

FOCUS

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A BLIND BROOK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATION

June 2016

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Community Messages

Congratulations to the members of the Class of 2016 on their graduation!
Walk Date: June 23
Entrance by ticket only

The hearts of the Focus staff go out to the victims of the Orlando attacks. We send our love and support to the families of the victims and the victims themselves. We stand united in our condemnation of these horrible attacks.



Photo/Rachel Brown
(From left) juniors Paul Soden, Stacy Gerchick, Alexa Limb, and Petal Samrow thrill a group of fifth grade students with their extravaganza project.

5th Graders Wowed by Science Extravaganza

By Lauren Rothmann

Fifth graders from B.M.P. Ridge Street School were welcomed to the high school on Friday, June 3 for the annual Science Extravaganza, hosted by the AP Psychology and AP Biology students and their teacher, Julie Hensley.

"The Science Extravaganza first started when AP Biology was first only a senior course, and began as a project for students to work on teaching a science concept of their choice," said Hensley. She remarked that she got the idea for the Extravaganza from her husband, who teaches Physics at nearby Harrison High School.

Juniors began preparing for the Science Extravaganza as soon as AP exams were over and they had returned from their Junior Class Trip to Boston. Students worked on their presentations and projects every day in class leading up to the Extravaganza. On the day of the event, juniors presented their projects to fifth graders during both a morning and afternoon session, with a two hour break in between.

"I thought the process of practicing and preparing was hard, just because there were so many components, [but] on the actual day it was really fun! It was amazing to see how much kids really learn and that they soak up a lot of information. It reminded me what it was like to be interested in science and math," said junior Cate Smith.

Administrative Reorganization Approved

By Paul Soden

The Board of Education met in the George C. Trautwein Theater on June 6 to discuss various changes to Blind Brook High School and Middle Schools, including the reorganization of the administrative team. Many people in the community attended the meeting so that they could voice their opinions on this reorganization.

Members of the Board in attendance included President Jeffrey B. Diamond, Vice-President Ryan S. Goldstein, Ms. Wendy Z. Adler, Mr. Daniel C. Savitt, and Mrs. Ashley Welde. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jonathan Ross was also present at the meeting.

The meeting began with announcements by Dr. Ross regarding community events including the Senior Prom meeting, the Middle School band concert, the Destination Imagination World Competition in Tennessee, the annual Science Symposium, and the athletic banquet. An invitation for Public Participation was then extended to all in attendance to discuss matters not related to the reorganization of district faculty. The Board then responded to these comments and transitioned into the discussion of the reorganization.

Dr. Ross first gave opening remarks to the community, justifying

Stations at the Extravaganza included topics regarding plasticity, microscopy, fingerprinting, and psychological theories like the McGurk effect and the serial position effect.

"My project taught the fifth graders about the biological significance of their fingerprints. The presentation detailed the process of fingerprint information, the variation that exists among different fingerprint types, and the importance of fingerprints in the sensation of touch," said junior Paul Soden.

"A lot of research went into planning what we thought would be an informative yet fun presentation. In addition to providing facts about fingerprints to the students, preparation of interactive activities was required in order to provide the opportunity for more hands-on learning. One of our activities allowed for students to visualize the formation of fingerprints through the use of playdough," said Soden.

"My project was about memory and how although it's very helpful, it can be manipulated," said junior Sarah Simon, who is in AP Psychology. "The kids found it very interesting when we showed them a crime scene and then they had to figure out what actually happened," said Simon.

"The goal of the Extravaganza is for [AP] students to learn a new topic and to understand it at an advanced level, and then to teach [that topic] to [fifth grade] students at a basic level. I also wanted students to realize that they can learn things on their own, and have the autonomy to teach something on their own that they were passionate about," said Hensley.

"I think the Science Extravaganza was a great opportunity for AP science students to foster a lifelong love of learning in the fifth grade students," said Soden.

Since the juniors attended the Extravaganza when they were in the fifth grade, many of them felt nostalgia while presenting their projects.

ing his recommendation to the Board of Education. His recommendation proposed the creation of the position of Middle School Assistant Principal, the reestablishment of the position of Assistant Director of Pupil Services, and, in accordance with school board policy, the abolishment the position of Director of Guidance, which was held by Mary Mediate.

"I began to make my final decision to recommend this plan to the Board of Education when I began to do my administrative evaluations to evaluate the effectiveness of our team. I concluded that the proposed changes ultimately helped to make our school district stronger," said Ross.

Ross found the position of Middle School Assistant Principal to be necessary for various reasons. "I believe that our students and teachers will be served better by having separate Middle School and High School Associate

Continued on page 4

Seniors Honored for Achievements



Above: photo courtesy of Kyle Mak
 Right: photo courtesy of Greg Werlinich
 Above, seniors Kyle Mak, Andrew Farruggio, Jamie Epstein, and Seth Schuster leave the award ceremony, pleased with their accomplishments. At right, Lily Werlinich receives a journalism award from Dr. Kenyon.

By Sam Gibbs

The Senior Awards Ceremony, held on June 7, honored seniors who have excelled academically, shown good morals and values, and have participated meaningfully in the Blind Brook community and beyond. These students have worked very hard and have been very active in all of their endeavors.

The Senior Awards recognize students in various areas, including athletics, academics, service, and leadership. Each award has its own criteria, which are sent either to all 6-12 grade staff along with a roster of all the students, or to teachers in a specific department. Listed to the right are the total awards won by the senior class.

Awards were given out by each department, including English, Social Studies, Science, Italian, Spanish, Mathematics, Business, Athletics, and the arts, including Chorus, Band, Theater, and the Visual Arts. Other awards addressed students' moral fiber or growth of character, including the various citizenship and faculty awards.

Teachers were encouraged to indicate any experience they have had with specific students and make comments in regards to certain things, such as their character and ability to overcome obstacles.

The results were compiled and a committee was then held which was open to anyone who wanted to participate. Here, the criteria for each award was examined, along with the list of students that had been indicated for the awards according to the teachers.

Then the committee placed students where they fit best, while also looking to balance out the awards and make sure one student was not given too many awards.

The awards acknowledge the importance of certain characteristics, and honor students for perseverance and hard work, both of which are highly valued in the community.

A highlight of the ceremony was when senior Melissa Blum, who received eight awards, was also nominated as a candidate for the 2016 Presidential Scholars Award. This prestigious award seeks to recognize students who have demonstrated superb skills in the visual, creative, or performing arts, along with the career and technical education fields.

Although Blum was not one of the 161 students who received the award, she was one of the approximately 4,000 students that were invited to apply into the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.

"Before I received the invitation from [guidance counselor Stephanie] Jacobs, I wasn't aware that the program existed, but it was a huge honor to be considered for a scholarship among such a high-achieving group of applicants. I'm grateful that I was selected to apply," said Blum.

The morning after the Senior Awards ceremony, the junior class hosted a breakfast for the seniors.

Here, seniors were also presented with the yearbook, the theme of which was "Recorded Live." To go along with this theme, the staff linked the book with the app Aurasma, so that the reflection experience was more interactive. Photos had been curated for the book throughout the year by Editor in Chief Melissa Blum, along with her staff of photographers and editors.

After the breakfast there was a full-school assembly, where students and staff witnessed an abbreviated version of the Senior Awards ceremony. Following this, the Senior Class Officers handed a gavel to the Junior Class Officers to symbolize the passing of the torch, as the younger officers would be taking their place next school year.

Following this, the high school watched a video montage, created by senior Rebecca Regueira, that captured the lives of the current senior class. The montage will be played again at graduation.

- ★ *Steven J. Piccolo Memorial Award*: Emily Tazbin
- ★ *Dr. Carlos A. Lithgow Memorial Scholarship Award*: Noa Garfein
- ★ *Geraldine and Charles Gevertz HUMAN RELATIONS Memorial Award*: Matthew Streichler and Alex Silverstein
- ★ *Bruno M. Ponterio Award for Excellence in the Humanities*: Laura Marasa
- ★ *Valerie Weimer Memorial Award for Poetry*: Cayla Chang
- ★ *Excellence in English Award*: Joanna Goodman
- ★ *Pati Sherlock Creative Writing Award*: Luke Nadell
- ★ *Journalism Award*: Lily Werlinich
- ★ *The American Association of University Women Writing Award Outstanding Student Award*: Lily Werlinich
- ★ *The American Association of University Women Writing Excellence in Writing Award*: Samantha Friedlander
- ★ *Thespian Award for Outstanding Senior Performance*: Seth Schuster and Jamie Epstein
- ★ *Thespian Participation Award*: Brian Artabane, Jessica Bender, Rebecca Regueira
- ★ *Theatrical Renaissance Award*: Kathryn Comstock and Adam Newmark
- ★ *Portfolio Excellence Award in Photography*: Leah Kratochvil
- ★ *Outstanding Achievement in Instrumental Music*: Evan Wallace and Daniel O'Neil
- ★ *Dedication to Instrumental Music Award*: Jessica Bender and Jordan Sergio
- ★ *Dedication to Chorus Award*: Vanessa Numme and Amanda Luke
- ★ *Outstanding Achievement in Choral Music*: Jamie Epstein and Kathryn Comstock
- ★ *George Trautwein PTA Memorial Scholarship*: Melissa Blum
- ★ *Kyle Frand Award*: Kathryn Comstock
- ★ *U.S. Marine Corps Semper Fidelis Award for Musical Excellence*: Evan Wallace
- ★ *Senior Science Award*: Melissa Blum
- ★ *Mad Scientist Award*: Adam Hershaff
- ★ *NY Microscopes Co., LTD High School Science Award*: Rachel Park
- ★ *Math Department Tom Reitstetter Award*: Melissa Blum and Jacob Zeitlin
- ★ *Excellence in Business Education Award*: Jeremy Klein
- ★ *Excellence in History Award*: Samuel Zarkower
- ★ *Bruno M. Ponterio Award for Excellence & Creativity in Social Studies*: Alyssa Wei
- ★ *Jean Hurley Memorial Award for Citizenship*: Sydney Shiffman
- ★ *Excellence in Spanish Award*: Evan Wallace and Alyssa Wei
- ★ *Senior Italian Award*: Samantha Friedlander and Joseph Livornese
- ★ *U.S. Marine Corps Distinguished Athlete Award*: Matthew Dubin and Eleni Kohilakis
- ★ *Ted Reed Memorial Scholarship Award*: Sarah Carmona and Brandon Hamlet
- ★ *James F. Spano Scholarship Award*: Mackenzie Korpi and Kyle Mak
- ★ *Faculty Participation Award*: Sanika Mehta, Emily Rattner, and Baptiste Saliba
- ★ *Faculty Leadership Award*: Caroline Rose, Andrew Farruggio, and Lana Fabrizio
- ★ *Faculty Service Award*: Rebecca Regueira, Noah Lubin, and Chloe Greenwald
- ★ *Spirit of Blind Brook Award*: Amanda Hurwitz
- ★ *Certificate for Special Congressional Recognition from Nita Lowey*: Evan Wallace
- ★ *Community Service in Memory of B. Sitner Award*: Skylar Zakarin
- ★ *Senator George Latimer Certificate of Merit Outstanding Community Service Award*: Jason Christal
- ★ *Blind Brook Community Service Award*: Leah Kratochvil and Luke Nadell
- ★ *Prudential Spirit of Community*: Alyssa Wei
- ★ *Victor A. Ridder Scholarship*: Kathryn Comstock
- ★ *National Merit Semifinalists*: Melissa Blum, Jacob Zeitlin, and Sam Zarkower
- ★ *National Merit Scholarship Winners*: Melissa Blum and Jacob Zeitlin
- ★ *40/40 Club Scholarship*: Kyle Mak
- ★ *PTA Scholarship Award for Character Development*: Emily Rattner
- ★ *Blind Brook Enrichment Program Scholarship*: Jason Christal and Marly Suesserman
- ★ *PC/RB Rotary Club Individual Achievement Award*: Eleni Kohilakis
- ★ *Port Chester Teacher's Federal Credit Union for General Excellence in Education Award*: Nicole Axelrod
- ★ *Rye Brook PBA Criminal Justice Memorial Scholarship Award*: Jacob Zeitlin and Josh Rosson
- ★ *Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendent's Achievement Award*: Melissa Blum and Sam Zarkower
- ★ *U.S. Marine Corps Scholastic Excellence Award*: Leah Kratochvil
- ★ *United States Presidential Scholar Award Finalist*: Melissa Blum
- ★ *Blind Brook-Rye Federation of Teachers Mike Dockweller Award*: Evan Wallace

Junior Book Awards

By Leah Kratochvil and Lily Werlinich

At a school-wide ceremony in late May, twenty juniors were awarded Book Awards: national honors given in recognition of academic achievement, exemplary character, and service to the community. The recipients are selected by faculty members based on observation and other acquired knowledge and, along with the awards themselves, reflect the values of the awarding institution.

“Blind Brook is a really prestigious high school and the teachers do a really great job at preparing the students here. Winning an award and being considered a top member of the class—God knows how—is a really big surprise and a huge honor.”

- Robert Giuliano

“I’m definitely honored to have received this award. It feels really good to know that my work is being noticed, but I definitely feel that it’s a collaborative effort between students and teachers. I wouldn’t be the person I am today without the help and hard work of my teachers and the fact that they never gave up on me.”

-Petal Samrow

“For me, the Yale award symbolizes years of labor and dedication to striving for excellence. While perhaps the true prize is having grown up in such a nurturing environment, the acknowledgement is a testament to my ability to bear future toiling on the road ahead.”

-Rowan Reddy

“It was an honor to have a received one [a book award] after watching the Book Awards every year since ninth grade. Junior year was tough, but it has flown by and it’s nice to be able to reflect upon how hard work can really pay off.”

-Mindy Leder

Hannah Brady



University of Rochester Frederick Douglas & Susan B. Anthony Award nominates a junior who has demonstrated commitment to understanding and addressing difficult social issues as well as leadership and dedication to community action, while maintaining strong grades and rigorous courses in the humanities and social sciences

Stacy Gerchick



Brown University Book Award honors a member of the junior class who demonstrates excellent verbal and written communication skills and has excelled in the area of English

Hailey Feuerman



Oberlin College Alumni Book Award presented to a member of the junior class who has exhibited high academic standing in English or Humanities, overall rigor in all areas of study and commitment to social justice in school and in the community

Erica Wels



University of Rochester George Eastman Young Leaders Award presented to a junior who has demonstrated strong leadership in school & the community and extensive involvement in extracurricular activities while maintaining high grades and challenging courses

Spencer Kaplan



Columbia University Social Studies Award awarded to a junior who is intellectually curious and who has demonstrated a high level of achievement in social studies

Adam Fleishaker



University of Rochester Xerox Award given to a student who is innovative in the field of Information Technology and leads others to new solutions

Petal Samrow



Mount Holyoke College Book Award made to a young woman in the junior class who has earned an excellent academic record and who has exhibited qualities of leadership and service to the school

Justin John



Allison Hamburger

St. Michael's College Book Award for Scholarship and Service recognizes students who demonstrate a sustained and sincere commitment to community service combined with a high level of academic achievement with a social conscience

Rowan Reddy



Yale University Book Award awarded to an outstanding student who displays excellence in scholarship and exemplary character and demonstrates involvement in extracurricular activities

Lauren Rothmann



Wellesley College Book Award honors a female student in the junior class whose academic record and character are exceptional, who has made significant personal contributions to her school and/or community, and who is in the top 5% of her class

Samuel Landino



University of Pennsylvania Book Award goes to a junior who best exemplifies the qualities of Benjamin Franklin – a scholar and innovator who serves the community, and who is enrolled in the most rigorous academic program and in the top 5% of the class

Bryan Weintraub



Brandeis University Book Award awarded to a high school Junior in the top 10% of the class who demonstrates a commitment to civic engagement, community service, political activism, social justice, or volunteer work

Robert Giuliano



Alexandra Limb

Dartmouth College Book Award presented to a student who has performed in the top 10% of the class, demonstrates exemplary character and excels in at least one non-academic area

Kaveri Reddy



Cornell University Book Award awarded to a high school Junior who has achieved general academic excellence, and who has also demonstrated an above-average involvement in extracurricular activities as well as a meaningful participation in community service

Mindy Leder



Bryn Mawr President's Book Award presented to a young woman in the junior class who exhibits an intense intellectual commitment, a purposeful vision of her life and a desire to make a meaningful contribution to the world

Owen Xie



The Rensselaer Medal Science & Math Award awarded to a student in the top 10% of the class who excels in advanced math and science courses

Paul Soden



Harvard-Radcliffe Book Award awarded to an outstanding student who displays "excellence in scholarship and demonstrates exemplary character"

Sydney Goodman



University of Rochester Bausch & Lomb in recognition of high achievement and rigor in science classes, high PSAT and/or SAT math scores and superior intellectual promise in the field of science as well as positive contributions to school and the larger community

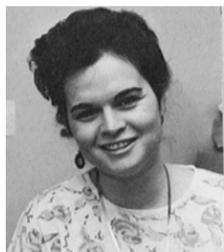
Faculty and Staff Milestones

By Stacy Gerchick and Paul Soden



Bridget Gorman, library clerk at the Blind Brook Middle/High School is retiring after 26 years. Gorman will be greatly missed by the entire Blind Brook community for all of her hard work and dedication to the school. "I'll miss that she's become a good friend over the time we've been in the library together. I will also miss her dependability and her willingness to work hard and ultimately sort of read my mind so that I don't even really have to ask. She anticipates so well, and I'm going to have to train somebody new to do that," said Library Media Specialist Jean Follansbee, who worked closely with Gorman.

1990



School nurse Nancy Garretto is celebrating her 30th year working at Blind Brook. Throughout her time in the district, she has served an integral role in helping maintain the health and well being of both middle and high school students. "Ever since sixth grade, I have gotten to know Mrs. Garretto really well, and I can confidently say that she is one of the nicest people that I know. She always puts the wellbeing of students above her own. She is so kind, caring, and supportive, and she always has such a positive impact on BBHS," said Junior Emma DePaola.

1987



Social Studies teacher Martine Curto is also celebrating her 30th year working at Blind Brook. Curto's charisma and engaging teaching style continues to make her a role model to all students. "Mrs. Curto is an amazing teacher that I saw [then,] as...a student, and now, as a teacher. Her focus on art as a tool for teaching was inspirational back then, and I think it still impacts kids now. One of my best friends became a history teacher because of Martine, traveled to Italy because of Martine, and saw a lot of the artwork that she taught. So, she's just a phenomenal teacher, and I wish she could be here when my kids come to school in 15 years," said English teacher and Blind Brook alumna Mackenzie Gasparini.

1987



Susan Arkawy is celebrating her 46th year at Blind Brook. Throughout her time in the district, Arkawy has served as the Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools as well as district clerk. She was a parent in the district, and also served as president of the PTA. The founder of the Blind Brook Exchange magazine, Arkawy printed it in her own basement on a mimeograph and distributed it to the community. As district clerk, she performed a lot of research in service to the Superintendent, and for that reason, in conjunction with her seniority, Arkawy was the keeper of much of Blind Brook's history.

1989

Administrative Reorganization Approved

Continued from page 1

Principals. There is only so much time in each day for one associate principal to carry out the mandated responsibilities for both schools. Hiring a Middle School Assistant Principal frees up the High School Assistant Principal to better support the students at Blind Brook," said Ross. "We have a lot of students with disabilities and section 504 accommodations at Blind Brook. My recommendation to hire an Assistant Director of Pupil's Services will provide more assistance to the Director of Pupil's Services so that he can run this department more efficiently," he said.

Another Public Participation session then afforded community attendees the opportunity to articulate their concerns with the recommendations and express their viewpoints on the issue.

Over thirty students, parents, faculty, and members of the community participated and spoke out about the reorganization.

"I spoke at the meeting in order to voice my position

regarding the necessity for the position of the Director of Guidance. Being a rising senior, this issue directly affects me and I believe that student participation in the meeting was important," said

student Kaveri Reddy.

