the cases and decides they are severe enough, however, the players could be forced to take paid leaves while under investigation. It seems that this is currently not the case. The NFL policy has game suspensions of six or more games if investigators determine there was an assault felony.

Multiple Patriots players have



Stefon Diggs practices before a game.

stepped up to defend Barmore and Diggs, but the media and the concerns that have been raised about the allegations have potentially impacted the team's play. The Patriots and the NFL do not wish to be seen disregarding serious allegations, so there is a fine line they must walk between continuing to utilize players that are necessary to the team's success and acknowledging the severity of assault. Both players are currently able to play, allowing them a victory over the Denver Broncos and sending them to the Super Bowl for the first time since 2019.

The Patriots must protect their players from legal questions despite scrutiny from the media. The NFL, however,

does also have its own investigators. If they were to find "credible evidence" to suggest that Diggs and Barmore are guilty of their accusations, they could be suspended, even if their legal cases are dismissed.

As Boston Latin School science teacher Mr. Scott Balicki eloquently concludes, both Diggs and Barmore are "good players but problematic individuals, if convicted of what they were accused of." As of right now, these athletes' arraignments are in progress. Nevertheless, Boston sports fans hope that these accusations are incorrect and the players will be able to aid in Super Bowl LX.

Who Will Take the Crown?: Clash Royale



Competitors clash in intense 1v1 matches!

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

Clash Royale is a mobile strategy game that reached the height of its revival a few months ago. Its popularity, combined with the nostalgia factor for seniors who played the game in middle school, inspired the senior class officers to host a Boston Latin School fundraising tournament.

Since the game is easily accessible to anyone who owns a phone, *Clash Royale* reaches a plethora of people while still being entertaining and challenging. It features two players competing against each other with a previously chosen deck of character cards, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. The goal of the game is to take down more of the opponent's three towers than they do within the time limit. Elixir, the game's energy resource and currency used to place cards must be rationed

or calculated to efficiently deploy cards defensively or offensively, adding to the strategy aspect. Trophies gained from each game can be used to measure the player's proficiency and dedication.

The senior class officers spent several months planning the logistics of this exciting debut competition. They needed to figure out how to turn a one versus one game into a full tournament while allowing everyone an equal opportunity to participate and show off their skills, which they accomplished by placing restrictions on the game to prevent those who spend money on in-game purchases from having an unfair advantage over others. The tournament featured around 40 players competing for first place through a series of brackets.

Senior class president Jacob Shi (I), who plays as "watermelooooon" says, "We settled on making this a very hype event, especially for the finals." The competition began on January 22 and culmi-

nated in an epic final. They broadcasted the finals in the Black Box on January 23 to an audience of over 60 people.

The promotion for the tournament began in late November 2025 by Charles Ellrodt (I), a *Clash Royale* enthusiast, who made the poster using *Photoshop* to promote the idea of a tournament.

One of the requirements for the tournament was recruiting a commentator to add to the excitement of the event. Daryl Cashman (I), an avid player of five years under the name "Cheese-Curds," was invited to commentate. Cashman expresses excitement at this opportunity, noting, "I have a lot of experience with the game, and I think it would be a great experience to connect with an audience over it." Since then, he has been brushing up on the cards and different combinations, or decks, that people might use in an effort to familiarize himself with the varying playstyles he may see in the tournament.

The final outcome of the tournament was based on strategy as well as a touch of luck, depending on the matchups and if one player's deck counters that of the other. According to Cashman, the result is impossible to predict because it is possible that the brackets may put "[one player] against [another player] that [they] either really counter or get countered by."

While trophies might measure a player's skill, there are many additional variables involved. Shi adds that there is potential for an underdog story if "a certain deck archetype gets countered by [an opponent's] deck archetype." The winner is therefore based mostly on strategy; trophies will be irrelevant in truly determining the strongest competitors.

Players expect to encounter many common decks, such as the 2.6 Hog Cycle, Double Prince, Lumberloon Bait

Cycle or Piggies Earthquake. Marcus Michaud (I), a competitor under the alias "Bobsta," mentions that his current favorite card to use is Firecracker. Shi enjoys using Rocket, Cashman likes Barbarian Barrel and Ellrodt currently uses Berserker the most.

For those who wish to begin playing, it is important to learn strategies before starting. Cashman suggests watching a video on the basics so that new players can learn how to make a deck and play the cards to their fullest potential. Players should "find some favorite cards and build [their] deck around those cards," as it is crucial to have a balanced deck. Beginners should be well-rounded in all fields of cards with card types varying between swarms, troops, tanks, spells, buildings and many more. The game itself is very beginner-friendly, with the difficulty slowly increasing as the player gains more experience and trophies. Since *Clash Royale* is an accessible mobile game, it is extremely straightforward to pick up if you have been inspired by the tournament's players.

The senior class's *Clash Royale* tournament took place after school across two days with the preliminary matches on January 22 and the finals on January 23. The tournament consisted of many intense matchups that went down to sudden death and even tiebreakers, with some winning by margins of as low as three health. The finals featured Ultimate Champion Alan "214263849" Zhao (I) and globally-ranked Ultimate Champion Carl "CG F2P♥FC" Gehring (II). Zhao ultimately came out on top as the first BLS *Clash Royale* champion after an extremely high-energy and high-level match against Gehring. Shi, along with many others who spectated, believes that the competition may have been the "highlight of the year."

Politics and Performance: Trump’s Patriot Games

Yes, Trump’s Patriot Games Make Sense

No, Trump’s Patriot Games Do NOT Make Sense

By Joseph Day (I)
Contributing Writer

When United States President Donald Trump first proposed his polarizing idea to host a four-day athletic competition between high-school athletes in honor of the nation’s 250th birthday, the public was split on how to react.

The competition will involve two high schoolers, one boy and one girl, from each of the 50 states facing off against one another in some athletic manner that has not yet been disclosed. Outbursts of dissent against the idea have followed the announcement, coming primarily from Democrats and people on the political spectrum who are opposed to Trump and his administration. While many of these claims are valid, there may still be some perceived benefits of the Patriot Games as explained by proponents of the concept.

An event like this is extremely unprecedented, as there has never before been anything like it in our country. Max Gomez (I), a current high school athlete at Boston Latin School, remarks that the idea is “eerily similar to *The Hunger Games*.” This is a criticism favored by many detractors of the Patriot Games, who argue that this competition feels like a real-life version of the fictitious series in which children from different districts are sent to battle each other to the death. The ultimate goal of the Patriot Games, however, is to bring the country together over a single competition.

A celebration of the country, the original purpose behind the competition, calls for the nation to gather together and unify around one thing, which is why the Patriot Games will include participants from all over the nation. As a country that is divided at every turn with so many major issues on the political stage, introducing something new and unprecedented may be the only way to effectively unite people during such a meaningful time. The Patriot Games, therefore, is worth a shot, even if it is only because it offers something new.

In addition to what it might do for the country as a whole, there would also be pivotal benefits for each competitor. For an athlete trying to make it in their respective field, nothing is better than exposure on the biggest stage, which is what the Patriot Games can provide. “I think that those people who get a chance to participate might be able to make a name for themselves depending on what they can do,” states Ronan O’Connor (I), a current student-athlete at BLS. It has not yet been determined what types of activities these competitors will be taking part in, but it will nevertheless give them a chance to showcase their skills and further their careers, leading them to collegiate athletics, professional contracts or monetary sponsorships. This could work in a similar way to established national sporting events for specific sports such as New Balance Track Nationals or All-American football games but in a more generalized sense and with the ability to reach a broader and more diversified audience.

The main obstacle to the success of the Patriot Games will most likely be the constant backlash that it will face throughout both the buildup and the actual event. Although technically an athletic event, it is thoroughly wrapped in political controversy. BLS student-athlete Annabelle Bagley (I) says that she “was appalled when [she] first heard about it,” a sentiment shared by many around the country.

The benefits that will certainly come with this event may be difficult to see, as it is inevitably tied so closely to such a polarizing side of our current political stage, but the Patriot Games should be recognized as what it is at its core: a national athletics event that will promote national unity and aid the next generation of American athletes and youth as a whole.



Win McNamée

By Trevor Gracombe (I)
Staff Writer

Two teenage participants are selected from each region by the powerful and wealthy capital to fight each other. This is the premise of Suzanne Collins’s novel *The Hunger Games*, a dystopian trilogy that features a televised “to the death” style of fighting competition between youths for the entertainment of wealthy residents of the fictional country Panem. Although it seems far from real life, United States President Donald Trump has recently shared plans for a similar competition to take place in America: the Patriot Games, where two athletes from each state will compete on national television.

This seems like an interesting premise at first glance. Americans can find unity in sports even though overall unity

between Americans is low. One example of this is the Red Sox’s heroic 2013 World Series championship in the wake of the tragic marathon bombing. Whether it is the Super Bowl, the National Basketball Association finals, or supporting American athletes in the Olympics or the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup, sports connect people and offer an often much-needed distraction from our daily lives. Savan Boxer (I) echoes this sentiment, pointing out: “It does seem like it can kind of bring the country together over an event, but I guess we shall see what happens.” Boxer mentions, however, the Patriot Games’ striking similarities to *The Hunger Games*, remarking that in the dystopian trilogy’s world, “the [games] would have started in 2026.”