A major concern voiced by the community is how the many responsibilities of the Director of Guidance will now be managed now that the position no longer

exists.

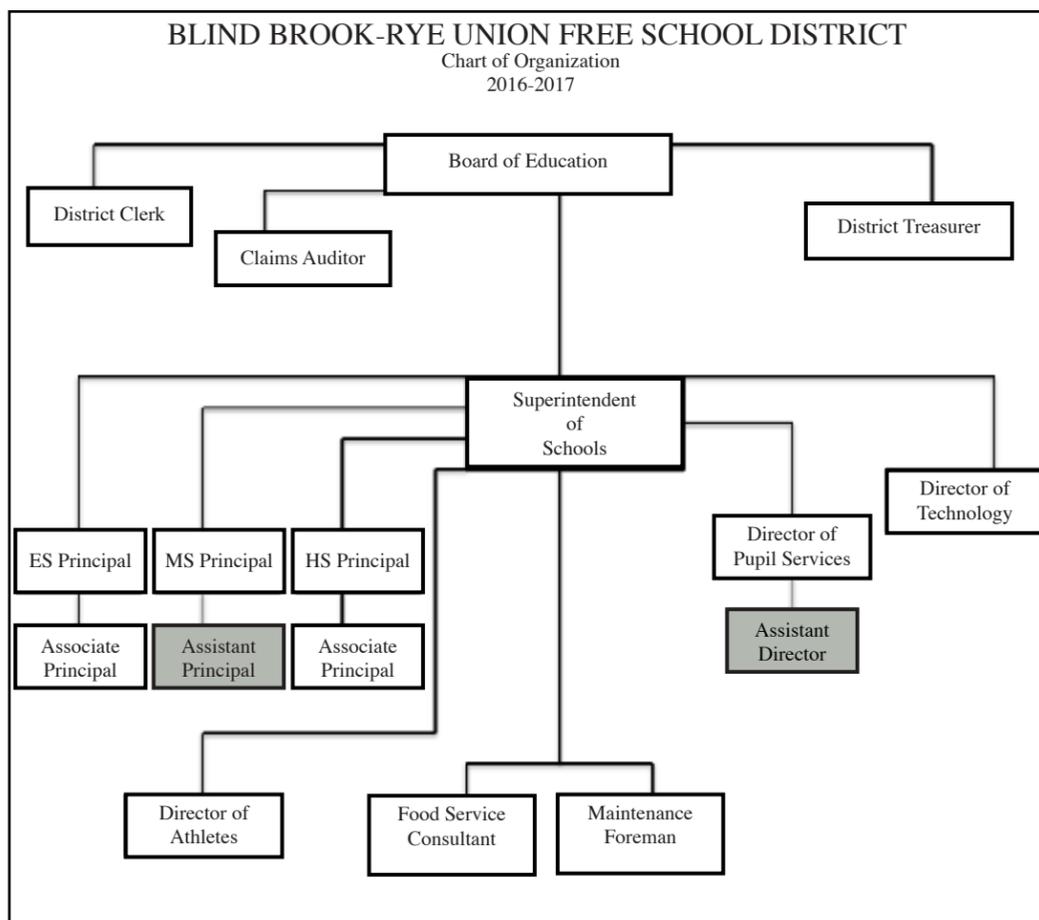
"The roles and duties of the Director of Guidance were mostly related to college advising at the high school level. These duties will be addressed at the July 6 board meeting and hopefully the community will accept what we have done," said Ross.

After over two hours of public comments, the Board of Education voted on the policy changes discussed throughout the meeting, particularly an adjustment to policy 4212, which would amend the district organizational chart for the 2016-2017 school year.

The Board voted four to one in favor of the proposed amendment to the district organizational chart, thus eliminating the position held by Mediate.

"I was very disappointed in [the Board of Education's] decision to abolish the position of the Director of Guidance," said Reddy.

"My job as the Superintendent is to take a step back, consider all student needs, and recommend an organizational structure that will best meet them," said Ross.



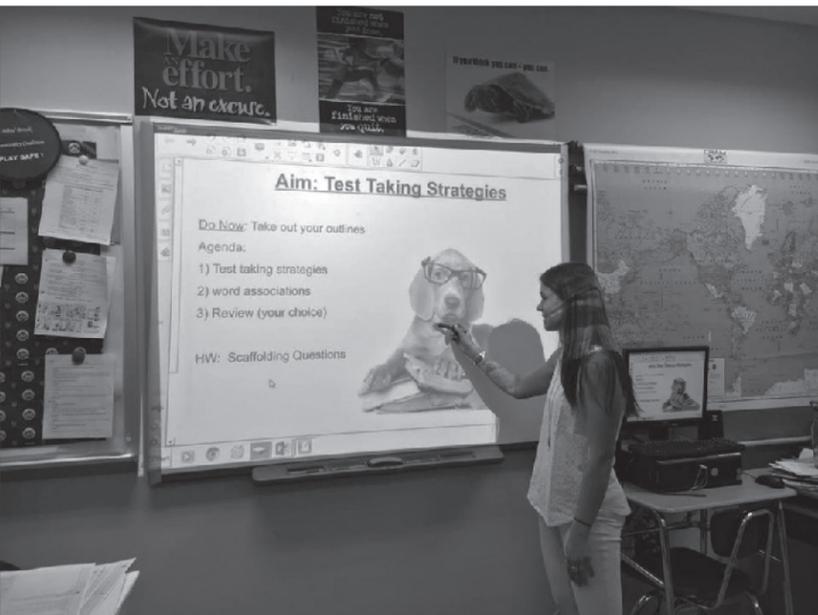
New organization of the Blind Brook administration. Gray areas show additions.



Ms. Blatt discusses papers with sophomore Sarah Rattner.



Mr. Von Hollen checks his email mid-workday.



Ms. Maksym gives students test-taking tips.



Ms. Samilow smiles proudly in front of the Italian board in the hall.

Four Teachers Awarded Tenure

By Paul Soden

This year, the Board of Education conferred tenure on four high school teachers: Ms. Talya Blatt, Social Studies; Mr. Charles Von Hollen, Computer Science teacher and technology staff developer; Ms. Victoria Maksym, Special Education teacher; and Ms. Rachel Samilow, Foreign Language teacher.

Mr. Von Hollen is involved in many student activities pertaining to the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) initiative.

“Now that I have tenure, my role in the school as teacher, technology staff developer, and club advisor will grow as I continue to be involved in the Blind Brook community. In the coming years, I plan to become even more immersed in school events as Blind Brook continues to feel more like home,” said Von Hollen.

Von Hollen also serves as advisor to the Computer Club, which seeks to expand students’ knowledge about technology and computer science, and as co-adviser to Impulse, the literary magazine. Von Hollen was essential in the production of the online version of the publication.

“Mr. Von Hollen is a great teacher who is really passionate about computer science and who truly wants to engage students by making the class enjoyable and very useful,” said junior Alexa Limb.

Ms. Samilow, who currently teaches Italian 3 and Italian 4, Honors Italian 3, and Spanish 3, is also the co-adviser of the Spanish Club and the adviser of the Italian club. Through these clubs, she is able to take on a stronger role in the community and share her passion for foreign languages with her students.

“It feels great to have been awarded the honor of tenure. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the students and staff members at Blind Brook in these past three years and I look forward to the future,” said Samilow.

Many of Samilow’s students are delighted that she has earned recognition for her patience and cooperation with her students.

“She is always there to help her students and is truly a fantastic teacher,” said junior Allison Gelfarb, who had Samilow as a Spanish teacher last year.

“[With tenure], I plan to continue to be involved in student life at Blind Brook and hope to spend time attending more events within the school. My favorite part of being at Blind

Brook is watching my students grow in and out of the classroom throughout high school and being able to help them along the way,” said Samilow.

Academic tenure is a form of job security for educators that extends tenured teachers and other school officials the opportunity to hold their positions until retirement age. Each year, faculty members are awarded tenure and are welcomed to become a more permanent part of the Blind Brook community.

At Blind Brook, tenure appointments follow the strict rules and regulations put into place by New York State and require teachers to demonstrate their teaching abilities throughout a probationary period in order to be considered. Most teachers have a probationary period of about three to four years in order to earn tenure.

At the end of each teacher’s probationary period, the Superintendent of the district makes recommendations for tenure to the Board of Education based on classroom observations and overall teacher performance. Teachers are typically rated using the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) standards, and those teachers who meet the criteria of effective or highly effective (a score of 75-100 composite out of a possible 100 points) are usually recommended for tenure.

The APPR sustains the professional growth of educators by evaluating teachers based upon their students’ growth and achievement and their overall effectiveness compared to their colleagues.

The Board of Education must then consider the Superintendent’s recommendations and vote to grant certain faculty members tenure.

Even if a teacher does not receive tenure after their probationary period, they may have their probationary period extended for one year, at the end of which they will be re-evaluated for tenure by the superintendent.

The purpose of the rigorous and intricate process of tenure reception is to promote a philosophy of continuous improvement in the quality of education delivered to students. The process affords dedicated teachers the opportunity to stand out and to be recognized for their commitment to the success of their students.

Lily Werlinich: Editor in Chief

I was in Amsterdam when I heard about the Stanford rape victim, in bed when I read about the Orlando attacks, but the impossible words sent me miles away, to a place of pain where all I could register was the persistent echo—*why, again, why, again, why*. The words of the Stanford rape victim steeled my spine in rage; the forty nine Orlando knells bent it in anguish.

Like many others, I took to social media to communicate my horror. I read the articles pleading for gun control. I watched the videos of survivors reliving their terror. I scrolled through the photos, perused a few of the letters.

But what had I—had we—accomplished? What had we truly changed by sending up our prayers, our hashtags, and our posts about the Stanford rape victim and those slain in Orlando?

Sure, we got the message circulating. But not for a second can I fool myself into thinking that any of this “clicktivism” was enough to force the change I wish to see in the world.

The time for empty words on social media is *over*. So is the time for complacency. It is time to get mad, to get furious, and to *do* something about it.

Are you angry about the lenient sentencing Brock Turner received for consciously raping an intoxicated woman? For taking advantage of her when she could not stand, let alone voice her legal consent? I am.

Does your soul ache for those brutally gunned down in Orlando? For the unimaginable suffering of the LGBTQ* community and the persecution it continues to face? Mine does.

So do something. Write letters to your newspaper, your Congressperson, your Senator. Sign petitions, form an advocacy group, educate yourself about the importance of bystander intervention. Give your support, your love, and your understanding to those who have been impacted by these terrible events. They need it. We all do.

We cannot forget about these tragedies, nor can we habituate ourselves to them. Such horrors should not happen with this frequency. Such malice should not be normal to us.

If we choose to do so, Class of 2016, we can transform this spiteful world into an Eden where peace, understanding, and love abound. Let's start now.

FOCUS

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Focus is a student-run public forum. Staff members make all content decisions.
Focus is a member of CSPA, NSPA, and Quill and Scroll.

Now, for a mood change with some acknowledgements:

To my fantastic family, let me shower you in all the hugs and kisses that I do not actually like to receive often because too much physical contact weirds me out. I love you all so much and I doubt that I would have made it through the past four years (and more) without your constant support, sardonic quips, and patient ears that you lent for my frequent whines and complaints.

To my friends, you have kept pushing me up this mountain. Without all of you I would most likely be holed up in a pungent bed, drooling and muttering to myself about the respective merits of various sitcoms. You have brought me out of myself and I love you for it.

To my teachers, know that you have helped to shape a lifelong learner. The passion and knowledge that you have brought to your classes have molded me, improved me, and driven me to become the person I am today. I am forever grateful.

To Principal Lambert, please allow me to bestow upon you the thanks that you have earned for your tireless devotion to this school, its teachers, and the students they nurture. I will never forget the support that you have shown *Focus* this year, nor will I forget your patience and grace in allowing me to barge into your office at random intervals to (politely, I hope) demand information for the paper. (A special shout-out to Mrs. Connor for allowing me to do this.)

To my incredible *Focus* staff and editors, I am incredibly appreciative of the work that you have put in to make this paper the best that it has ever been. The metamorphosis that *Focus* has undergone in merely a year is stunning, and it could not have been accomplished without every single one of you.

Finally, to my sublime teacher, advisor, and mentor, Dr. Kenyon, I cannot properly express my gratitude to you in words—which must be somewhat of a disappointment to you, my English teacher of two years. You have you fed and watered my love of this wonky language and have helped me to transform *Focus* into a newspaper that is truly special. But above all of this, above being my teacher, advisor, and mentor, you have been my friend, a person that I can call on rant to about books and kittens, a person on whom I can trust and depend. I know that I have not always obeyed the prompt, but you have made these past three years better than I could ever have imagined. So thank you.

Being Editor in Chief of *Focus* was challenging, aggravating, sweaty, exhausting, and tear-out-my-hair and beat-on-my-chest-like-Tarzan frustrating. There were times when I cursed myself for getting involved as a freshman, when I wanted to hurl my laptop off of a bridge, if only it would make the typos disappear.

But no matter how many times I complained, how many hours I spent in that clammy Mac Lab, how many emails and texts and Facebook messages I sent about *Focus*, I still loved it.

I loved my job. I loved sinking my teeth into a section and knowing that with a few revisions I could make an article sparkle. I loved watching a group of brilliant minds produce something beautiful and creative that I could never have done alone. I loved watching as the words we published were debated across halls and classrooms. I loved being able to write about what mattered to me, to sign my name to an editorial and know that I had spoken for what I believed in.

I hope that down the road, I will find myself with more opportunities to create and to collaborate like the ones that *Focus* has given me. But even if I do not find these opportunities, I am so grateful to carry with me the memories of this year. So my last thank you is for my newspaper, *Focus*.

Thank you for giving me a voice.

Lily Werlinich

Editor-in-Chief, *Focus*

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Leah Kratochvil: Managing Editor



It took me four days of AP Calculus to understand integrals and anti-derivatives. It took me four years of high school to understand an adage I have heard since I was five: be yourself.

Just a few years ago, I wanted out. Little comforted me more than the prospect of being out of this high school, out of this town. I was in my “awkward phase,” that illustrious period of time from middle school until the be-

ginning of high school when hormones are exploding out of our bodies and voices are cracking and outfits we pick for ourselves lack any remote coordination of patterns and colors whatsoever. A time when emotions are running high.

An extrovert all my life, I became introverted. I became tired of seeing the same people over and over again, in school and at the movies and at the mall. I was suddenly aware of the vast world beyond our insignificant town, and I wanted to be a part of the outside.

Simultaneously, I began to learn of some reasons this town is so incredible. I was told I was lucky to go to such a highly regarded school, lucky to live in the house I did, lucky to have the friends I had.

I scoffed and turned up my nose at such outrageous remarks, usually made by my mother or father (both of whom will whole-heartedly uphold this assertion, I'm not exaggerating). I raised my eyebrows as I listened to a Blind Brook alum discuss his initial fears of moving beyond the shelter of the close-knit Rye Brook community.

All I could see were the negatives: the smallness, the lack of diversity, the high-strung, entitled attitudes of the minority. So I shut myself out.

My last two years at Blind Brook have been perhaps the best two years of my (albeit eighteen-year) life. I got involved.

I ran for varsity teams two out of three seasons a year for Blind Brook and I improved with each year. In my junior year, I was on the executive board for two of the three clubs that I would continue into my senior year, including Focus. I chose classes I wanted to take. I discovered what I loved. And as I worked alongside others who shared my passions and values, I realized that there was much more to this town than met my naive young eye.

The “stereotypical Blind-Brooker” became the students of Blind Brook. I realized that I belonged here. And so can anyone else. You just have to be yourself. Most people here do like “different,” especially when it is accompanied by confidence. And those who do not? They aren't worth another second of your precious time.

Take advantage of opportunities you are given. Teachers care. Friends care.

So, to the faculty at Blind Brook—teachers, custodians, and administrators who have also served as advisers, tutors, recommenders, coaches, friends—I send you my most sincere gratitude and well wishes. Thank you for the lessons, the smiles, and the laughs.

To my classmates—my teammates, my midnight-runners, my co-editors, my friends—may you see the best of futures. Thank you for the lessons, the smiles, and the laughs. I mean it.

I care. I could not have gotten here without you.

Rachel Park: Layout Editor

To the Class of 2016, I would like to say congratulations. It has been four great years with you all. I have learned a lot throughout these years as a student, friend, and person with the help of all my peers and mentors. From managing my time efficiently to learning how to cope with stress properly, to gaining more self-confidence and becoming more involved, I've learned some very important life lessons along the way.

Of course there were the ups and downs. However, none of that compares to what I'm leaving Blind Brook with: a confident and growing mindset. This high school has, slowly but surely, molded me into the person that I am now and will continue to be. As a result, I want to share a few tips that helped me improve myself with the current students at Blind Brook.

First, prioritize your work from most to least important when under a time constraint. All high school students will inevitably come across a time when they leave assignments uncompleted until the night before they are due.

So, rather than stressing about finishing all your as-



signments, do the ones that you think are most important and then go to sleep. If you rationalize the situation, there is no point in stressing about something you know you cannot complete well. On the other hand, if you are

in this situation a lot, learn that this was a time management issue that you should fix for next time.

That brings me to my second point. Although it is challenging, try to prioritize sleep. I realized that staying up until 4 a.m. in the morning trying to finish my work was not helpful for me in the long run. I only became more tired throughout the week and I lost my concentration during school.

As busy and worried high school students, it is difficult to leave work uncompleted and to go to sleep comfortably, but it is vital to get a goodnight's sleep for many psychological and biological reasons.

Lastly, do not stress over the little things. Just make sure not to learn from your mistakes so that you do keep repeating them.

With these three things that I've learned during high school, I was able to better myself as a person and as a student.

Finally, I just want to leave off by saying thank you to the Class of 2016 and to everyone at Blind Brook High School.

Skylar Zakarin: Viewpoints Editor

It was not until my senior year that I decided to join Midnight Run. I thought it would be a good idea to experience more of what Blind Brook had to offer before I graduated. When I was chosen to go on the final run of the season, I was overwhelmed with excitement.

In one night, I saw a new side of Mr. Beatty, the club advisor, one of compassion and empathy and sensitivity. In one night, I got closer with other students, including freshmen that I probably would never have encountered otherwise.

In one night, I saw people beg. I saw people desperate for more food. And even though I went to the soup kitchen in Port Chester every Thursday for four years, I got to see people who were suffering in their natural habitat: the sidewalks of Manhattan. I saw a man get beaten up along the walls of the Port Authority Station. I saw people who were obviously under the influence of drugs.

It was frightening, and upsetting, especially because there was only so much we could do for these people. Our stock was limited. And though it hurt to say no, we had to, over and over again. But I took more away from one night in a city so close to home than I could ever hope for in a classroom setting.

If I could leave current students with one piece of advice, it would be to explore. I had so many

obligations throughout high school and at many points, I bit off more than I could chew. But I am glad that I prioritized my commitment to a new club in my senior year.

I wanted to see change; I wanted to be change. I wanted to feel like I was at the bottom of the food chain again, a level of discomfort that I had not felt since my freshman year. I had become accustomed to comfort. I had settled into my routine in Blind Brook. And, although Blind Brook High School has its fair share of flaws, it is luxuriously comfortable.

When I applied to the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, I did not think I would actually end up going there. It was so far away. It promised hours of stressful paperwork to gain a study permit. I would have to learn systems that everyone but us Americans stick to, like the metric system, and changing “center” to “centre” and “flavor” to “flavour.”

It is hard growing up with the same people in the same environment for seventeen years. But living here has provided me with a passion for culture and diversity. Now, I will enter a university with 21% international students. It is so diverse. And without the confinement of the Rye Brook “bubble”, I probably would not be so thirsty for a new way of life. I might never have considered Canada as my new



home for the next four years.

With hindsight in my favor, I am glad I took chances and tried new things. And thanks to my friends, family, and the Blind Brook faculty and staff, I am proud to say that I am graduating from such a prestigious public school. I am forever indebted to those who helped shape who I am as a young adult and a citizen of the world.

So, thank you. And congratulations to the Class of 2016!

Sydney Shiffman: Features Editor



I was born in New York City. At the age of two, my family relocated to a house in Rye Brook to accommodate our growing unit. Upon the birth of my younger brother, the Shiffmans were a group of five, and so we found ourselves in this suburban town.

I, like many of you, have been in the Blind Brook school district since kindergarten. And so, I, like many of you, am well aware that Bruno M. Ponterio Ridge Street

School, Blind Brook Middle School, and Blind Brook High School are the pinnacles of our town.

Looking back on my past eighteen years in Rye Brook, I have discovered that the biggest challenge I faced was not the size of our district, but how our small student body lacks opportunities available to larger schools in the Westchester area.

In the past four years, I have taken core academic classes ranging from literature to Latin and chemistry to calculus; I have read Dickens and Descartes, Fitzgerald and Freud, Hamilton and Hume. But, despite my worldly studies, I was not taking classes that truly interested me until my senior year.

It is logical that as we grow older, we are afforded more choice in our course selections. After all, with age comes a more developed brain, and thus, we are capable of more complex thought processes. But I'm not here to discuss the science behind why we can take more difficult classes as we get closer to graduation. Quite frankly, for the sake of my argument, it's not important. I'm focused on how we are limited academically by the size of our school.

Despite how challenging it has been to manage five APs, apply to college, and keep up with extracurricular activities, my senior year has been the most enjoyable

of my high school career. (And no, I don't say that as a second semester senior who's knee-deep in incomplete homework and has been watching *Scandal* on Netflix for seventeen hours straight).

I'm speaking purely from an academic standpoint. The six courses in which I am enrolled have piqued my interest. Though I don't know what I am going to study in college, my knowledge of these subjects has unveiled my interests in creative writing, law, and European history.

Furthermore, I started to weed out what I do not like: quantum mechanics, torques, thermodynamics (basically just physics, actually. Sorry, Mr. Glickman. It's not you, it's me).

If I'd had a broader course selection earlier in my high school career, I believe that I would have been able to narrow my curiosity, which has not yet settled. I want to be fluent in French, conversational in criminology, and articulate in art history. I have not been able to take these courses at Blind Brook because we do not have high enrollment stats comparable to those of other Westchester schools.

So, looking ahead, I suggest that instead of spending precious time dwelling on doors that have closed, we open new doors by expanding our academic agenda.

Seth Schuster: Politics Editor

With every end comes a beginning. Cliché, I know. But, it's true.

Things do not always go as planned. So, sometimes it's best to expect the unexpected. The person I was when I entered high school is a vastly different person than who I am today. I am far more confident, compassionate, and overall happier. Why, might you ask? Because my high school career did not go as planned. At least the second half did not.

Freshman year and sophomore year I played soccer. Junior year and senior year I did not.

I was cut from the varsity squad the summer entering junior year. I was at a loss. Soccer was always my main extracurricular activity in the fall. This was the end—I would have nothing to do, all my friends would be at soccer. I knew I'd be a hermit, alone in my house every-day after school, wasting away my life. But really, I knew nothing. See, sophomore year I began doing this thing called theatre—but only because I was begged to by Ms. Colangelo, the theater director.

She asked me to audition for *Guys and Dolls*. After she called my house multiple times regarding my prospective audition, I eventually agreed to go—out of guilt.

Let me clarify. I agreed to go—not to audition. But



somehow, surely enough, I found myself singing "Luck Be A Lady" in front of a casting committee, who would later pin me as Rusty Charlie in *Guys and Dolls*.

Initially I said no because I was embarrassed. I didn't want people to look at me differently. I was an athlete, not a thespian.

I wasn't planning on doing the fall show during my junior year, because soccer was going to be my main priority. But when soccer was no longer a part of my life, my parents forced me to do something productive with my life. So I sent Ms. C an email. I told her she had my full commitment in the fall of 2014. My soccer career had met its end, and my theatre career was only just beginning—and that set the rest of my high school career into motion.

Now, after performing the opening song, "Fugue for Tinhorns," in *Guys and Dolls* and scoring four leading roles in *Little Shop of Horrors*, *West Side Story*, *Leader of the Pack*, and *Anything Goes*, I am heavily involved in the Blind Brook theater community. When in full swing, I spent about forty hours at rehearsal per week.

Forty hours per week is a ton of time, a huge commitment. So, why do I do it? Because I love it. Because it's fun. Because it's rewarding. Far more rewarding, I might add, than sitting my sorry butt on the bench for two seasons.

Not all will go as planned in life, so just sit tight and enjoy the ride. Perhaps your true calling is just waiting for you to stumble upon it. So thank you, Ms. Colangelo, for helping me to stumble upon mine, and for bestowing me with memories that I'll cherish forever.

Amanda Luke: Health and Science Editor

This issue of *Focus*, in my opinion, is going to be the most truly read issue of *Focus* this year. Why? Partly because those bored audience members of the graduation ceremony are trying to pass the time before the event begins. Others maybe have brought it home and reading it in their spare time.

Truthfully, though, I think this will be the most valued issue because it is the last issue of the school year. It's the last hurrah. Of course, there's a lot of sentimentality behind that. Writers and editors are graduating, and this is the last time they'll print their words and share their ideas for *Focus*.

When I was a freshman, and decided to write for *Focus*, I did not understand the process that went behind sharing an idea and creating the paper. I naively thought, in a few words, that it was writing, editing, re-editing, arranging the blurbs in a pretty way, gathering some photos, and then printing it out.

Yes, that is what *Focus* does, but it does it to much larger extent. There are meetings, and long hours poured into the paper. There are people behind the scenes making calls, hunting down quotes, taking last minute photos, fixing grammatical errors, and practically making their homes in the high school Mac Lab.

I was not one of those people that stayed late into the night in the Mac Lab. I cannot testify to how it feels in the final hours finishing the paper, because I am at the start of the assembly line. I am an editor.

Editors conduct the majority of their work during the first steps of creating the paper. Roughly a month or so before the paper is published, editors think of ideas for the paper, have them vetted by the Editor in Chief, assign the articles, and edit the final products.

As Health and Science Editor, catering to the high school people, the audience, has been the most difficult task of this job. It is not always easy to intrigue high school students to read about their health and the changing world around them, especially when it is not always something they would see or feel everyday.

I believe that being editor has been one of the most challenging, yet rewarding, responsibilities that I have ever had. For the last two years I have learned a lot about commitment, dedication, and how great things take time. The paper we create appears to be black and white ink on paper, but it symbolizes tireless effort and perseverance.

I would like to thank all the staff of *Focus* during my last four years, including my writers, columnists, fellow editors, and web designers and editors. I am grateful es-



pecially for the layout staff, editors-in-chiefs, managing editors, and our advisor Dr. Kenyon, who has stayed late in the Mac Lab, sometimes even after all had already left the building, to ensure that the paper ended up in the students' appreciative hands.

Mackenzie Korpi: Sports Editor



This spring, I played in my last high school lacrosse game. Not only was it my last game of the season, it was the end of my career as a high school athlete. It marked the end of my four seasons of varsity soccer, three seasons of varsity skiing and five seasons of varsity la-

crosse—nothing is left.

As an eighth grader, I remember the last game of our lacrosse season and the tears that the seniors shed as they stood in a huddle for one last time. I remember thinking that I had all the time in the world left, four whole more seasons.

But somehow, now I'm that senior, the one who has just played in her last game, who walked off the field for the very last time, and who has handed in her uniform for good.

In my final season of each sport, I remembered to value each second I was on the field. The time on the scoreboard counted down each minute of every game I had left, until it buzzed for the very last time. The clock had run out and I was no longer a high school athlete.

But as I look back and try to reflect on my time as a student athlete at Blind Brook, everything seems to blur. It is too hard to distinguish one season from the next and impossible to differentiate between all the games played.

I wish I could say that I cherished my time on the field as intensely as I did these last seasons each and every year, but I cannot. There

were days where it was pouring rain where I hoped that we were playing on a grass field to ensure that the game would be canceled and times when the amount of homework I had accumulated that day made the thought of getting home late from a race unbearable.

But now that I will never receive another varsity letter, I long for the chance to play in another game no matter the weather, distance, or other responsibilities I had.

I once had a coach that loved to say to us, "Play every game like it's your last." And although this phrase motivated me, I did not truly understand what it would feel like to play my last game.

For me, senior year has been a year of lasts, and each time one part of my life comes to a close, I'm forced to cope with the loss of routine, comfort, and instead left with the emptiness of the unknown.

And now, knowing that feeling, I wish I could have told myself to work harder, run faster, and smile bigger each time I stepped out on the field because now I recognize the importance of playing every game like it is your last.

Alexa Goldstein: Design Editor

Focus is a busy environment that involves intense work, effort, and communication, much like high school. However, unlike high school, where a person's ideas can get lost in the crowd or mixed with others to conform as one, *Focus* is a place where everyone's voice is heard.

It wasn't until this year that I felt like the Viewpoints section of the paper reached its potential. Students were sharing their thoughts and opinions openly, ready to hear back from Blind Brook. Other writers on *Focus* were also sharing their voices through the new Politics section or their column.

Focus was a hit this year. And why? Because students were sharing their thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Because the voices of Blind Brook students were being heard.

Since Blind Brook is such a small school it can be scary to think differently for fear of backlash. Conformity affects a person's behavior, and that is okay, but sharing your opinion is not wrong. Issues written about in *Focus* created much needed discussions in the hallways of school.

But these discussions do not need to stay within the parameters of the school and I en-



courage all members of the Blind Brook community, past and present, to share their opinion, while also learning about and respectfully discussing others'. This is what makes for a successful and socially diverse environment.

Especially with the upcoming election, I

encourage my peers to learn about current issues and form an educated opinion. Discussing ideas and opinions helps to build developed concepts and makes for effective communication. These discussions also add to a person's voice.

Voice is extremely important. It is a crucial part of writing and of personality that shows others who you are. While voice is an essential part of an effective editorial or column, it does not just have to be heard through writing.

I found my voice in *Focus* through design. The design and art of the paper was another element in which the students of Blind Brook were able to express themselves.

That being said, I advise anyone reading this to try and find your voice in any medium. Maybe it's through writing, maybe it's through design or maybe it's something else. Voice is something unique to all individuals. Finding your voice is difficult and takes time but the process adds to your identity, opinions and beliefs.

While I hope to find and add to my voice in the next chapter of my life, I hope you try to find your voice as well.

Emily Sachs: Photo Editor

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. To me, the pictures I both took and edited for *Focus* were more than just words; they were memories. My four years of high school have flown by and, in a blink of an eye, I went from decorating the rock and wearing my senior shirt to getting ready for prom and graduation.

Throughout all of these traditional events that I have both looked up to in past years and now have participated in, I have relied on pictures to remember and savor each and every special moment. With the help of a camera, or even an iPhone, I was able to freeze passing time and step out of the crazy high school bubble to appreciate all of the fun my friends and I were having, all of the lessons that I learned in school, and the influential people that surrounded me.

Photography served as magic for me as it was something I loved to do. It allowed me to share very personal and one-of-a-kind moments with family, friends, teammates, and classmates, moments they would not normally see without a

shutter and lens.

Being the Photo Editor this year for *Focus* has taught me many valuable things, such as patience, leadership, and organization, that I will now carry with me as I walk out of Blind Brook and into the college world.

I would like to thank my past photo editors for inspiring me and guiding me, this year's editors for working by my side to make every issue the best that it could be, and of course Dr. Kenyon for providing me with this creative outlet and encouraging me to become a leader and role model for younger photographers.

I would also like to thank my photography staff for being so amazing and cooperative with each issue. *Focus* would not be the same without you guys. I am so excited to see how the paper will grow in the years to come and how the lowerclassmen will continue to uphold the meaning and reputation of the newspaper.

Congratulations to the Class of 2016! We did it, and although I will miss being a part of *Focus*.



I know we definitely stepped up to the plate and did an amazing job putting together the issues this year.

Gabby Ramirez: Multimedia/Social Media Editor



As students, we have been told about the many obstacles that will lie in front of us in the future. These obstacles are much more intimidating than what we have faced in high school. The “real world”

is daunting, an unknown force that we will be thrown into, where, much like the Hunger Games, we will have to learn how to thrive and succeed. But four years later, it is amazing to see the accomplishments we have made and obstacles we have hurdled over to get to where we are now, the end of senior year.

We have all seen each other grow and shape into the individuals we are today. We have been molded by our experiences here. Our first challenge was freshmen year. The transition from middle school was at first difficult, but soon, we adjusted.

Our sophomore year we began to realize that we needed much more than good grades to get into good colleges, as we ventured out to find what extracurriculars and activities inspired us. Our junior year, we were hit with AP courses and standardized tests, but we still persevered.

Our senior year, we slowed down to take everything in, from our last game, to homecoming, and, finally, our last day of school.

These challenges we were faced with made us stronger. I, for one, have felt the toss and turns of the bumpy road called high school, but looking

back at the damage, it doesn't seem so bad. Every bump in the road was worth the ride and every turn brought us to something spectacular.

As we continue through our journey, we will again find ourselves on a bumpy road. It may at times feel like the end of the world. But we must realize, that at the end we will be okay. I have accepted the fact that all of those challenges I had faced in high school were worth it, because in the end I was even better than okay.

We may not end up where we first thought we would, but we always do end up in the right place. I hope that in the next four a of our lives, our paths lead us to success and amazing memories. I know the next few years of our lives will be unforgettable, so embrace it.

Enjoy the moments of joy and the laughs that you have here in our last few moments of high school. We will continue to make friendships like this, where we are connected in so many ways.

So, take the path less traveled, venture into the unknown with open arms, and get ready for the bumpy ride, but remember to enjoy it because everything will be okay in the end.

Alyssa Wei: Webmaster

Throughout this past year, I finally grasped the true meaning of a community, albeit a little late after eleven years living in Rye Brook.

Plebe (freshman) year at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis is marked by a summer of intense physical training with little contact to the outside world, and culminates with fourteen hours of nonstop physical and mental challenges. Now imagine the astonishment of my family, friends, and teachers when I told them this was my dream school, my dream lifestyle. Very few people understood the full rationale behind my desires, yet I was supported, unconditionally, throughout the year-long application process.

We are told to “Beware the Ides of March” and that's that. I didn't think twice of it, nor even think once of it. But on that day, I had a little part of my dreams crushed, and an even larger realization that brought much happiness and comfort to me. And this was all thanks to the Blind Brook community, a community I will be hesitant, yet confident to leave, knowing that I will always be supported in my endeavors.

My daily routine on March 15th was rather the same as always; I left gym class, grabbed my backpack, and checked my phone. As I pulled down on my list of emails, refreshing my feed, one single email from the admissions committee at the United States Naval Academy popped up, and my heart sunk. I drew in a breath of anticipation before reading the opening line.

I wasn't in.

I walked to sixth period, tears welling up in my



eyes. But the waterworks began for real as I shared the news with the guidance office and was immediately comforted by two guidance counselors and a countless number of hugs, tissues, and overwhelming support. I remember the genuine sincerity as a parent waiting in the guidance office looked me in my teary eyes, and said, “I heard about this choice of yours, and we were all cheering for you.”

I remember walking into Principal Lambert's office, blinking back tears as I told her my news and understood what a privilege it is to attend a small high school where I could notify the principal for

a simple college admissions outcome. I remember the countless numbers of emails I received from teachers, the hugs from my friends, and even the tears, from those teachers whom I never imagined would cry over my little heartbreak.

Yet through the despair, in those collective moments, I knew that my parents had chosen the greatest home for me. I can now see why I fell in love with the Naval Academy. The brotherhood and comradery that is formed by the Navy, or any branch of the armed forces, is very similar to the Rye Brook community.

In Rye Brook—like in the Academy—I know that in my past, present, and future I have had and will always have the academic, physical, social, and mental support in the decisions I make. I will have shoulders to cry on and words of affirmation from people who truly care. I know that I will always have someone to turn to for advice, to celebrate little victories, and to laugh at silly mistakes.

So as I head off to a larger community, I know that the small community that I call home is and always will be my home and my family. Blind Brook has taught me the value of service, community, and expanding my horizons and breaking the boundaries of conformity.

To the Blind Brook community and to my family: I don't know how I can ever repay you for the lessons you taught me, the support you showed me, and the endless love and understanding of every frivolous decision, no matter the size. For that, I am forever grateful.

And as always—Go Navy. Beat Army.



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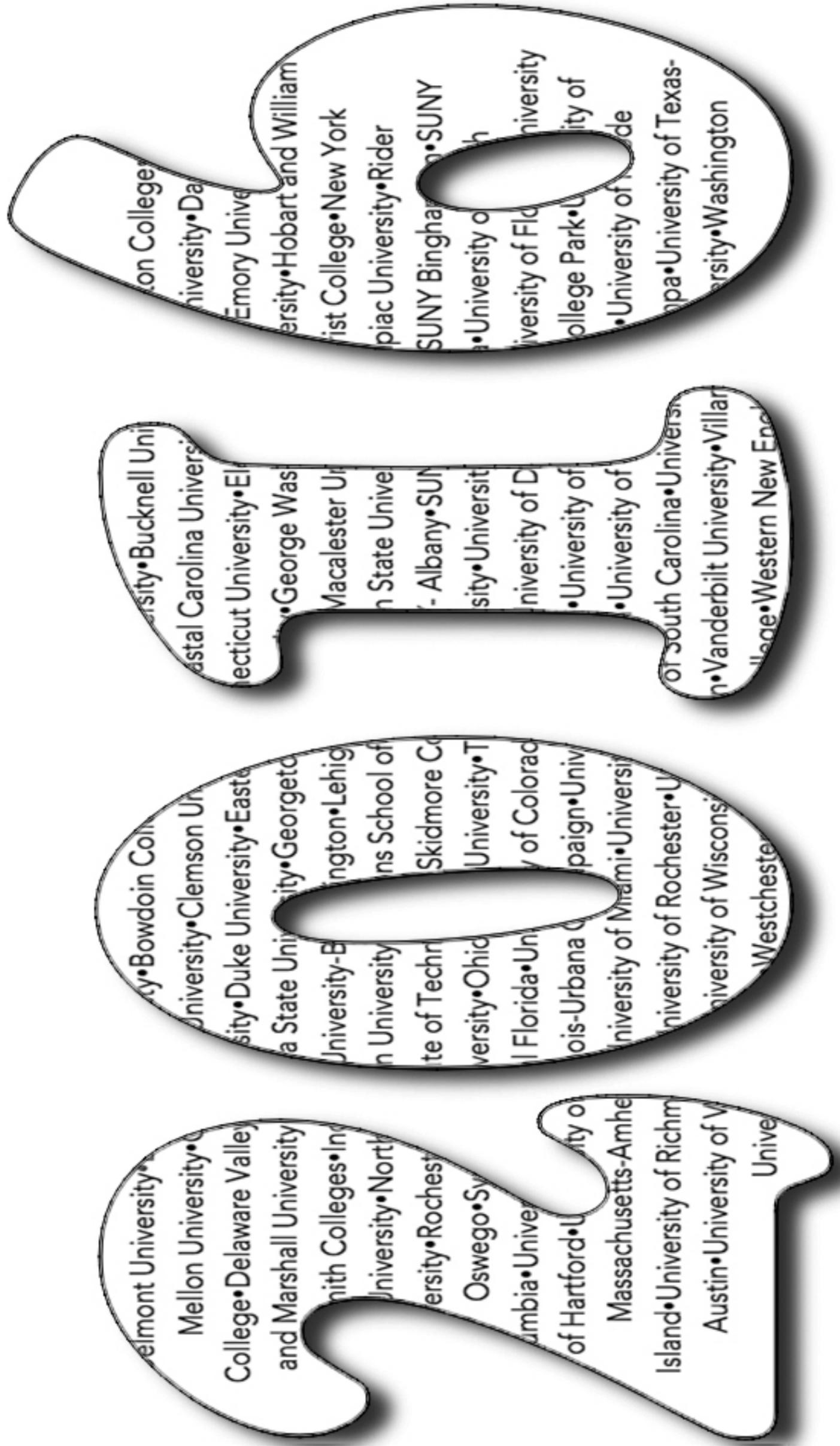
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Viewpoints



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accomplishments to come.