The phrase “keep politics out of sports” is not as simple as it sounds, though, as politics inevitably impact players. Examples of this are Chicago Cubs third baseman Matt Shaw missing games to attend his friend Charlie Kirk’s funeral and English soccer player Jadon Sancho revealing a message reading “Justice for George Floyd” after scoring a goal. In more extreme cases, athletes have received threats from fans or suspensions from their league for their political statements.

Therefore, is it really possible to believe that Trump’s Patriot Games will be completely apolitical, as he suggests? It is hard to believe given the president’s desire to be the center of attention, as seen during Chelsea Football Club’s FIFA Club World Cup victory this past summer, when the president joined the champions on stage during their trophy celebration, much to the bemusement of the players. Chelsea captain Reece James later said, “I wasn’t expecting [Trump] to lift the trophy with us,” and that he thought Trump “was going to exit the stage, but he wanted to stay.” It is easy to believe that Trump will use this event, featuring teenagers seeking to demonstrate their athletic talents and represent their state, as a vehicle to further his political agenda and personal figure.

Another issue with the Patriot Games is the fact that it is yet another glamorous U.S. event that can be seen as a waste of money in a country in which over ten percent of the population lives in poverty, according to the national census. This administration has already been accused of inefficient spending that benefits the top one percent or even just the president’s personal entertainment. The White House is currently under construction as Trump is adding a new ballroom, expected to cost 400 million dollars. The administration’s most notable policy of 2025, additionally, was the “Big Beautiful Bill,” which lowered taxes on America’s wealthiest individuals, allowing billionaires like Elon Musk to gain over 100 billion dollars while many struggle to get by day-to-day.

Reggie Hesselbein (I) critiques the Patriot Games, saying, “I believe Trump’s Patriot Games are completely uncalled for. Focusing on creating a game that distracts from the state our country is in and does not improve the lives of many people in need shows the lack of responsibility and care the president has. These games are completely useless and just another stunt for Trump’s personal entertainment.”

What to Expect in the 2026 Winter Olympics

By Alice Fragasso (I)
& Jayla Martin (VI)
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

With the Winter Olympics coming up next month in Milan and Cortina, sports fans are on the edge of their seats from high expectations and excitement around their favorite teams and athletes, namely in hockey and skiing. Longstanding rivalries and record-breaking athletes lead millions of people to gather and watch the United States compete in the Winter Olympic Games, whether viewing the events in person or from home.

The United States’ hockey team has gained a lot of attention in recent years, particularly for its rivalry with the Canadian hockey team. Robert Fitzgibbon (I) shares that, along with many of his friends, he is mainly “excited for the four nations face off,”

which includes the national hockey teams of the U.S., Canada, Finland and Sweden.

Last winter, the United States lost in the final against Canada, building even more anticipation around this year’s face-off. Although there is no official tournament this year, the teams will still compete against each other in intense games during the Olympics.

Among those to look out for the face-off are the Tkachuk brothers from the U.S. team, who “were outstanding in the Four Nations Faceoff,” as varsity hockey player Max Peterson (I) notes, since many fans are excited to see them play on the Olympic team.

The U.S.’ rivalry with Canada began during the 1920s, when they faced each other in the Antwerp Olympics. The U.S. unfortunately lost this match, but the rivalry only grew stronger over the next 82 seasons in which they played against each other. Their rivalry has continued to grow because many of these athletes are teammates during their

regular National Hockey League season and now find themselves on opposite ends of the ice. Canada is likely the U.S. team’s biggest competition today.

Although it is not guaranteed that the U.S. and Canada will face each other this winter, many fans, including varsity hockey player Morgan Barbuto (I), are hoping that they do: “I am expecting the U.S. to do very well. [...] Hopefully, they play Canada in the gold medal game.”

Aside from this hundred-year rivalry, fans are also excited to watch the ski races, an essential part of the Winter Olympic Games. American skier Mikaela Shiffrin has been breaking records and making history throughout her career with the most skiing world cup wins in history at 107, an astounding record that she continues to build on.

Fitzgibbon shares that “Shiffrin is in her prime right now, which is what makes

her races so exciting to watch as a former ski racer.” Although originally from Colorado, Shiffrin has skied and trained in Vermont, where Fitzgibbon has also had the chance to ski. “It’s inspiring to see someone who has trained in the same area as me progress their career to Olympic levels,” he remarks.

In addition to Shiffrin, many younger athletes who have launched their snowboarding and skiing careers during the last Olympic season or plan to this year are expected to excel in Cortina. Young athletes to watch out for this season in the snowboarding and skiing realm include 18-year-old South Korean snowboarder Choi Ga-on, 19-year-old Italian skier Giorgia Collomb and 15-year-old Austrian skier Indra Brown.

The 2026 Winter Olympics will undoubtedly capture the attention of sports fans all over the world as they gather to witness history in the making in Milan and Cortina.