LOVE, MOMMY, DADDY, MORGAN
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- ★ Security Guards



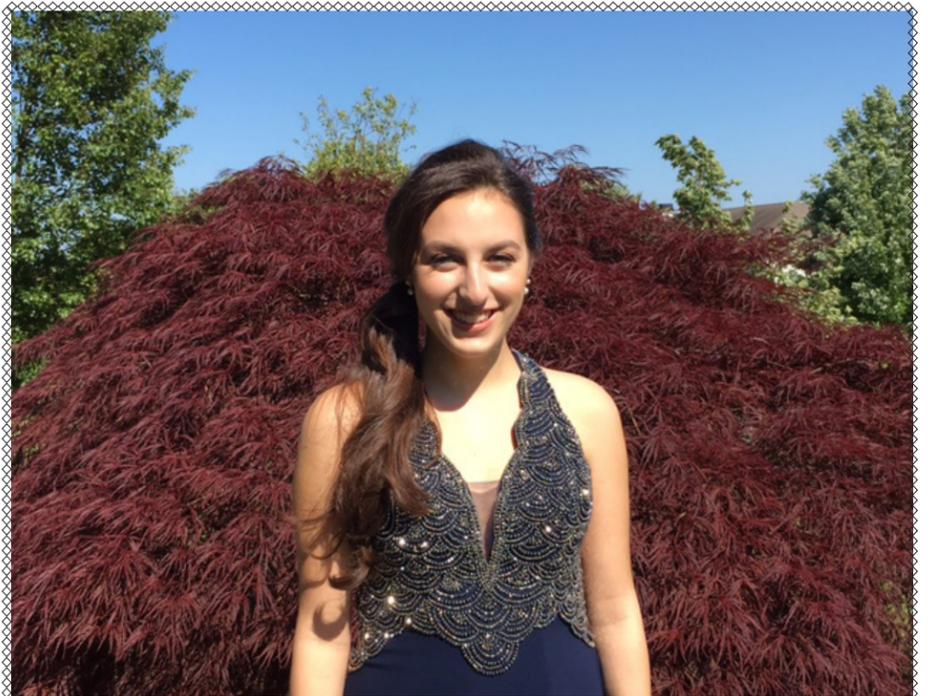
CONGRATULATIONS

to

Noa Garfein

and the

Blind Brook High School
Graduating Class of 2016!



Dear Sydney,

Congratulations to you and your
classmates on your graduation from
Blind Brook High School.

We are so proud of your
accomplishments and wish you much
happiness and success in your next
chapter!

With much love,
Mom, Dad, Sara & Tyler



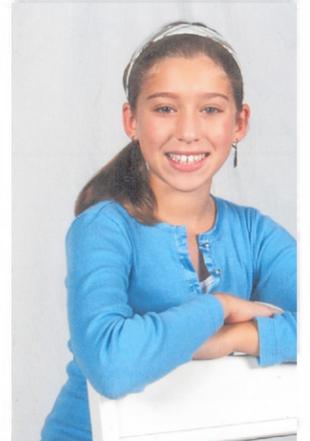
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Lily Werlinich

Class of 2016

Focus, Editor-in-Chief 2015-2016

GW University Honors Program, Class of 2020

**congratulations! Woohoo!
We are so proud of you!**

Lots of love from the whole family

Potty Talk

an opinion

By Carly Kabot

Going to the bathroom seems like one of the easiest things to do. It's not often this private business comes up in politics, let alone in conversation. However, in such a progressive nation, even bathrooms must reflect and push us forward with social and cultural changes.

President Obama's recent directive, which instructed public schools to allow transgender students free choice of bathrooms, has thrown the debate over gender-identity and bathroom usage into the political spotlight. The directive, issued by the Justice and Education departments to all United States public schools, has divided much of the country. Although the directive does not carry the force of law, it protects transgender students under Title IX and prohibits sex-based discrimination.

The rules for civil justice and discrimination are being rewritten. After the Supreme Court made same-sex marriage legal, America has had monumental changes and strides. But even so, the vote was only 5-4, a hair away from erasing all of that. Not everyone is welcoming the directive with open arms and many are afraid of the grave consequences this could lead to.

A *New York Times* poll shows just how split the nation is, with 46% of people demanding that transgender students only be permitted to use the bathroom of their gender at birth. A smaller 41% deem that they should be allowed to use the bathroom of the gender they identify with.

Democrats and Republicans are leaning opposite ways on this particular issue. Typically, younger generations and Democrats are more supportive of these liberal changes. Many Republicans, however, take issue with the bathroom directive.

Members of this party tend to look more at the practical complications, worrying specifically about males entering female bathrooms unpermitted, as college campus rape has escalated in the recent years.

It is inevitable that this development would be contentious. But many issues that were once uncomfortable and controversial soon become the new normal.

The Charlotte Observer stated: "We must remember that every civil rights struggle has involved "overcoming discomfort—with blacks sharing facilities, with gays sharing marriage."

On the other hand, some, like Texas Governor Greg Abbott, believe this allowing transgender individuals to choose their bathrooms would be a safety hazard and taking a step too far and too fast.

"The president is turning the Constitution on its head," Mr. Abbott told Fox News. "He's trying to cram down as many parts of his liberal agenda on the United States of America as he possibly can before leaving office in January."

Texas, along with other states like North Carolina and Mississippi, have been very vocal against the implications that the directive entails, and put laws in place to try to counteract these changes.

These changes directly involve the students of this nation. At the end of the day, they are the ones who will either react positively or negatively to their changing world.

The bullying rate among transgender students is extraordinarily high, and a national GLESEN report stated 75% of transgender students do not feel safe at school. Not only that, but over 50% of transgender adolescents have thought about or attempted suicide at least once in their short lives.

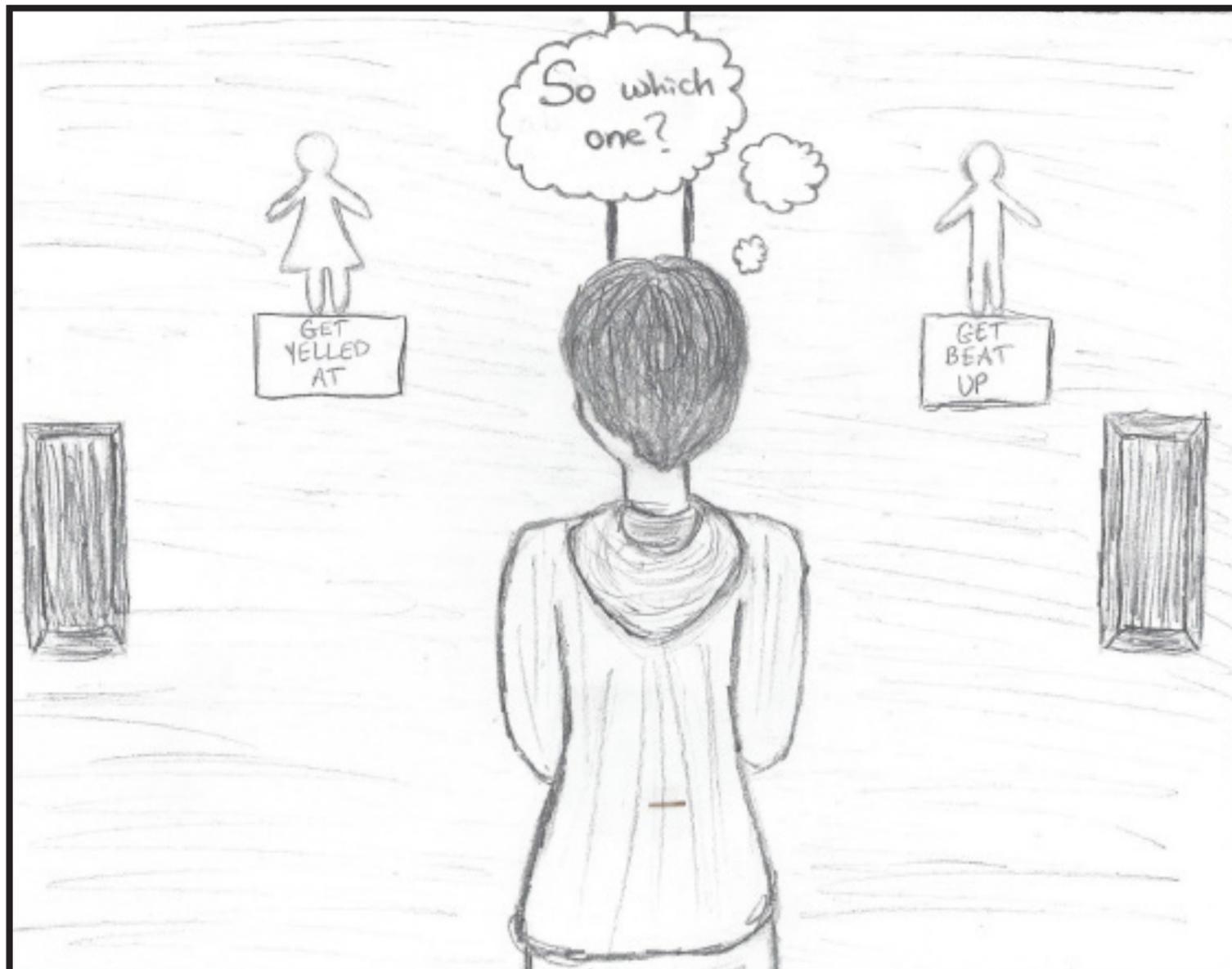
Rex Huppe of *The Chicago Tribune* said, "I'm sorry, but those lives are far more important to me than anyone's squirmy, unmoored-from-reality-washroom fears."

President Obama agrees, which he made clear in one of his statements to the nation: "I think that it is part of our obligation as a society to make sure that everybody is treated fairly, and our kids are all loved, and that they're protected and that their dignity is affirmed."

One proposed solution is the construction of gender-neutral bathrooms. These bathrooms would be open to students of all genders, which would negate the issue at hand.

That being said, not all schools can afford to build gender-neutral bathrooms. Others claim that this is merely a band-aid solution, as creating new bathrooms would only serve to further alienate transgender students from their peers.

For a smaller school such as Blind Brook, this issue has to be approached with the wellbeing of all students in mind. It will, without hesitation, take time and cooperation, but will ultimately enhance and better transgender student's educational experience.



Cartoon/Jeremy Weingarten

Why the Dueling within the Democratic Party? *an opinion*

By Noah Lubin

Donald Trump, a candidate once thought to be a joke, has trounced his challengers. Hillary Clinton, on the other hand, has *still* been unable to silence Bernie Sanders.

Although Hillary Clinton has reached the number of delegates necessary to title her the presumptive Democratic nominee, Sanders continues to compete for every delegate possible. Thus, we are witnessing a prolonged Democratic primary rather than preliminary battles between Clinton and Trump.

For those of who are unfamiliar with the delegate process in primaries, here is a little rundown: Citizens vote for delegates to represent the candidate of their choice at the party nominating convention in July. You are not voting directly for the candidate of your choice. Many of these delegates are selected at state nominating conventions in which many of the rules are convoluted and confusing.

Due to the ridiculous rules of the state conventions, absolute chaos broke out between Sanders and Clinton supporters in Nevada. Sander supporters began disrupting a state convention in Nevada, arguing in fear that Bernie would be cheated out of victory by not receiving a fair amount of delegates. The scene quickly began to resemble less like a democratic process and more like an eighteenth century drunken bar fight.

After this convention, Sanders claimed he was receiving unfair treatment from the Democratic Party, the latest rift between himself and the party establishment. Prior to this claim of unfair treatment, Sanders had called the Democratic Party establishment “corrupt” (including Hillary Clinton) and declared Clinton unqualified to be president.

Statements like these not only stoked the fire between the Democratic establishment and Senator Sanders, but also helped Donald Trump close the gap between him and Clinton in national polls from eleven points to three. Currently, Secretary Clinton and Mr. Trump are nearly tied in the presumptive general election matchup.

The businessman capitalized on the chaos in the Democratic Party and part of that is due to Senator Sanders. If there were ever to be a permanent schism between the Democrats, then the events of the past few weeks would certainly have started it.

A divided party is the ultimate fear for Democrats, whose goal is to pre-

vent an unprecedentedly unqualified man who has made a mockery of the office from becoming president. With roughly 55% of Democrats supporting Clinton and 45% of them supporting Sanders, a divided party unable to reconcile its differences would virtually hand the presidency to Donald Trump.

The larger the percentage of Sanders supporters who refuse to support former Secretary of State Clinton grows, the more likely she is to lose to Trump. That is why it is imperative for the Democratic Party to begin to seek common ground and for Senator Sanders to moderate his belligerent tone.

But, with Sanders’s pledge to stay in the race all the way to the convention, it seems unlikely for this to happen, which would only result in more division. Thus, many Democrats are calling for the Senator to suspend his campaign, while labeling him as a sore loser.

Thankfully, though, it does not matter whether or not Sanders is a sore loser for staying in the race, or is still trying to gauge the popularity of his positions, or is just plain old upset that his revolution has not galvanized the American people. It seems that the division that so many feared has been avoided through a deal brokered between Clinton, Sanders, and Chairperson of the Democratic National Convention Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

The agreement enables the three to select members to the committee that will determine the Democratic Party agenda at the National Convention in July. Clinton, Sanders, and Schultz will each respectfully select six, five, and four members to the important committee that will determine the party’s layout for how Democrats plan to tackle the countries issues.

This ensures that Senator Sanders has a large influence over how the Democrats plan to aid Americans, even if he is not the Democratic nominee. More importantly, it may resolve the differences between Sanders and Clinton and in all likelihood will unite the party.

The Associated Press has also reported that the Sanders campaign only has six million dollars left in its coffers, which could signify the campaign’s end and inability to even reach the Democratic National Convention.

Taken in sum, all signs point towards the Democratic Party unifying and becoming fully equipped to challenge Donald Trump for the presidency in November.

Walking the Cable Part II: Analyzing the Media’s Undeniable Impact on the 2016 Presidential Race

an opinion

By Seth Schuster

Social media is its own beast. Quite frankly, there is nothing like it. The rise of social media has altered the political landscape drastically.

We no longer engage in political discourse with solely thousand-word articles or political debates. Now, we have shrunk our political attention span to 140 characters in a small box, a thumbnail sized image in our palm, a Snapchat “Story”, or a Periscope live stream.

Of the major forms of social media, Twitter has undeniably shown its value as form of communication and publicity. Bernie Sanders has 2.24 million followers. Hillary Clinton has 6.36 million followers.

Big numbers, right? Yes, but not the “huge” number of followers that Donald Trump has, with 8.4 million. To put that in perspective, there are only 65 million active Twitter accounts in the United States. 8.4 million is roughly thirteen percent of all Twitter users in the United States.

That means every provocative tweet administered by @realDonaldTrump, is seen by at least his 8.4 million followers. I qualify with the phrase “at least” because each tweet can receive upwards of 10 thousands re-tweets. His tweets can also be seen embedded in online news articles and on major news networks.

When Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton, and especially Donald Trump send a 140 character message into the Twittersphere, the message permeates all forms of media, and thus, a massive portion of the general population.

But what is most important about the newest major political tool is that it is completely unregulated. Social media has no bounds. Television networks have to cater to their viewing audience, to their base—Twitter accounts do not.

Television networks, as they have been for generations, are the platform that best suits establishment politicians. They are regulated and orderly. But in the 2016 presidential campaign, we are seeing a shift away from the establishment and toward the political outsiders, such as Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders.

Trump especially caters to no audience. He says what he wants, when he wants. Unlike the other candidates who use their Twitter accounts to inform, Trump uses his to provoke, which Politico describes as “the best way to dominate online discussion.”

Hillary Clinton is the last establishment politician standing, and thus a more staid Twitter user. Politico described the Twitter usage of Hillary Clinton and fellow establishment politician Jeb Bush, as “safe, burnishing their images as reliable public servants while trying to avoid any misstep that might blow up into a TV controversy.”

That is exactly what Donald Trump is: a constant TV controversy. His contentious and provocative tweets gain him the attention that other candidates do not want in the form of negative press. Yet, as I mentioned in my previous article, @realDonaldTrump lives and breathes the “any news is good news” mentality because Internet fire storms caused by Donald Trump give him the air time and press needed to compete with Hillary.

Clinton’s Twitter feed has historically contained messages of positivity to give her followers, what Politico describes as a “warm-and-fuzzy” feeling about the candidate. However, we have recently seen a shift. She has gone @realDonaldTrump on Donald Trump, so to speak, spewing attacking and anti-Trump messages.

But it seems as though Hillary may be a little late to the Twitter party. As her main target has become Trump, and her tweets become ever more anti-Trump, she is giving Trump more and more attention on social media. She is simply feeding the beast.

The issue with regard to this shift in media platforms is that is simultaneously transferring the attention away from political issues. No longer do candidates engage in discourse about the economy and foreign policy, rather they spout personal attacks on fellow candidates.

While there have been attack ads for generations, previous generations did not have the boon—or curse—of social media constantly refreshing in their hands. Political discussion has become shallow, and ultimately lacks the depth and understanding of issues of prior political landscapes.



Student Spotlight

• Emily Kitchin •



Photo Courtesy of Emily Kitchin

By Danielle Barsky

Junior Emily Kitchin has stunned audiences across Westchester County for years. Having begun her theater career at nine years old, Kitchin has participated in numerous shows, both in and out of Blind Brook. As a senior, Kitchin is expected to sing and dance her way even deeper into Blind Brook theatergoers' hearts.

Q: Do you enjoy acting, dancing and singing equally, or prefer one more than the other?

A: I enjoy acting, singing, and dancing a lot, however, I prefer acting over the other two.

Q: Do you take any lessons?

A: I took voice lessons and dance [lessons] for many years.

Q: Do you aspire to be in a Broadway show?

A: I would love to be in a Broadway show; however, I also have interests in TV and film.

Q: Which actor or actress do you admire the most? Why?

A: I don't have a particular actor/actress that I look up to as a role model.

Q: What are some shows you have starred in?

A: I've been in over thirty produc-

tions [throughout] the years. Some of the roles I have played are Gertrude in *Seussical*, Christmas Eve in *Avenue Q*, Bonnie in *Anything Goes* (at our school), and most recently I played Sister Mary Theresa in *Sister Act*. The production was nominated for fifteen high school Metropolitan Awards.

Q: Which theatre programs are you currently involved in?

A: I currently do shows at our school's theater program, Stepinac High School's drama program, and the Sandbox Theatre.

Q: What is your favorite play you have participated in? What has your favorite role been?

A: My favorite play that I've been in is when I played the role of Molly in the national high school premiere of *Peter and the Starcatcher*. It was my first time being in a play instead of a musical and I had a great experience.

The show was on Broadway a few years ago. I was the only girl cast in

the show because there is only one girl role, which is something that I'm very proud of. The production was a premiere, which means I was the first high school aged girl to play Molly. It was an amazing role and I would happily play it again.

Q: Do you plan to continue with theatre during and after college?

A: Yes, I do plan to continue to be involved in theater in college and after that.

Q: What is your favorite Broadway play?

A: My favorite Broadway show is *Hamilton*. I got to see it in November and it was amazing.

Q: What is your favorite part of participating in theatre?

A: My favorite part of being in theater is the feeling that you get when you walk out onstage and you see the audience sitting there, ready to see the show that you've worked so hard to rehearse.

• Paul Soden •

By Isabella Lazar

In his spare time, junior Paul Soden saves lives. Soden has been a certified Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) with the state of Connecticut for over six months. He earned his registration by taking a four-month EMR class at the Greenwich EMS, which included both written and practical exams.

Q: What is a typical day as an EMR?

A: A typical day as an EMR constitutes waiting in the call room until an emergency is called in and then we are dispatched to the scene if the emergency does not provide assistance.

Q: What is the most rewarding thing about getting to be an EMR?

A: The most rewarding thing about getting to be an EMR is passing on the knowledge that I have by teaching classes to help other people learn how to save lives too.

Q: How many classes did you have to attend to become an EMR?

A: The EMR class lasted four months, from September to December, [including] a midterm exam and a final exam.

Q: How many other people do you work with as an EMR?

A: In Blind Brook [there are] four other people: juniors Sarah Simon, Alexa Limb, and Allison Gelfarb. There are also a lot of other EMRs my age

that are from various different high schools, such as Brunswick, Greenwich, and others in the area.

Q: How many hours a week do you spend volunteering as an EMR?

A: I typically spend three hours a week volunteering as an EMR. I go to meetings at the GEMS Headquarters and also participate in fundraising opportunities that the club provides, such as the "Touch A Truck", which allows for special needs kids to learn about the ambulance and about saving lives.

Q: How many people do you ride the ambulance with?

A: Typically there are three people in the ambulance: a paramedic, an AEMT (which is different from an EMT), an advanced EMT who is able to put in IVS, and an EMR.

Q: In what way do you assist the paramedics or patients?



Photo Courtesy of Paul Soden

A: There are many ways I can assist the paramedics or patients. I'm involved in providing emotional support to the patients [to help them] get through the difficult situation. I also do many basic medical tasks, such as taking blood pressure, [finding] a pulse [and] a respiration rate, and even administering some simple medications such as an EpiPen, or glucose for diabetics.

Q: Do you have a specific experience that made the greatest impact on you as an EMR?

A: The specific experience that had the greatest impact on me as an EMR was probably when I first entered the ambulance and saw how complex and advanced the technology present in the back of the ambulance really is. It just struck me, and I realized that they [the emergency medical responders] do everything possible to keep people alive to

get them to the hospital.

Q: What influenced you and made you decide to become an EMR?

A: Well I wish to pursue a vocation in the medical field when I get older, so it makes sense for me to first pursue to be an EMT, and learn the basics of the medical field to later apply to my future medical education

Q: What is the most valuable lesson you have learned from being an EMR?

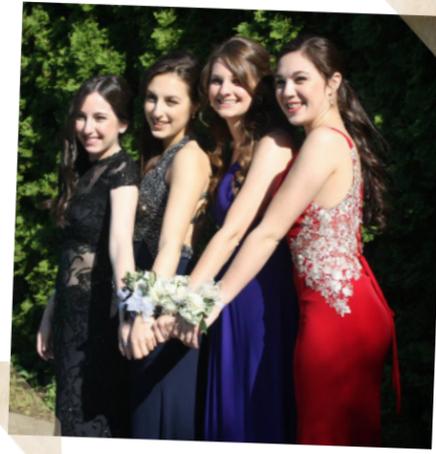
A: I have learned that time matters, and the faster you [can bring an individual] to the hospital, the more likely that someone is to survive. All of the equipment in the back of the ambulance has the purpose of doing just that. I've learned about just how important that is.

Q: What kind of things have you seen being an EMR? Can someone who is squeamish be an EMR?

A: Well, as an EMR we have learned about all the potential situations we can encounter, [like] a drug overdose, a heart attack, a stroke, diabetic shock, anaphylactic shock, and a lot of other conditions. It is really important that you are able to handle all of the things that you will see as an EMR, because the things that you can see are really gruesome sometimes. You need to be able to be emotionally distant and detached from it, or else you will have problems and not be able to do your job effectively.

Features

June 9
2016



↑ cute

Above/Right: photo courtesy of Leah Kratochvil
A: A group of well-coordinated seniors, juniors, and outside dates prompose.
R: Senior boys do the can-can at pre-pre-prom!
Top Right: photo courtesy of Sydney Shiffman
Senior girls flaunt their smiles and corsages.

best friends ☺



the duvudes



Above: photo courtesy of Lily Werlinich
Seniors Lily Werlinich and Lu Goldfeld and their dates compliments their outfits with pearl whites.
Right: photo/Meghan Comstock
Senior girls cheese it before heading to pre-prom.
Below: photo courtesy of Emily Sachs
Seniors Caylee Drangel, Emily Sachs, Alli Abrutyn, and Olivia Steinberg smile for the camera.



PROM



BLIND BROOK'S

DECLASSIFIED

School Survival Guide



"Through sports teams and clubs, there are a lot of people...that I would have never really even spoken to [before] and now consider them my really good friends. So it really forms a family atmosphere, at least in sports that I have played. I think that is something important that you get, that you have from school, that you get to be friends with people from all different grades and all different types of people."
- Brandon Weston

Library's Closed...Again

It's happened. Again. The library is closed, but you have a paper due the next period that you haven't printed out yet. The teacher isn't going to accept that your printer broke because, let's face it, you've had a week to hand this thing in and you waited until the last minute. What do you do?

- Knock on Mrs. G's door in the Writing Center.
- Check to see if the computer lab or the Mac Lab is being used. If either is, ask the teacher in the room if you can use one of the spare computers.
- Ask a teacher or guidance counselor you have a relationship with if you can use their computer in the faculty room to print.
- If all these options fail, pull up the assignment on your phone and write the answers on a sheet of loose leaf. Your teachers will appreciate that you did all you could.

"I think if there was any one book [that got me through high school], I mean the Harry Potter series was kind of obvious. But, it was my favorite book. It helped me realize that I want to be an author, so I guess I would say the Harry Potter franchise."
- Sam Friedlander



Mastering picture day is a skill that all students should perfect. For those of you that haven't been practicing by taking a million selfies, here's what to do:

- Make sure you actually know when picture day is (this is crucial).
- Set aside an outfit the night before, so you are not pressed for time in the morning.
- Pick a mature backdrop for your photo.
- Remember the backdrop color you picked; it will be necessary when picking an outfit.
- Do not let your shirt clash with the backdrop.
- Comfort before style. The picture doesn't show your pants, so why not wear a comfy pair of sweatpants paired with your nice shirt?
- Do not take a retake. It'll most likely turn out worse than the first one.
- Juniors: make sure it's a good one because that picture will be on the TV screen when you are senior of the day next year!
- Don't actually say "cheese", but give a genuine smile.
- Try not to blink!

Remember! It's Picture Day!

"I was Editor in Chief of [literary magazine] Impulse, also in Midnight Run, Autism Speaks, and a few other clubs, and it's just about time management and only being a part of things that you genuinely have an interest in because you're not going to want to do it otherwise."
- Sarah Carty

"I would say, the greatest piece of advice for incoming freshmen is to live every moment to the fullest, because high school, honestly, is the quickest four years of your life so far, and it's just a blast. I wish I had appreciated all of those moments."
- Kyle Mak

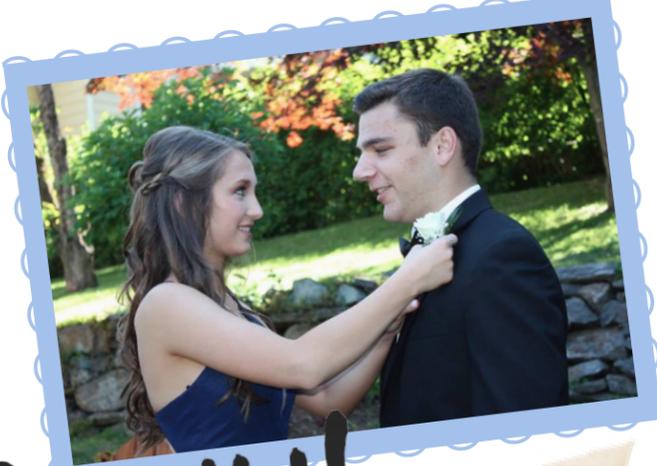
"I think that it is so important to take classes that you're going to enjoy in high school, not only to have the AP credit so you could have it for your GPA, but you should really just take classes you like."
- Jamie Epstein

"Basically, like, you do you. Just be yourself. Do whatever you want."
- Olivia Steinberg

Best Places for Seniors to Get Food During Frees

9/31	Kneaded Bread	
10/2	Corbo's Corner Deli	\$7
11/15	GVille Deli	\$9.50
12/28	Castle View Deli	\$8
1/17	Chipotle	\$12
2/13	Chop't	\$15
3/16	Starbucks	\$10
4/17	Chicken Joe's	\$4.50
5/23	Marini's Deli	\$13
6/12	Dunkin Donuts	\$11
	Total: Our College Tuition	\$5

LW+LK



awww!

Above: photo/Meghan Comstock
 Senior Katy Comstock attaches senior Dean Oppizzi's boutonniere.
 Top Right: photo courtesy of Vanessa Numme
 A group of senior gal pals giggle at pre-pre-prom.
 Bottom Right: photo courtesy of Gabby Ramirez
 A group of senior boys prompose with their dates.
 Below: photo courtesy of Emily Sachs
 An entire party bus worth of seniors and their dates prompose near the pool - and hopefully stayed dry.



my face



Sketches/Leah Kratochvil and Julia Mendelsohn



Dancing the Night Away

By Sydney Goodman

As the school year comes to a close, seniors attended one of the pinnacle events of their high school career: prom. April, May and June are filled with a flurry of dress and tux shopping, "promposals", and countless hair and makeup appointments leading to the event.

Promposals are an especially sacred part of prom. It has become a tradition that in the weeks leading up to prom, seniors ask their dates to the dance with a witty "promposal."

Oftentimes, these include puns related to the setting or the promposal or where a person will be attending college.

One senior, Freddy Heller, even rented a plane to fly around the high school carrying a sign in order to ask his date, Caylee Drangel, to prom.

This year's senior prom was held on June 9 from 7:30 PM to 12 AM at Willow Ridge Country Club. At the dance, seniors and their dates took pictures, ate, danced, and celebrated their high school careers one last time before graduation.

Prom is planned by the class officers and funded by the culmination of four years of grade-wide events, including the Sophomore Circus, food sales at sporting events, and other key fundraisers.

"In the months leading up to prom and end of the year activities, the job of the Class Officers is just to get information to the students," said senior Class Officer Nadav Neuman.

"The end of the year is hectic for seniors so it's important that all of the information that we

give is really clear and straightforward so that there is no confusion," he said.

"We are on the phone and in contact with various people that have to do with prom, like organizing Red Roof for pre-prom, talking to management at Willow Ridge to ensure that things go smoothly for prom, and organizing and picking up flowers for the decorations for actual prom," he said.

"Besides the one class meeting we had, which was helpful, we do a lot of posts on Facebook to get information out to the students, such as checks to be paid. It is really important that these posts are clear so that people know exactly what they have to do by a certain date. [This is] so that we can calculate the money and send it where it needs to go," he said.

In comparison to other high schools in the area that offer a junior and senior prom, Blind Brook only hosts a dance for the graduating class. All seniors are invited to the event, as are any other students or individuals who are invited by a senior date.

Blind Brook's prom was held at Willow Ridge Country Club, but the dance itself was not the only event the seniors attend that night. In fact, Blind Brook is home to an intricate series of events preceding and following the prom.

First, seniors and their dates take pictures at their houses with their families. Then, some students choose to take pictures with a few of their closest friends. Following this is pre-pre-prom, where all the students on a certain bus congregate at someone's house to take pictures as a group.

Next, the seniors travel to Red Roof to debut

their gowns, tuxedos and dates to all of Rye Brook. Pre-prom is an hour-long period allotted for pictures, socializing and smiles with the entire village.

Pre-prom is an outdoor event, and as such, is weather contingent. In the past, pre-prom has been held at Congregation KTI synagogue in order to prevent clothing, makeup and hair from being ruined by the rain.

Once prom has ended, some students choose to return to Rye Brook to change out of their prom finery and attend after-prom, a late-night party that is unaffiliated with the high school. This year, the after party will be held at LIFE The Place to Be, a teen club in Ardsley.

Aside from pre-pre-prom, pre-prom and promposals, Blind Brook students partake in numerous other traditions each year during prom. Seniors and their friends rent party buses to transport them from the pre-prom events to the after-prom events.

Another tradition is for all of the girls attending prom to be added to a Facebook group in which they compile photos of their dresses so that no one wears the same gown to prom.

For seniors, prom is more than just an elegant party.

"I'm not huge about taking pictures, but [prom] was a great opportunity to spend time with friends," said senior Melissa Blum.

Prom is an opportunity to make final lasting memories with friends before parting separate ways in the fall. It is a rite of passage, an event students spend years hearing about as they wait for their turn to get all dressed up and celebrate.

Breeze into Summer with Summer Trends

By Julia Mendelsohn

New York City has been a universal fashion icon for the past two centuries. It is home to Spring Fashion Week and the Met Gala Ball, two events that culminate in the rapid evolution and expansion of fashion on a global scale.

Just as these events dictate trends nationally, international style hubs like the Cannes Film Festival in France work in cahoots with these domestic events to shape high fashion and everyday attire worldwide.

At the Cannes Film Festival, celebrities debuted spring styles on the red carpet. Blake Lively flaunted her new baby bump in a figure-hugging blue silk sequined Versace dress. The gown's thigh-high slit and single, off-the-shoulder strap were balanced by the billowing train that trailed Lively throughout the event.

Half-sisters Kate (42) and Lottie Moss (18) opted for bold red dresses by Halston and Dior, respectively. The former donned a one-shoulder Greek-goddess style dress, complete with a slit no smaller than that of Lively's gown, while the latter took to the red carpet in a long sleeve evening dress, complete with a low-cut back.

Supermodel and reality star Kendall Jenner, just two years older than Lottie Moss, showed off her build in a sheer silk dress designed by Roberto Cavalli. Jenner's dress was embroidered with in-

terwoven snakes, and the form fitting design was complemented with extra fabric around the wrists to give off an angelic vibe. The common thread (pun intended) of all of the Cannes creations? Showing skin.

Off the red carpet, much skin is being shown, too, but not in high slits and sheer silk. This time, the more casual branch of this scandalous see-through style is denim. From jackets, to ripped boyfriend jeans, and all accessories in between, this fabric has stepped up as spring's most popular street style.

Actress Katie Holmes and her daughter, Suri Cruise, were spotted donning denim wear, a tribute to '90s styles. Holmes' denim bucket hat, suede trench, and boyfriend jeans fit "like a glove" (as was said just two decades ago).

Following in Holmes' fashion footsteps is supermodel Gigi Hadid, who also rocks denim and white kicks on the daily. Hadid often pairs her choice look, denim-on-denim, with a sleek pair of white Adidas sneakers. Her model sister, Bella Hadid, also struts the streets of NYC in denim; Bella pairs her high-waisted blue jeans with a barely-there crop top from Topshop and a flowing denim jacket on top.

Yet more casual than the daily-denim look is the up and coming "athleisure" style. High fashion name brands have launched athletic lines to be worn both to the gym and for running errands, meeting friends, and everything in between. The goal of "athleisure" is to offer fashionable clothing that can be worn at the gym or on the run.

On the catwalks, everyone from Alexander Wang and Celine to Louis Vuitton has embraced this new style. Tracksuit trousers are the new slacks, leggings are the new sweatpants, and sports bras are the new crop tops. Even worldwide superstar Beyoncé has joined the game, debuting her new line Ivy Park through Topshop.

As a worldwide fashion capital, New York is tasked with setting high standards for style worldwide.

Now not only are high profile supermodels and names brands expected to put forth trends, but so are the people of NYC, at least according to Bill Cunningham, who covers covering street styles for *The New York Times*.

The lucky few that do so could be caught by his camera, like Blind Brook graduate Morgan Zakarin, who was featured in his "Duality" piece on April 8 for her funky black and white attire.



Photo/Ayden Bauer

Now not only are high profile supermodels and names brands expected to put forth trends, but so are the people of NYC, at least according to Bill Cunningham, who covers covering street styles for *The New York Times*.

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The Male Identity

By Joanna Goodman

We like to think of how we have advanced. We can say that in our lifetime, the iPhone came to be and gay marriage is now accepted by society. Yet, we do not recognize all of the great problems that we have failed to address, like those concerning gender relations, and, in particular, gender-related violence.

A few nights ago, I sat down with my father to watch the 1991 film *Thelma and Louise*, a "feminist film" that follows the journey of two women trying to make it to Mexico after Thelma becomes the victim of an attempted rape, and Louise kills the perpetrator (I promise, this spoils nothing). Following the murder, Thelma suggests to Louise that they go to the police, and the following conversation ensues:

THELMA: Shouldn't we go to the cops? I mean, I think we should tell the police.

LOUISE: Tell them what?! What, Thelma? What do you think we should tell them?

THELMA: I don't know. Just tell 'em what happened.

LOUISE: Which part?

THELMA: All of it. That he tried to rape me.

LOUISE: Only about a hundred people saw you cheek to goddamn cheek with him all night, Thelma! Who's gonna believe that?! We just don't live in that kind of world. Pull over!

After listening to this dialogue, I realized there is but one difference between then and now: today, a woman can be taken seriously by the police. But there is a greater issue at hand that we've failed to address—the actual behavior, the sexual assault of women.

Statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice show that between 1995 and 2010, the number of attempted rapes remained constant, though successful assaults did decrease significantly (it should be noted, however, that this is only based on the number of reported rapes).

It is here that we like to think rape has declined by 64%! This is great. But how can we ignore that the number of attempted rapes has remained relatively constant fifteen years later? It is here that I see a more serious issue.

Unfortunately, as it stands today, the women in my generation continue to experience sexual assault and constantly hear stories of rape and sexual battery. It is understood that this is not "a spoof," a "one time thing," or "bad luck/timing." Rather, this is a behavior that occurs quite often, that women must be concerned about and take precautions to avoid.

It seems that women are being taught day and night to avoid: leading men on, dressing provocatively, or walking anywhere alone, especially at night.

Police are put on street corners, and around college campuses, but I am afraid one factor still exists that we are not focusing on, and that is the male culture that unconsciously promotes misogynistic behavior. We are not stopping men from

degrading us, or objectifying us. Society is not helping men regain their footing in the wake of female economic advancement—and thus, we fail to address the real issue at hand.



Photo courtesy of Joanna Goodman

Once upon a time (until the 1980s), the vast majority of students receiving college degrees were men. Now, according to various polls, including those conducted by U.S. News & World Report, women outnumber men in college, are more likely to graduate, and are overall, more educated. Women have also become more prominent as business leaders and government officials.

I believe that this—women's advancement—has put negative pressure on men attempting to find their place in the modern world. Perhaps this is one of the factors that have contributed to the continuing problem of male aggression toward women.

Slam poems have become a popular means of expressing one's emotions, and an especially popular topic has been rape. One poem that I stumbled across commented on the failure in allowing "boys to be boys."

It spoke of what seems to be "innocent" behavior on the part of boys, such as tugging on a girl's pony tail or pulling on her bra strap—behaviors that girls are told mean "he has a crush on you" or "he likes you"—but are really gateway behaviors to much more aggressive and repressive actions like assault and rape. A big assumption, I know, but I do not believe it is an unreasonable one. In fact, many psychologists have and are conducting research on this very idea.

Alan Berkowitz, a psychologist and activist in the area of social justice and women's rights, wrote in his book *Fostering Men's Responsibility for Preventing Sexual Assaults* that, "Men must take responsibility for preventing sexual assault. . . Even though only a minority of men may commit sexual assault, all men can have an influence on the culture and environment that allows other men to be perpetrators."

Berkowitz suggests that it is time for men to take a stand against violence by other men, that it is time to put the ball in their court.

Our generation needs to take a step back and look at how little we have advanced in this department. Perpetrators and aggressors are still out and about like they were years ago, and telling women to avoid drinks and to walk with a group of people just isn't enough.

Misogyny is cultivated from a very early age, and we must be attuned to it. Men are socially rewarded for being hyper masculine and for condemning all things feminine. So long as this outlook lives on, so will the rape culture, according to *Asking For It* by Kate Harding.

It is time we start back at ground zero and focus on fostering a more gender friendly atmosphere, where aggressive behavior directed at women—and other men that are themselves victims—is not only considered unacceptable from a societal viewpoint, but is also unacceptable from the standpoint of men themselves.



Congratulations Joey!!!

We are so very proud of you, and know you will continue to succeed in everything you do!



We love you to the stars and back!
--Mom, Jess, Scott and Grandma --



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Arts and Entertainment

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

June 2016

Upcoming Summer '16 Movies

By Allison Chien and Hannah Marrow

It's finally summertime, which means two whole months of absolutely no school, no stress and (almost) no homework. With all of this free time, students have the opportunity to go out and satisfy their growing desires for fresh entertainment. Fortunately, many of the year's most popular movies come out during the summer, and provide students with the perfect opportunity to satiate their thirst for fun. Below is a compiled list of the most promising upcoming films to help you choose what to watch next on the big screen.



The Legend of Tarzan- July 1

Live action remakes of classic Disney films have been all the rage in Hollywood in the past year, with films including *Maleficent*, *Cinderella*, and *The Jungle Book*. While those films have all fallen a bit flat in the pop culture world, *The Legend of Tarzan* definitely won't disappoint. After Tarzan (Alexander Skarsgard) has settled into an aristocratic life in London with his wife Jane (Margot Robbie), he is called back to his former jungle home in the Congo to work as a trade emissary. Eventually, Tarzan realizes that he is actually a pawn in a dangerous game masterminded by the evil Captain Rom (Christoph Waltz), and must work to escape his wrath.



The Secret Life of Pets- July 8th

Itching to know what pets do all day when their owners aren't home? *The Secret Life of Pets* is a light hearted animated film that is sure to satisfy your curiosity. Max, a city dog with a perfect canine life, spends his days socializing with the other animals in his apartment complex. But when his owner brings Duke home from the pound, Max's life is turned upside down. Even though Max is not at all fond of his new brother, when they find themselves captured by animal control, they must work together and enlist the help of other street animals to find their way back home. With its star-studded cast of voices, including Kevin Hart, and its adorable animations, this movie is sure to bring out the kid in you come July 8.



Ghostbusters- July 15th

Your favorite demon-fighting clan is back and better than ever, and it's the girls' turn to show what they can do. This *Ghostbusters* sequel to the classic 1984 film is sure to be nothing but hilariously entertaining. These women have dedicated their lives to studying the supernatural, and they are ready to step up in order to save New York City - again. With a cast of venerated actors including Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, and Chris Hemsworth, this movie will definitely not disappoint.



Ice Age 5: Collision Course- July 22nd

Just when you thought it was over, the Ice Age franchise is back with another potential summer blockbuster. In *Collision Course*, the gang enlists the help of Neil DeBuck Weasel (voiced by Neil Degrasse Tyson) on a galactic adventure to outer space after Scrat's never ending chase for the acorn sparks cosmic events that greatly threaten Earth. The voices of Ray Romano, Josh Peck, and Nick Offerman will have you laughing throughout the duration of the movie, while the rest of the cast, including Queen Latifah, Jennifer Lopez, and Jesse Tyler Ferguson is sure to make this movie a summer hit.



Suicide Squad- August 5th

Everybody knows that bad guys are insane, but what do you get if you take a bunch of them, put them together to make a team, and then tell them to fight crime? A crazy good movie, of course. This highly anticipated film combines the forces of supervillains Dr. Harleen F. Quinzel/Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie), June Moone/Enchantress (Cara Delevingne), and Floyd Lawton/Deadshot (Will Smith). These anti-heroes are brought together to complete secret, high-stakes government missions that will most likely get them killed. Make sure to hit the movie theater this August to see if they can beat the odds and make it out alive.

Summer Beach Reads

By Allison Chien

One thing most people look forward to every summer is the pure bliss of doing nothing: doing nothing on the sofa, doing nothing in bed, perhaps even doing nothing at a mediocre internship. If you are one of the pioneers who actually ventures out into the sun, you might find yourself with your family in a nice tropical locale or even on a cruise. You might end up on a beach or by a pool. But you'll probably be doing nothing there too. In that case, 10/10 would recommend a good book. To help you out, here is a curated selection:

The Swiss Family Robinson- This book would be quite appropriate to read on a boat or some other kind of floating vessel, as *The Swiss Family Robinson* by Johann David Wyss tells the tale of a family that, upon getting abandoned by the other passengers on a ship in the middle of the night and subsequently shipwrecked, spots an island in the middle of the ocean. The parents, William and Elizabeth Robinson, and their four kids, Fritz, Ernest, Jack and Francis, must now figure out how they will proceed. They manage to transport supplies, including livestock and artillery, onto the island in tubs. The family manages to survive using both their own knowledge as well as the items from the shipwrecked boat. This novel shows the basic ingenuity of humans and explores that dream of living on an island and creating your own civilization that many of us had as kids.

The Selection- This young adult novel, by Kiera Cass, takes place in a quasi-post apocalyptic world in which there are generational nationwide searches for a suitable queen for the future king. Yes, it's literally the book version of *The Bachelor*. In this fictitious world, every girl's fantasy is to be Selected. Not only does Selection mean a chance with the prince, but it also includes many other lifelong benefits. It details the journey of America Singer as she gets Selected, much to her and everyone else's surprise. America is forced to leave her dearly beloved family and boyfriend in order to compete for a crown she does not

want. While this book is a bit predictable and cheesy (the fiery, red-head main character is named America of all things), Cass effectively ensnares the reader and gets you to root for your favorite girl to win, much like *The Bachelor* television show itself.

Throne of Glass- The main character in this novel is a magnificently crafted assassin named Celaena Sardothien. Written by Sarah J. Maas, the story follows an 18-year old warrior protagonist who has a thing for expensive clothes, but is also really, really good at killing. Celaena is taken from her old imprisonment at the salt mines to stand before the Crown Prince, Dorian, who then proposes a deal: fight in his name as his champion in a game of assassin against assassin, and, if she comes out alive, earn her freedom in return. The book encompasses everything you could ever want: a great main character, a hot prince, another hot captain, an intense mystery of who killed this dude and that dude, an obviously inevitable love triangle, and a couple impressively detailed fight scenes. This book is perfect if you enjoy snarky banter, awesome descriptions, and crazy back stories.

V for Vendetta- This one's for people who prefer visual cues to words. *V for Vendetta*, by Alan Moore and illustrated by David Lloyd, is a graphic novel that envisions a near-future, post-apocalyptic Great Britain after surviving nuclear warfare. V, the mysterious, Guy-Fawkes-mask wearing, chaos-causing protagonist is a revolutionary who is very much pro-anarchy. V goes against the police state that currently controls England, Norsefire and breaks it down piece by piece. As the story progresses, more and more is revealed about who V is and why he is the way he is. V meets and saves Evey Hammond, a young girl who is desperate for money, and takes her under his wing. The graphic novel incorporates many different storylines that are all happening simultaneously, which makes this a great read for longer beach days or maybe even long distance air travel.

Arts and Entertainment

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

June 2016

Hot Fun in the Summertime: Activities

By Alana Applebaum and Alexa Limb

With summer vacation just around the corner, there's no better time to start planning for long days filled with fun and excitement. Whether you enjoy relaxing or adventuring, there are always places to visit nearby that will guarantee lifelong memories.



First, for those willing to ditch the suburbs and venture into New York City, the possibilities are virtually endless. A popular destination for tourists and city natives alike is the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), located in Midtown. Whether you want to take in the bold, eccentric pieces by Andy Warhol or view the classic art of Van Gogh, MOMA's extensive collection offers something for everyone. If this famed museum doesn't satisfy your fine art cravings, there's another one - the Metropolitan Museum of Art - just a subway ride away. There, viewers can admire ancient works of art from all over the world.

If you're looking to spend time outdoors, the summer weather is perfect for visiting the High Line in Chelsea. This mile long linear park was historically a railway but has been recently converted into a popular location for the public. The elevated park is the perfect



place for visitors to enjoy the sights of the city or appreciate the bright greenery that spans its entire length. After a stroll along the High Line, the perfect complement is a visit Chelsea Market, a short walk away from the park. Here you can try an assortment of New York City's finest foods. Some of the most popular vendors in Chelsea market include Donuttery and Los Tacos No. 1.

Food lovers will salivate at the opportunity to try the famous vendors at Smorgasburg, an outdoor market that runs on Saturdays and Sundays in a variety of NYC locations, including Williamsburg and Pier 51 in Brooklyn. Here, foodies can enjoy endless small plates created by creative vendors such as the Instagram-famous Ramen Burger and Raindrop Cake. On a sweltering summer afternoon, nothing is more refreshing than a popsicle from People's Pops. Visitors can also enjoy coconut water straight from the nut and tons of other unconventional dishes. Stop by and start tasting.

For the more adventurous types - and those willing to venture perhaps a little farther - there are a number of amusement parks close by that are sure to get hearts racing and adrenaline pumping. About a two hour drive from here, Six Flags Great Adventure, in Jackson Township, New Jersey is certainly not something to miss this summer. With over fifty attractions, no one will be displeased. Even the more extreme riders will not leave disappointed; this park is best known for its roller coaster Kingda Ka, the tallest and fastest of its kind in North America. For people who dislike roller coasters or other high-motion attractions, several water rides are



featured in Great Adventure's water park, Hurricane Harbor.

Another well-known amusement park is Lake Compounce in Bristol, Connecticut. Despite its deceptive size, Lake Compounce is, in fact, the oldest theme park in the United States. It features roller coasters such as Boulder Dash, voted the world's top wooden roller coaster. This park is also home to Connecticut's largest water park, Crocodile Cove.

And who could forget Rye Playland? Only a 15 minute drive away, it's a more modest choice, but no less exciting. Most famous for its wooden Dragon Coaster, the park never disappoints; there are Coasters, games, Mirror Houses, shows...the list goes on. Plus, after a fun day of rides, visitors can relax, cool off, and watch the sunset on the nearby Oakland Beach.

Now for the beach lovers. Aside from Oakland, perhaps the next closest beach is the very popular Tod's Point, just a few minutes away in Old Greenwich, CT. A day spent here - filled with beautiful water, shells, and breathtaking views - is almost like a mini vacation.

Another popular beach located in Greenwich is Island Beach. A trip to this destination involves a ferry ride, setting it apart from some other nearby beaches. The ferry ride provides extra cost and extra hassle, but simultaneously extra relaxing and extra fun.

Photos/Rachel Penn

Monday Nights with *The Bachelor/Bachelorette*

By Jamie Kerner

Some people's Monday nights consist of watching sports games or doing homework. I revolve my Monday's on making sure I am ready and available to watch the newest episode of *The Bachelor* or *The Bachelorette* at 8pm. It is safe to say I am a pretty big fan of the show.

So, let's start this over... Hi, my name is Jamie and I am a "Bachelor"-holic.

The Bachelor/Bachelorette series is a dating game show in which "contestants" compete for the main prize: finding love and marrying that season's *Bachelor* or *Bachelorette*. The show first premiered on March 25, 2002 as just the *Bachelor*, and as the show gained popularity, the *Bachelorette* was born in 2004. As a result of the two, spin offs such as *Bachelor in Paradise* and *Bachelor Pad* were created. These two shows were designed to help those who didn't "win" and find love on their season, find love with other "losing" contestants.

Each episode consists of "one on one dates," where the season's bachelor or bachelorette goes on a solo date with a contestant, and "group dates," which consist of a group of contestants and the bachelor or bachelorette. These dates are always very extravagant and not what average people would do on their dates. At the end of each episode is a cocktail party, followed by a rose ceremony where contestants are eliminated.

Most relationships that are formed from the franchise eventually do not work out. In fact, seventeen out of the twenty relationships that have stemmed from the Bachelor have failed and seven out of the eleven relationships that formed throughout the Bachelorette have also failed. That's a lot of failing relationships for a show that is supposed to bring people together and help them find love.

So, why do I still watch this show? I watch for pure entertainment. I am unlike a true *Bachelor* or *Bachelorette* fan for the fact I know that the relationships most certainly will not work out and last, but I do know that the drama that exists between contestants is hysteri-

cal and entertaining.

Such shows as *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* are created solely for the purpose of entertaining the millions of viewers that tune into the show each week. During the first episode, contestants who cause drama, or rub others the wrong way, tend to stay and make it through the first week's rose ceremony.

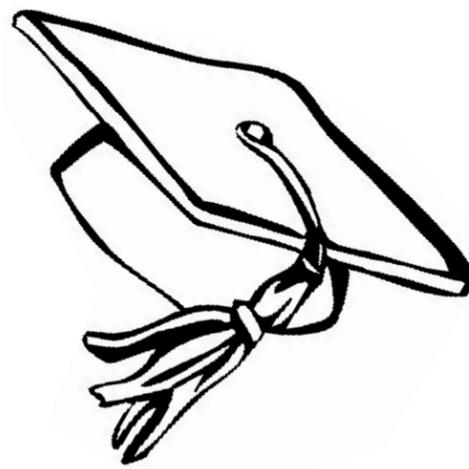
The producers become aware that these people would make for entertaining television throughout the season. Despite the feelings of the bachelor or bachelorette towards these contestants or towards others, they are forced to give these people roses to move on to the following week.

This season of *The Bachelorette*, which premiered on May 23, 2016 on ABC, is centered around Texas native Joelle "Jojo" Fletcher and twenty six eligible bachelors competing for her love. Though only a few episodes of these season have aired so far, they have been filled with the same quotes that contestants say every season. "This person isn't here for the right reasons," contestants always say. "I know that I will fall in love with the *Bachelor/Bachelorette*," they add on. While listening to these people proclaim their love for someone whom they just met, it makes me wonder what is real and what is fake. Among the twenty six men vying for Jojo's love and attention is a man named Chad, who is known as the antagonist among the contestants thus far. Chad calls the out the men who proclaim their love for Jojo within the first two weeks, noting that their feelings are not real. Chad is known to call it as it is, and has even called Jojo "naggy." Though Chad is supposed to be strongly disliked by viewers, and is obviously disliked by fellow contestants, he is correct regarding the untrue feelings portrayed by men and women each season.

So yes, I will always continue to tune in to the newest episode of *The Bachelor* or *The Bachelorette* every Monday. Not so I can watch contestants fall in love, but purely for the entertainment aspect.



Photo courtesy of Jamie Kerner



CONGRATULATIONS

to

*Jonathan
Applebaum*

and the Class of

2016

Jonathan, we are so proud of you and your classmates, and can't wait to see what the future brings!

From the Applebaum Family



Blind Brook Theater Students Attend the Annual Metro Awards

By **Eliana Rosenzweig**

This year, the prestigious Metropolitan High School Theater Awards nominated senior Adam Newmark for Actor in a Supporting Role, junior Sammy Landino for Actor in a Leading Role, and freshman Ryan Vogt for Male Featured Dancer in recognition of their outstanding work in the spring musical *Anything Goes*.

Newmark, nominated for the role of Lord Evelyn Oakleigh, a bumbling and kindhearted Brit, discovered his love for acting after he participated in a production at a summer camp. Since then, Newmark has participated in all of the Blind Brook theater productions in both middle and high school.



Photo/Amanda Capelli
Junior Sammy Landino performs a song from Anything Goes.

Newmark plans to continue pursuing theater in college, and his love for theater also extends to voice-acting and set production.

Ryan Vogt played the role of a tap dancing sailor, a role well-suited to the freshman that describes dancing as part of “who he is” and a crucial form of his self-expression. He cites dancing as his “happy place” and cannot imagine his life without theater.

When Vogt is not acting or singing, he is usually dancing, and spends most of his time dancing at the New York Performing Center. He participates in many competitions, such as Beyond the Stars and Twenty Four-Seven, as well as charity work with Dancers Responding to AIDS, Stars of Tomorrow and the Felix Foundation. This year, Vogt has won five dance scholarships and looks forward to dancing at Broadway Artists Alliance and Ballet des Ameriques this summer.

Sammy Landino was recognized for his role as Billy Crocker, a



Photo/Amanda Capelli
Freshman Ryan Vogt is accompanied by seniors Jamie Epstein, Katy Comstock, and Seth Schuster at the Metro Awards Show.

dashing Wall Street man who falls in love with Hope Harcourt. As a nominee for Actor in a Leading Role, Landino performed one of his character’s classic numbers, “It’s De-Lovely,” at the awards ceremony.

This is was Landino’s first theater award nomination and he looks forward to meeting all of the talented actors and actresses from other

schools. Landino loves theater primarily of the people in it.

“People in the theater community are so amazingly supportive and have been so kind to me,” said Landino.

The awards, called Metros, are presented annually to the top high school theater programs and individuals across Westchester and Rockland County in New York, as well as Bergen County in New Jersey. There are awards for many different aspects of theater, including dancing, vocal, acting performances, and also for the backstage components of the show, such as production and crew.

Three judges attend spring showings of different participating theater programs, and if all three judges agree on a specific nomination according to their form scores, then the nominee becomes eligible to win at the Metro Awards. The number of nominations in each category varies, but there is generally only one winner.

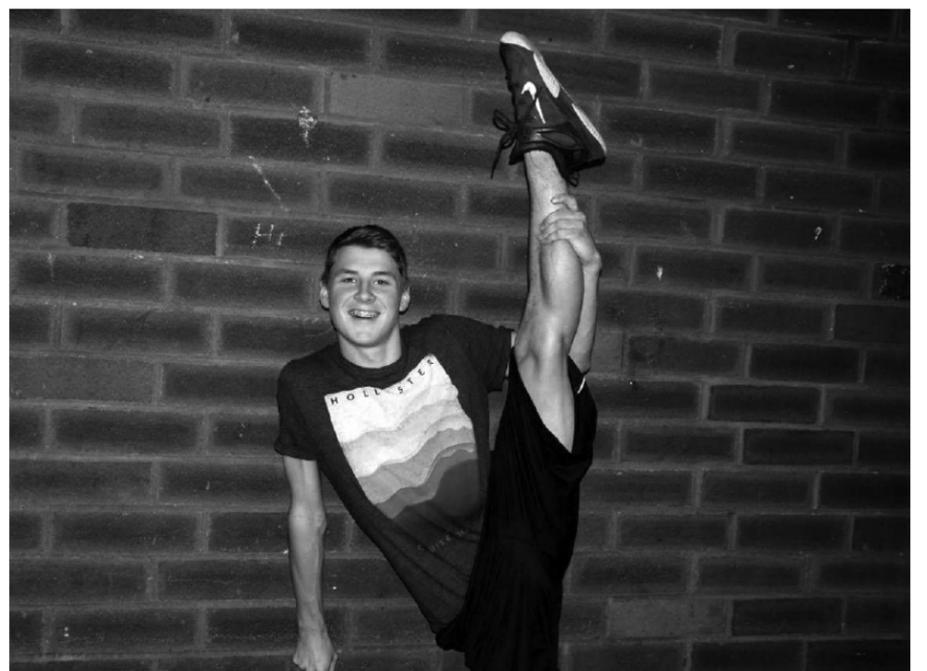
The June 6 event was attended by approximately 1,000 individuals,



Photo/Amanda Capelli
Shown above is the program for the Metro Awards Show.

which included nominees and their supporters. Performances featured the nominees for Actor and Actress in a Leading Role as well as performances by the schools nominated for outstanding overall productions.

Unfortunately, the three Blind Brook actors did not take home



Photo/Rebecca Reguiera
Freshman Ryan Vogt strikes a dance pose for the camera.

awards this year, but are extremely grateful to have received the honor of being nominated.

“It was very exciting and I felt honored to be nominated for a Metro Award. The Metros are basically the Tonys for high school performances. It was such an amazing experience to be there and to see all of the love and support that people gave for each other. So many people came out to support each other,” said Vogt.

Thank You, Blind Brook

By Jacob Zeitlin

As I reflect on the thirteen years I spent in the Blind Brook School District, I feel a mixture of emotions. I feel anxious about leaving a place I have known for so long and starting completely fresh. I feel excited to discover the opportunities the rest of the world has to offer. I feel reminiscent as I think about the memories I have shared with my friends and family. But most of all, I feel appreciative towards all of the support that I have received from the many different people who have been a part of my journey.

While I am not exactly sure what I want to do with the rest of my life, Blind Brook has provided me with an excellent starting point, and not just from the level of academic instruction that it has to offer.

I also feel like I have been part of a community of people who have purposes and passions that span across all fields—whether it is the teacher who pushes each student to his or her maximum potential, the student who selflessly offers help to peers, or anyone else who contributes to the environment at Blind Brook. Each of those individuals has the ability and desire to make those who surround them better people, and I honestly feel I am a better person because of it.

Blind Brook has taught my peers and me to do what we love. That's the advice I would give to my classmates of the Class of 2016: to continue following your passion.

Michael Jordan once said, "I'm not out there sweating every day

just to find out what it feels like to sweat." Don't go through the next four years sitting through classes and studying in libraries just so you can get a high GPA, find a good job, and make a lot of

money. Go and learn about what you find interesting, and the rest will follow. Not only will you be happier, but you will also be more successful. Not many people in the world have the opportunities that we have, so why not take advantage of it?

For the first time in my life, I am going to be going to school with thousands of people I have never met before. But whatever I do and wherever I go, Blind Brook and the lessons it has taught me will play an influential role.

I have been exposed to so many diverse ideas and ways of thinking so far in my life, but I can only imagine how different it will be 500 miles away from home, in a new place with new people.

But that's okay. In fact, it's exciting. If I knew what the rest of my life would be like, I wouldn't have anything to work towards.

Each time I walked through the doors in the front of the building, or walked into a classroom at the beginning of a period, I was filled with the sense of drive and motivation that pervades Blind Brook. All of my time at Blind Brook, but especially the past four years, has transformed me from an uncertain, immature boy into a person who is ready to be a contributing member of society.

For that, Blind Brook, I would like to thank you. It's been real.



Photo courtesy of Jacob Zeitlin

Startup Stats: Oculus

By Arianna Kohilakis

Mark Zuckerberg introduced the world to Facebook in 2004, thus revolutionizing the way in which we interact with one another. Scroll, like, scroll, like, has become the norm, a mundane cycle that is second nature to social media users. Each time we log on to or open the Facebook app, we confront a world of images, videos and articles.

Our constant access to any information we could possibly need has desensitized us; we are no longer as awed by, afraid of, or curious about things that we have not experienced ourselves.

Facebook is one of many social networks that has facilitated this technological numbing, making it especially ironic—or brilliantly devious—that Mark Zuckerberg has invested in a company meant to re-sensitize: Oculus.

Startup company Oculus Virtual Reality was founded in 2012 in Irvine, California by Palmer Luckey, Jack McCauley, Nate Mitchell, Andrew Scott Reisse, Brendan Iribe, and Michael Antonov. The name, derived from the Latin word for eye, appropriately describes the goal of the technology, which is to open users' eyes to a virtual reality experience.

In March of 2014, Zuckerberg acquired the startup for a grand total of two billion dollars. The Facebook founder's decision to purchase Oculus was met with much criticism from consumers who were unfamiliar with the startup's purpose. Yet, years later, the idea of virtual reality has revolutionized modern technology by creating a computer-generated scene with which an individual can interact.

In 2015, Oculus acquired a British company named Surreal Vision in order to further develop simulation technology. The two corporations worked together to develop telepresence: the use of virtual reality technology for participation in distant events.

The idea of virtual reality

is to enhance an experience by incorporating all of the senses in a simulated setting. For instance, with the Oculus headset on, a person can "explore" an underwater environment while sitting in a classroom. Telepresence provides users with stimuli that would exist in an alternate location in order to mimic the experience of inhabiting a certain environment.

Oculus currently offers two products to the public: Rift and Touch. The former is a headset with a target audience in the gaming community. The headset, which launched in 2012, features futuristic components like an LED sensor and integrated headphones. These elements amplify the surreal virtual experience desired by game-junkie users. The Touch, in comparison, is a hand-held device that allows users to control objects in their virtual reality with a joystick.

In November of 2015, Oculus helped Samsung to create Samsung Gear VR, allowing Samsung consumers to experience virtual reality on their mobile devices. Not only is virtual reality accessible on smartphones, but also on high-performance PCs that have been redesigned to support the Rift. Thus, the virtual reality experiences of consumers are not limited to the constraints of a handheld device's screen.

In addition to allowing users to experience alternate physical settings, Oculus is also redefining the entertainment industry. Oculus's products enable users to stream live events and recorded shows. Consumers can also virtually "attend" concerts, "act" in movies and television shows, and take on the point of view of another person.

Oculus has vowed to continue tinkering with technology to deliver cutting-edge equipment to twenty-first century consumers. With funding from Zuckerberg, Oculus has pioneered virtual reality technological experiences by testing the limits of technology and human experience.



The Oculus Rift

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Health and Science

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

June 2016

Blind Brook Science Symposium

By Joanna Goodman

On June 1st, 2016, Blind Brook's Science Research Program hosted its annual symposium during which students in the program displayed not only the completed projects of the senior class, but also projects in progress by the freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.

The night began in the auditorium, where four seniors were selected to present their studies to the audience. The four speakers and their studies were:

Jacob Zeitlin— An Analysis of ENSO Forecasts and Farmer Preferences for Index Insurance and Savings for Risk Management

Melissa Blum—Regulation of Macrophage-Induced Breast Cancer Epithelial-Mesenchymal Transition

Alyssa Wei— Induction of Apoptosis in Pancreatic Cancer Cells (PANC-1) by Eb-Peptide of Human Pro-IGF-1

Joanna Goodman—The Impact of Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder on the Interpersonal Relationships of Adults 12 Years of Age or

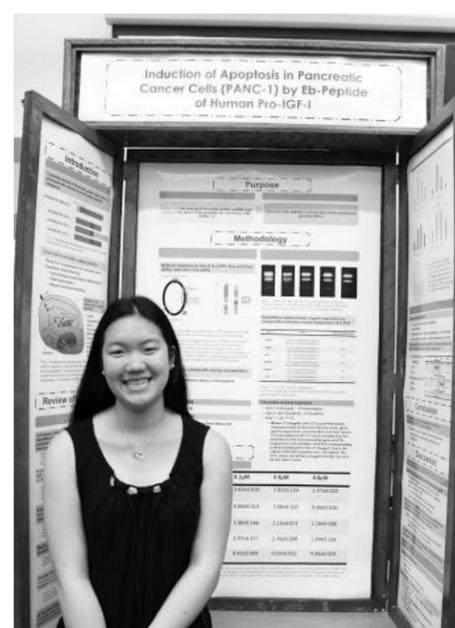
Older.

Afterward, the crowd was redirected to both the Commons and library where freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors presented their lab studies and projects. The students individually presented their studies while the audience listened and asked questions.

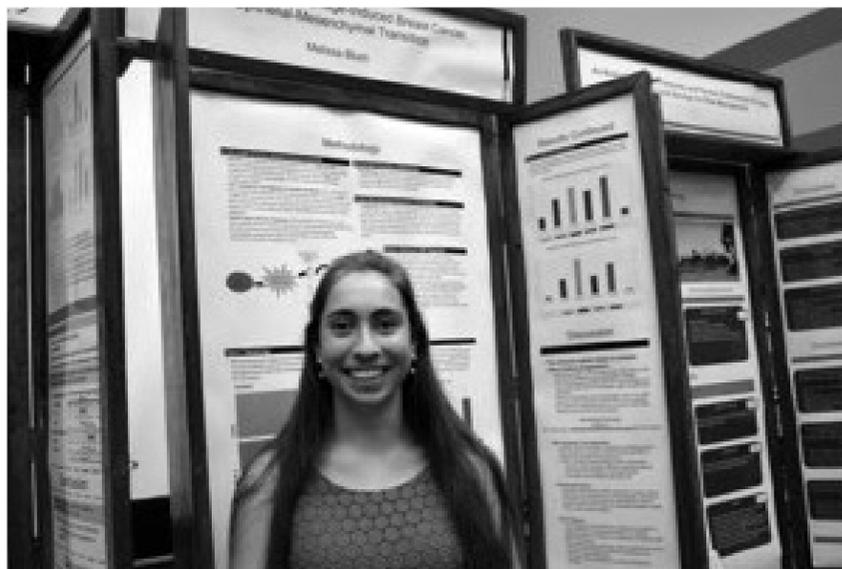
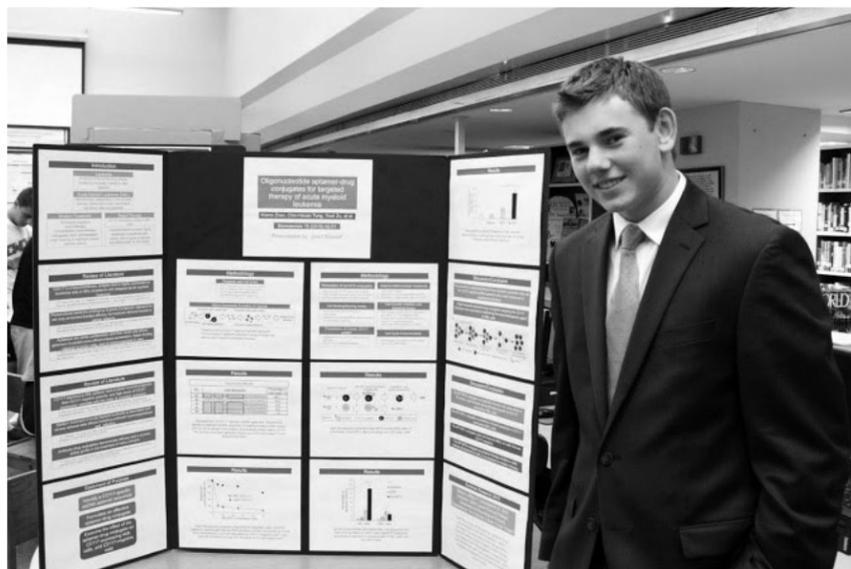
"The projects that were presented were very interesting. To observe all of the hard work the Science Research students put in was incredible. After presenting my project, I was inspired to look further into specific topics and it sparked my interest for science even more," said Freshman Bryan Wei.

This year studies included cancer research, environmental research, behavioral science, and computer science. Seniors Amanda Luke, Eleni Kohilakis, and Samantha Friedlander presented studies titled: The Effects of Long-Term Music and Art Therapy on Autism Spectrum Disorder, Exploring Weight Bias and Body Esteem Among Members of a Weight Management Program Within a Large Multispecialty Practice, and How Occupational Therapy with a Sensory Integration Component Impacts Short Sensory Profile (SSP) Scores: A Pilot Study, respectively.

While juniors, Divya Kumaran, Petal Samrow, Paul Soden, and Owen Xie presented studies titled: Is a Low to Moderate dosage of Hydromorphone



Clockwise from top left, Jacob Zeitlin, Paul Soden, Alyssa Wei, Melissa Blum, and Jared Bassett stand in front of their research posters, awaiting an audience for presentation.



Effective in Treating Pain Associated with Sickle Cell Disease: A Pilot Study, Mutation Screening in CRYAA gene in Congenital Cataract Cases from North India, The Impact of Stimulant Medications on the Academic Behaviors of Children and Adolescents with ADHD, and Application of Automatically Constructed Concept Map of Learning to Conceptual Diagnosis of E-Learning, respectively.

"Preparing for the science symposium was a challenging yet gratifying experience. The formidable rigor of the Science Research curriculum has made me a more inquisitive and curious individual while shaping my abilities as a presenter and as a researcher. Being able to present my research to the community and celebrate the culmination of my work is an incredible achievement," shared Soden.

"I think this has definitely been a challenging year in Science Research, but in the end, doing this research has helped to expand my own interest in science, as well as fuel my passion for it. It has also shown me

that it's important to persevere—even when it looks like what you are doing will fail. There were several points in time when I thought I wouldn't be able to continue my research, but because I chose to continue and adapt, I was able to make it work. Overall, these past three years of Science Research have been a fulfilling experience, and I am thankful for this opportunity," remarked Friedlander.

"Everyone was amazing and I am very proud of all the students that participated. Our Science Research Program has grown immensely since its start and we are looking forward to many more years of success," commented head of the Science Research Department, Doctor Michele Sugantino.

Photos/Noah Zeitlin & Photo/Maya Finkman

Putting Pen to iPad

By **Eliana Rosenzweig**

The first groundbreaking revolution in the evolution of writing technology began in the fertile land of Mesopotamia, where the Sumerians developed cuneiform, a form of written communication used with so-called tablets. Today, students are moving away from the notion of handwriting notes, and focusing their attention to the recent evolution of digital note taking. As reported from a study conducted at Docmail, one out of every three individuals has not handwritten anything in the last six months.

Two years ago, Blind Brook's rising middle school students tested the waters with the use of Google Chromebooks to take notes for first time. These digital notes seem to fare well with Blind Brook students, so much so that the incoming tenth graders at Blind Brook High School will be receiving Chromebooks this upcoming fall.

Digital devices such as the Chromebook look to replace the inconvenience of shuffling papers around and hopefully keep people more organized. New apps are being released that are making note taking easier and undeniably more efficient.

Anne Trubek, associate professor of rhetoric and composition at Oberlin College in Ohio, mentions that "What we want from writing – and what the Sumerians wanted – is cognitive automaticity, the ability to think as fast as possible, freed as much as can be from the strictures of whichever technology we must use to record our thoughts, we want more time to think."

Mr. Markolovic, the AP Macroeconomics and AP U.S. Government Politics teacher at Blind Brook High School, often integrates technology into his daily teaching styles. He recommends the apps Whink, Notability, and Paper by 53 for digital note taking on the iPad.

Any Apple device that has been made in the past few years includes a Notes app that allows the user to draw, make a list, and insert pictures into their "notes."

Since technological advancement has already established digital note taking appliances, now, corporations such as Apple are concentrating their efforts on replacing pens and pencils. According to researcher Edouard Gentaz, people will soon lose interest in keyboards, and new styluses and touchscreens will, ironically, bring people back to traditional handwriting.

Apple recently released the Apple Pencil, which works with the iPad Pro to enhance digital note taking through mimicking the ac-

tions of an actual pencil. According to Adonit, Apple is not the only company to provide writing utensil technology, and the Adonit's Jot Script 2 actually focuses on mimicking the ballpoint pen.

Amazon also sells commercially accessible styluses such as the FiftyThree Digital Stylus, Boogie Board 9.7, Wacom Intuos Creative Stylus, and the Stilo that are compatible with various devices.

With the new wave of digital note taking, many states have taken a side, either favoring the path of traditional note taking, or embracing the new technology at their fingertips. According to articles written by The Guardian and the New York Times, the new Common Core standards recently dropped the requirement of teaching cursive and "legible writing" at schools. Instead it is only going to be required in first and second grade. Neuroscientists actually predict that without handwriting substantially implemented in schools, reading comprehension and word retention rates will significantly decline.

A new study conducted by two U.S. researchers, Pam Mueller and David Oppenheimer, looked at the differences between handwriting notes and digitally typing notes in 300 college students from both UCLA and Princeton. Their research found that the students who took handwritten notes answered more questions correctly as opposed to those who typed away at a computer. Researchers concluded that the subjects using laptops were more inclined to retaining verbatim factual information and students who typed their notes quite literally wrote down exactly what the teacher says. This is something the researchers coined as "desirable difficulty."



Photo/Daniel Oppizzi

Olivia Jaccoma uses a Chrome Book in Mrs. Sofer's class.

Other schools in the United States are moving towards continuing standard lessons on handwriting and emphasizing the importance of writing, especially in younger children. For example, according to Education Week, Indiana's senator Jean Leising has worked hard to ensure that cursive continues to be taught in schools so that students will be able to read their grandparents birthday cards, teachers comments, and significant works of literature such as the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence.

Whether or not digital technology continues to pave the way for note taking in the future, it has inevitably become a huge part of the education of younger generations and demands people to ask themselves how much technology should extend into daily lives.

Feeling Nostalgia is Feeling Better

By **Joie Ng**

As individuals grow older, they often reminisce about the past, wistfully remembering earlier moments in life that were filled with happiness and joy. This yearning for an idealized past is known as nostalgia. Although many people enjoy recalling "the good old days," according to Elite Daily, the past that they fondly look back upon is actually a romanticized, distorted version of what had occurred in reality.

Rather than associating with a specific memory, nostalgia links to an emotional state.

Different people connect different emotional states with certain objects, places, or odors. Because of this, when reminded of such things, they are then prompted to ruminate on past times that embodied those emotional states.

The term was first used by Johannes Hoffer in the late 17th century when he deemed soldiers' longing to return home to be the reason for their men-

tal and physical ailments. Hoffer described nostalgia as a "neurological disease of essentially demonic cause." Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, it was branded with a myriad of labels, classifying phenomenon as an "immigrant psychosis," a form of "melancholia," and a "mentally repressive compulsive disorder."

However, over the past few years, various studies have produced data that counter the negative connotation nostalgia has held in the past. According to The New York Times, in one experiment, people reported that negative events or feelings of loneliness led to bouts of nostalgia. This in turn improved their mood and helped them to feel better. It was found that as a whole, the positive outcomes of nostalgia outweighed the negative effects.

In an experiment conducted at North Dakota State University, researchers induced nostalgia through music. Those who felt nostalgic after listening to the music were more likely to

say they felt "loved" or that "life is worth living." Additionally, they tested the reverse effect by having people read an essay on how life is meaningless in order to induce existential angst. This condition also increased the probability that the readers felt nostalgic. Similarly, people who felt nostalgic before they read the essay were less likely to be convinced by it.

Clay Routledge, one of the researchers who conducted this experiment, stated, "Nostalgia serves a crucial existential function. It brings to mind cherished experiences that assure us we are valued people who have meaningful lives."

Further experiments have led to the discovery that feeling nostalgic may induce a mind-body link in that experiencing nostalgia can cause a person to physically feel warmer. For example, research in Sun Yat-Sen University showed that nostalgia was more common on cold days or in cooler rooms. Other studies have indicated that nostalgia makes

people more optimistic and inspired about the future. It also has been shown to counteract feelings of boredom and anxiety while increasing generosity towards strangers.

The usefulness of nostalgia is thought to vary with age. According to Erica Hepper, a psychologist at the University of Surrey, levels tend to be high in young adults. After a decrease in the frequency of nostalgic feelings in middle age, they rise once again as a person enters old age. This trend suggests that nostalgia helps people deal with transitions.

Nostalgia is universal feeling that is common around the world, allowing humans to establish connections and feel empathy for one another. In June, the seniors of BBHS will be graduating. As the school year draws to a close, and as the seniors move on to the next stage of their lives, they may nostalgically recall their time at Blind Brook and look forward to what is to come.

A Prescription for Heartbreak: Tylenol's Pursuit to Replace Ice Cream and Netflix

By Alyssa Wei

Let's play a game. Your significant other just broke your heart. Or maybe you broke theirs. Regardless, the game still stands. Do you...

A. Break down in tears or drown in silent sorrow

B. Eat endless amounts of ice cream, pizza, or any other comfort food

C. Watch your favorite television program or play videogames

D. Pretend it doesn't hurt

E. Any combination of the above
My answer is E., and I would be right to assume I'm not the only one.

The term heartbreak has been around since 1580 as a combination of the separate lexical entities of "heart" and "break" to form a word defined as "great sorrow, grief, or anguish." More than that, heartbreak is a feeling, a feeling when your grandparent dies, a feeling when your pet has been put down, a feeling when your first love breaks your heart, a feeling of utter rejection and emptiness. Heartbreak is an ineffable feeling and as humans, we have all experienced it in one form or another.

Depending on age and cultural preferences, viable coping mecha-

nisms range from alcohol consumption to exercise, Netflix, binge eating, and more. What many don't realize is that heartbreak is a temporary state of being; it won't continue in perpetuity. It doesn't have to be the lazy, moping around that romantic comedies make it out to be. In fact, it can be detrimental to watch a fictional character live his or her whirlwind fairytale life in about two hours' time, all while you continue living in your depressive state. But I digress.

Even with all these remedies, there exists an actual prescription to ameliorate the negative effects of heartbreak, but it shouldn't be recommended, or even "prescribed" by any means. Gary Stix, senior editor of Scientific American and neuroscience specialist, writes in his article entitled Feeling the Pain of Rejection? Try Taking a Tylenol, that "certain kinds of physical and emotional pain share a neural pathway that responds to acetaminophen," which include brand name drugs such as Tylenol.

A 2003 study conducted by Dr. Naomi Eisenberger, Assistant Professor of Social Psychology at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), first found the shock-

ing revelation that neural pathways involving physical and social pain overlapped significantly. With this, an extension to the original imaging analysis was proposed in which participants suffering from social rejection and the associated pain, were given either a placebo pill or a painkiller for three weeks. As expected, those with the painkiller experienced less hurt as measured by the Hurt Feelings Scale, which employs the use of a Likert scale to quantify sensitivity and response to criticism.

So at the end of the day, yes, the same painkillers that you use for your migraine or your sprained ankle can help desensitize your heartbreak. But while Tylenol can allow you to be more productive late at night when you wish you just weren't so alone, it is still a drug. It should not be taken in large dosages; it should not be consumed with other pharmaceutical products; it should not become the end-all be-all for a heartbreak.

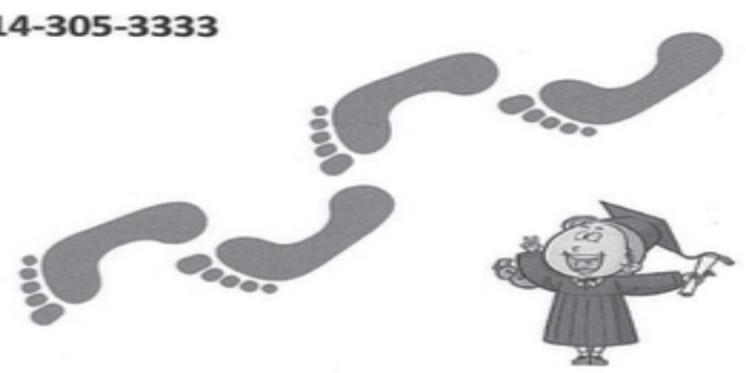
In addition to the potential for overdose, Dr. Eisenberger has noted the heavy impact that feelings such as heartbreak and rejection have on our mammalian brains, and fears for the effects of dulling the dreaded

sensation. The hurt and emptiness allows for our bodies to learn, a psychological conditioning to refrain from engaging in behaviors with poor prognosis. She warns against the use of painkillers as a means to quell discomfort, fearing for the loss of evolutionary learning. No one wants to experience heartbreak more than once, but the mere reality is that in a lifetime, the majority of us will experience heartbreak, once, or twice, or even ten times.

With that in mind, ice cream and pizza and Netflix and friends and sports and books are definitely not dangerous in large dosages and are rather good distractions for your brain to hone in on. While romance novels or movies may not be the best choice for obvious reasons, it can't hurt to let loose and binge (on television, food, or maybe even both) and maybe hit what feels like a low point so you can spring back up to face the world again.

Sometimes, the best medicine can't be purchased behind a counter. Sometimes, ice cream, some tears, and the clichéd advice to take time to "find yourself" are the best medicines to cure heartbreak.

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Melissa and Jamie,
 It has been our joy to watch you both grow and achieve so much during your years at Blind Brook. We are incredibly proud of you both and can't wait to see what your future has in store for you. We know it will be fabulous--just like you!

Congratulations to you and to the Blind Brook High School Class of 2016.

With our love,
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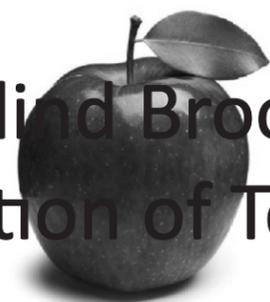
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Building Brighter Futures Together

Up and Coming Athletes

Sophomore Russell Scharf - Boys' Varsity Tennis

Russell Scharf has been a rising star on the Varsity Boys' Tennis team since he joined in the eighth grade. After finishing his third year on the team, Scharf hopes to improve his skills and remain a top player. This season in sectionals Scharf played doubles with freshman Zach Kornblum. In the off-season Scharf hopes to improve his individual skills so that he can be an even bigger contributor to the team next year.

Junior Lauren Santarsiero - Girls' Varsity Tennis

Lauren Santarsiero, one of the top Varsity Girls' Tennis players, is looking to finish her high school career by advancing far in sectionals next year. Stiff competition from Keio's strong team stood in her path this past season. In the fall, Santarsiero will show off her skills and try her best to push for a title.

Junior Jamie Broitman - Varsity Track

Rising senior Jamie Broitman will be encouraged to carry the Blind Brook Varsity Track team to victory in their upcoming season. With its many graduating seniors, the track team will look to Broitman for her ability to lead them to a successful season. Broitman's speed and endurance makes her a strong competitor in both the mile and 800 meter events, and her encouraging and lively spirit exemplify her role as a respected team player.



Sophomore Jake DiGiansante - Varsity Golf

Sophomore Jake DiGiansante may be known best for his skill on the basketball court, but he is also a leader on the golf course. DiGiansante has been on the golf team for Blind Brook since eighth grade and has continued to improve his skills over several seasons. DiGiansante looks to continue this trend into his junior after a successful spring season.



Junior Robert Giuliano - Varsity Football

Junior Robert Giuliano is a running back and safety for the Blind Brook Trojans football team. This was his third season on varsity. He is known for being a team player and for always valuing his time on the field. "As a team, I thought we all worked really well together and had great chemistry. I just give 150% every day and try my best," says Giuliano. Next season, Giuliano's goal is to push the team to "get farther ahead in physical and mental awareness."



Junior Socrates Espinal - Varsity Cross Country

Socrates Espinal had a very impressive season with the Varsity Cross Country team this year and wishes to increase his influence during his final year at Blind Brook. "I have great stamina and I am able to keep a constant speed throughout the race and not slow down," he says. Espinal is always optimistic and leads his teammates with his long strides. He has had injuries in the past that have affected his running, but he hopes that he will be healthy next year so that he has the ability to showcase his true talent.



Junior Haley Feuerman - Girls' Varsity Soccer

Captain Haley Feuerman will be responsible for leading the girls' soccer team next season. With sixteen graduating seniors this year, the Girls Varsity Soccer team will be in need of a strong role model. As both a junior and senior captain, Feuerman's experience from playing on varsity since freshman year will indisputably serve as an asset. As a midfielder, Feuerman brings many skills to the game that have proven to be very valuable. Not only does she score on offense, but her speed allows for her to get back in time to prevent the other team from scoring on defense. In the coming year, Feuerman is expected to help her teammates perfect their own skills as well so that the team can prosper this fall.

Junior Joao Souza - Boys' Varsity Soccer

Joao Souza, a center attacking midfielder, had an outstanding season with the Boys' Varsity Soccer team. Souza hopes that next year's team will be even more successful than this past one. In order to do so, he believes that the team needs to work on improving some aspects of its game. Souza has been praised for having an outstanding shot and for being a very skilled dribbler who can create his own space. His main goal is to leave a lasting impression on the Blind Brook soccer program after he graduates next year, and he hopes that his teammates work hard during the offseason so that this can be achieved.

Junior Sarah Simon - Varsity Ski Team

In spite of a rough season for the ski team, Sarah Simon has shone brightly on the slopes. An experienced racer who often competes at Hunter Mountain, Simon has been the top racer on the ski team since her freshman year. Next year she hopes to bring success to the team by repeating her performance this year, which earned her a trip to sectionals.



Up and Coming Athletes

Sophomore Melanie Stiler – Girls' Varsity Lacrosse

Starting at attack wing, Melanie Stiler brings a lot to the Girls' Varsity Lacrosse team. With seven graduating seniors leaving the team this year, Stiler will be looked at next season to lead the team to victory. With her speed and agility, there is no doubt that that she will be a huge asset to her future teammates. As one of the more experienced members of the Lady Trojans lacrosse team, Stiler is expected to safely carry the ball up the field and to beat defenders.

Junior Alec Milbauer – Boys' Varsity Lacrosse

Assistant captain Alec Milbauer helped lead the Boys' Varsity Lacrosse team to their first playoff appearance in school history. With four seniors leaving the team this year, Milbauer will be expected to carry the team's legacy through the next season. Playing the midfield position, Milbauer is responsible for both offense and defense and is able to help the team in both aspects of the game. He contributes to the team both on and off the field by always encouraging his teammates to excel in their sport.



Junior Rebecca Kimmel - Girls' Varsity Softball

Rebecca Kimmel has been an influential member of the Blind Brook softball team since freshman year. Although the team finished with a 6-10 record, it secured a spot in sectionals with the help of Kimmel's athletic ability. "As a team we all work really well together and individually I help support the team on and off the field." Kimmel says. Next year, Kimmel hopes to enhance her tactical skill and further develop her leadership skills for the upcoming season.

Junior Jake Wynn - Boys' Varsity Baseball

Jake Wynn is the starting catcher for the Boys' Varsity Baseball Team. Wynn is a major asset for the Trojans behind the plate and would like to improve upon his hitting approach for the upcoming season. Wynn also hopes to motivate the team to improve upon their hitting and fielding. This season, the Trojans finished 6-14 in their regular season, and Wynn was "disappointed" in the results. However, he is hopeful that next season he can use his skills to elicit better results from his team.

Junior Sam Brandeis – Boys' Varsity Basketball

After a tough defeat in the semifinals of the section playoffs this year to Putnam Valley, Sam Brandeis is looking to help Blind Brook advance even further next season. As a power forward with the versatility to play the small forward position, Brandeis has the potential to lead the team to great victories.

Junior Kaveri Reddy - Girls' Varsity Basketball

Kaveri Reddy has been a crucial player on the Varsity Girls' Basketball team over the past few years. Next year, as captain, she will use both her athletic and leadership skills to improve the strength of the team and to elevate their level of play. Reddy hopes to overcome the obstacles faced by the team this year by helping to develop her team into more of a united front and by utilizing each player's individual skills. Reddy's goal is to lead her team to sectionals, and as guard she will use her experience and perseverance to accomplish this feat.



Junior Chris Megdanis - Varsity Hockey

This season, defenseman Chris Megdanis, along with his team, the Rye Town/Harrison Titans, had a very successful season. With many strong seniors leaving the team, Megdanis believes that everyone needs to work hard to perfect their skills during the offseason so that the team can have a repeat performance. "I need to hit the net more often when I shoot so I do not give up odd man rushes, and I need a harder shot," said Megdanis. Noted for his devotion to his team, Megdanis is committed to encouraging and helping his teammates target and improve upon their weaknesses.



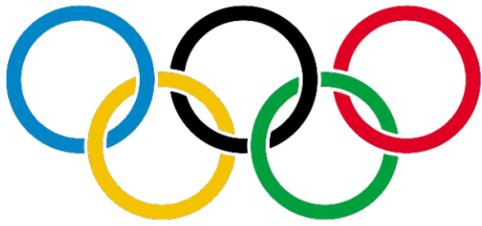
Junior Ryan Bedell – Boys' Varsity Swim

Blind Brook may not have many students on the swim team, which is combined with Rye and Rye Neck, but Ryan Bedell is proof that those who are on it are truly the best of the best. Next year, Bedell will once again resume the role of captain. Bedell will be looking to better his times in events across the board in the coming year, especially in the 500 yard freestyle, his main event.

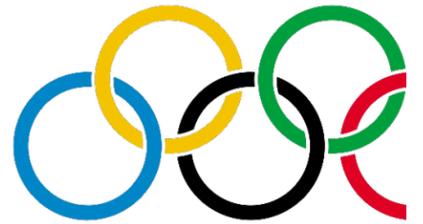


Junior Nikolina Cuk - Girls' Varsity Volleyball

Nikolina Cuk has played a crucial role on the Girls' Varsity Volleyball team since her sophomore year as the right side setter. Cuk believes that the team worked together well this past season and successfully rebounded from the loss of last year's key seniors. Next season, she hopes that the team will continue to progress and enter the season with a lot of momentum. Cuk's experience playing volleyball has accumulated from playing for Blind Brook, as well as on teams outside of the school. Her many years of play will surely prove to be an asset next season, as will her determination and athleticism.



Summer Olympics Back for 2016



By Michael Discolo

This summer, the Olympic Games will finally return to our televisions. The games will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil starting on August 15 and will feature a total of 28 different sports, which in total accumulates to 300 different events.

The Olympic events range from mainstream sports, such as basketball and soccer, to sports that have a much smaller following, like water polo and archery. One of the reasons the Olympics are so popular is because they broadcast these lesser-known sports to the general public.

"One of the sports I am most excited to watch this summer is beach volleyball. Not only is it an extremely entertaining sport, but it is also rarely televised on national television so this is one of the only chances I get to watch it," says Sophomore Nico DeLaurentis.

The Olympic games are also known for bringing some of the greatest athletes in the world together to play on their own countries' teams.

"My favorite event to watch every Olympic Games is basketball. I watch the NBA throughout the entire year so it is really cool to see my favorite players, like Stephen Curry and Kevin Durant, join forces and play together for our country," says Sophomore Carly Discolo.

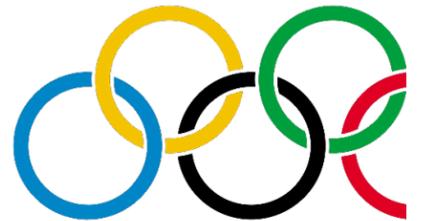
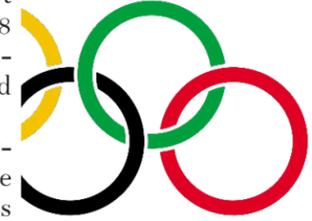
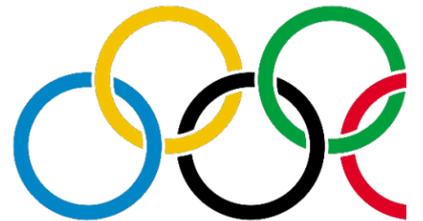
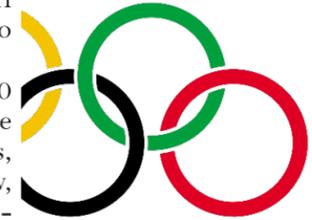
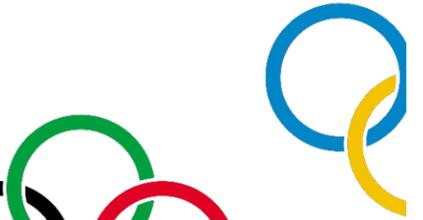
The United States Men's National Basketball Team has won five out of the last six gold medals at the summer games and will likely continue that trend in Rio de Janeiro.

Because there are over 200 million people projected to be watching the summer Olympics, many athletes, both old and new, will gain a lot of publicity during the games.

In 2012, U.S. gymnast Gabby Douglas won two gold medals for the United States, one in the gymnastic team competition and one in the individual all-around competition. As a result, her worldwide popularity spiked, and she received millions in endorsements from Nike and AT&T and even had a Lifetime biopic made about her.

Another well-known Olympic athlete is American swimmer Michael Phelps. Phelps has won a total of 18 gold medals, eight of these were won at the 2008 Olympics games in Beijing, setting a record for the most gold medals won in a single summer.

Phelps will be turning thirty-one this coming June, so Rio de Janeiro will most likely be his final Olympic Games. Fans are hopeful that he will be able to leave his mark and help America achieve success during what may be his last chance to showcase his abilities for the entire world.



Staying in Shape During Summer

By Lily Koenig

As the sports teams play their last games and the school year comes to a close, many students are beginning to focus on how they will exercise this summer. Whether they are doing it to simply stay in shape or to prepare for the upcoming fall sports seasons, many Blind Brook students participate in a variety of physical activities during the summer months.

Numerous students at Blind Brook attend sleepaway camps over the summer, where one of the main components of daily life is physical activity.

"I go to sleep away camp and since the food is not the healthiest, I try to stay as active as possible. I try to run and swim everyday, and force myself to play sports or else I would just be sitting around in my bunk all day," says sophomore Ayden Bauer. Bauer also does these things to ensure that she is ready for the soccer preseason, which begins shortly after she returns from camp.

Aside from sleepaway camps, many students have chosen to participate in specialty sports camps in order to develop their skills and focus on specific areas of improvement.

Junior Jake Cohen will be attending IMG Academy, which is a private sports training institute located in Sarasota, Florida. This facility focuses on developing the mental and physical components of an athlete.

Cohen will continue to train hard when he returns from IMG. "While I'm home, I'm really looking to get into great shape for the soccer preseason. I hope to run every morning to get great endur-

ance, and at night I will be attending captain's practices for the soccer team," he says.

While many sports teams take a break during the summer, some teams and clubs require commitments that last throughout the summer months. Sophomore Sophie Jivotovski has a lot of experience with this.

"Over the summer I participate in competitive dance and I need to stay in shape and stay healthy throughout. I exercise much more during the summer with activities such as Soul Cycle and Kaya Yoga to stay flexible. I also take a lot of dance classes including ballet and jazz. It is also really important for me to change my diet to more healthy food and to stay clear of junk food," says Jivotovski.

Sophomore Christine Argentino also participates in dance competitions with Jivotovski over the summer. However, she utilizes other methods of physical activity to keep herself in shape.

"In addition to attending competitive dance competitions, I will also be teaching dance to children in the city for two weeks. I will try to be as active as I can in the class by demonstrating the steps to the kids, as well as stretching, doing conditioning exercises and maybe even incorporating yoga or other sports into the classes. The place I am volunteering has an incredible gym with a lot of updated equipment and I plan on using these resources to keep myself in shape as well as the other students I will be teaching," says Argentino.

Six Sports Successes of Twenty-Sixteen



1 VARSITY GOLF TEAM

The golf team experienced one of the best seasons in Blind Brook history. Led by senior captains Griffin Robins, Andrew Farruggio, Brandon Weston, Austin Lavitt, and Ethan Hochberg, the Trojans ended the season 9-9, the team's best record in six years.

BOYS' VARSITY LACROSSE

The team reached historic status at Blind Brook this year, achieving their best record ever. Although their record was only 6-10, these six wins gave the Boys' Varsity Lacrosse team a ticket to the playoffs. Despite a 13-1 loss to Briarcliff High School, the top team in the league, the future is looking bright for the team.



MACKENZIE KORPI

Co-captain, senior, Mackenzie Korpi stunned the Blind Brook athletic community this year by scoring her 200th career goal for the Varsity Girls' Lacrosse Team. This record stands as the most goals scored by a student in the school's history, a record rightly earned after five seasons on the team.



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BOYS' VARSITY SOCCER

Heading into the playoffs as the number nine seed, the Boys' Varsity Soccer Team unexpectedly defeated number eight, Putnam Valley in an overtime contest. The team proceeded to beat Valhalla, the number one team in the section that had previously only lost one game all year, before falling in the semifinals to Hastings.

RYAN BEDELL

Junior and co-captain Ryan Bedell brought success to the Varsity Swim Team this winter when he qualified for states in a meet against Iona Preparatory School by completing his race with a time of 4:51. Bedell dropped two more seconds from his time at states, which earned him 29th overall. The relay team also scored eleventh in the 200 free and fifth in the 400 free.



BOYS' VARSITY BASKETBALL

The Boys' Varsity Basketball team defied expectations with a 17-3 regular season record, owning the third place spot heading into the playoffs. After two home playoff wins in front of an energetic crowd, the Trojans were able to book a trip to the County Center for the first time in five years, where they competed in a close matchup with the number two seed, Putnam Valley.



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1. Photo Courtesy of Griffin Robins
2. Photo Courtesy of Grant Alter
3. Photo Courtesy of Mackenzie Korpi
4. Photo/Emily Sachs
5. Photo Courtesy of Ryan Bedell
6. Photo/Emily Sachs